

SAFEGUARDING

Creating Safer Space

Advanced Module 2023 Edition

Handbook



Contents

Foreword	
Course overview	
Aims and objectives	6
Creating safer space for all	
Safeguarding and unconscious bias	8
Safeguarding in the culture of the Methodist Church	9
The impact of abuse	12
Prevent, protect, promote	
Safer recruitment practice	14
Safer cultures – creating barriers	17
Record and report	
What to include in the safeguarding record	23
Listening to those who raise concerns	24
How to report	25
Further safeguarding resources	
Methodist Church resources	26
Other organisations	27
Key definitions and issues in safeguarding	
Types of abuse	38
Appendix 1	
Safeguarding in the culture of the Methodist Church (Theology of Safeguarding)	45
Appendix 2	
Domestic Abuse Charter	50

Foreword

Welcome to the 2023 edition of the Advanced Module safeguarding training. We do hope you will enjoy undertaking this course and gain much from it, whether you are embarking on it for the first time or you have undertaken the equivalent course before. In all our training we value the fact that it is a shared experience. You receive but you also give, as you listen to and support others in their learning.

The Methodist Church is a community that welcomes and values each and every person with hospitality and openness. Our church communities, in whatever form they take, are called to be places where the transformational love of God is embodied in the safety which is offered to all people.

This safety is offered in such a way that it goes to the heart of what we are about. In its simplest form, when we talk of safeguarding we are describing relationships – how we want to be treated by others and therefore, how we treat others ourselves. To live out the gospel values means working in a way and creating environments that are safe, feel safe and offer hope and care for people. In these communities we will work to challenge bullying, discrimination and abuse in all its forms. We will become known as a Church which holds these standards high and has clear mechanisms for dealing with situations when the standards are transgressed. It will be embedded in our culture.

To this end, a proactive safeguarding approach is central to our mission. We undertake our missionary activities with a clear set of principles about how we will treat others and how we will respond to any concerns. This requires us to seek justice for those who have been abused. It offers constructive care and challenge to those who have abused. This provides us all with a safeguarding programme worth celebrating! It is about transformation and new life.

This commitment is to be an inclusive, growing, evangelistic and justice-seeking Church, affirming the Methodist Church's policy of promoting safe environments where children, young people and vulnerable adults are protected.

This includes:

- taking proactive measures to prevent abuse by safely recruiting those with any responsibility for vulnerable members, worshippers and users of our services
- minimising risk and putting safety measures in place
- responding promptly and appropriately to every safeguarding concern or allegation
- caring pastorally for those who have experienced abuse and other people who have been affected
- ensuring that survivors of abuse or trauma find a warm welcome within the Methodist Church, and feel accepted and understood
- working safely with those who are the subject of convictions, concerns or allegations of abuse.

Whether an established church community, a new church on the margins or a new place for new people, safeguarding and the promotion of well-being has to be everyone's responsibility. There is an expectation that all those involved will work safely and challenge bullying and abusive behaviour where identified. In all environments, children, young people and vulnerable adults will be listened to, supported and know that they will receive care.

All safeguarding measures must be carried out in accordance with the Church's safeguarding policy, procedures and guidance.

Over the course of the last 30 years the Methodist Church has developed its understanding and practice of safeguarding alongside colleagues in other denominations and professionals from statutory services. We are proud of the decisions we have taken during this time to learn from the experience of those who have been abused and mistreated and to push our training and practice forward. There have been notable milestones along the way with various reports, including the major undertaking of the 2015 Past Case Review (methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/resources-archive/courage-cost-and-hope-past-cases-review/) and the Government's independent inquiry into child sexual abuse (iicsa.org.uk/final-report).

The Church has demonstrated its commitment to learn and move forward in its safeguarding practice. Thank you for your commitment to this and we do hope and pray that you will gain much from undertaking this training together.

The Revd Dr Jonathan R Hustler, Secretary of the Conference
Judith Davy Cole, Chair of the Safeguarding Committee
Tim Carter, Director of Safeguarding

April 2023

Course overview

The Creating Safer Space Advanced Module course can be delivered either face-to-face or online. This Handbook is designed to fit alongside both forms of training.

Face-to-face training

This is split into three parts:

- Unit 1a: Preparing the Ground booklet – an hour of self-study.
- Core learning session (Units 1b-5) – minimum of four hours taught.
- Handbook – to support learning during the Advanced Module and for further study and resources.

Online training

This is also split into three parts:

- E-learning (units 1-5a) – approximately four to seven hours which can be completed in smaller sections. Alongside the e-learning, participants complete a workbook which they then take to the Gathered Session.
- Gathered Session (Unit 5b) – a two-hour facilitated session to consolidate learning from the Advanced Module online.
- Handbook – to support learning during the Advanced Module and for further study and resources.

This handbook contains additional information that builds on material covered during the course preparation and core learning sections. It also provides you with some suggested resources for further learning and development and points you to some helpful organisations.

Aims

The aims of the Advanced Module are to consolidate and develop your previous safeguarding learning and:

- extend your understanding of responding well to groups within our different church communities
- further equip you with skills and resources to be confident in promoting good practice in the church and community
- explore what this means in your designated role of responsibility within the Church.

Engagement in all three elements of the Advanced Module will enable you to meet these aims.

Objectives

These will be demonstrated by:

- appreciating the Methodist Church's theological understanding of safeguarding
- learning from the Methodist Church's ongoing witness to improved safeguarding practice and lessons from the Past Cases Review, new research and evidence-based practice
- understanding how a positive safeguarding culture may deter abusive and grooming behaviour
- identifying and understanding the reactions of groups and individuals who are impacted by safeguarding incidents or concerns
- having a clear focus on listening well, hearing and responding to those who have been hurt or abused
- understanding effective record-keeping
- knowing how to take appropriate action to share relevant information or concerns within the boundaries of your role
- applying today's learning to your role and future steps you will take.

Look after yourself

These materials contain content that some participants may find distressing. It is important that you look after yourself and take time out if needed. If any part of the Advanced Module training raises painful issues for you, please share this with the chaplain (at a training session), your local minister or someone else you trust.

Creating safer space for all

(A reminder of the Foundation Module)

What makes safeguarding in the Church special?



- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- Recognise, record, respond, refer.
- What I need to know for my role(s) and responsibilities.

Safeguarding and unconscious bias

- Safeguarding all children and vulnerable adults is everyone's responsibility. Cultural differences between us and others should not get in the way of keeping each other safe. We must avoid thinking that we will keep safe those who are like us, whilst those different from us are someone else's responsibility.
- We need to be aware of our own culture and cultural norms. When something strikes us as odd, unusual or out-of-place, an awareness of our own culture will enable us to identify if it is a cause for concern or is just uncomfortable to us because it goes against the cultural norms of our upbringing and experience.
- We need to be aware of our own unconscious biases so that we can evaluate situations in terms of people as they are, rather than as how our biases assume them to be. For example, a common unconscious bias is to treat children from ethnic groups that are minorities in the UK, especially Black children, as older than they actually are. We need to be aware of this and correct ourselves when considering the behaviour of, or risks to, children from ethnic minorities.

Safeguarding in the culture of the Methodist Church

The *Theology of Safeguarding* report was adopted by the 2021 Methodist Conference and recognises that safeguarding is not something we do because we have to, but because it relates to the heart of the Christian faith. A summary of the reader's guide is contained in the Appendices on p.45 and the full report can be found at methodist.org.uk/media/21753/conf-2021-27-the-theology-of-safeguarding.pdf

Safeguarding is integral to the mission of the Methodist Church; it is a response and witness to the love of God in Christ. The Methodist Church aims to establish a culture which creates a safer space for those who have suffered abuse and puts barriers in the way of those who wish to cause harm to others.

The Church recognises the devastating impact on those who have experienced abuse within a church context. It remains a deep source of grief and shame that, as a Christian Church, such abuse represents a clear failure to live in ways that glorify God and honour Christ.

In 2015, following the completion of the review of past safeguarding cases over the last 50 years (*Courage, Cost and Hope*), the Methodist Church offered a full, unreserved apology to survivors and victims of abuse for the failure of current and past processes in fully protecting children, young people and adults from abuse.

Our commitment to those who have experienced abuse within the Methodist Church means that we will:

- provide a welcome to all those who have experienced abuse and support their engagement with the Methodist Church
- work continuously to create a culture of inclusion throughout the Church
- provide time and space to listen without judgement to anyone raising a concern or reporting abuse
- respond promptly and professionally to safeguarding concerns and reports of abuse
- work closely in partnership with statutory agencies to protect the vulnerable and support those who seek justice.
- offer pastoral care to survivors of abuse and other people who have been affected
- work with those who have experienced abuse to increase understanding throughout the Church of the nature of abuse and its impact and reflect this learning through policy, procedure and training.

How do we begin to create spaces which are safe for all?

Here are some examples of steps we can take to create safe spaces within our churches.

- Acknowledge that abuse can be perpetrated by and happen to people in church communities.
- Consider the language used in worship.
- Acknowledge that certain names for God and certain concepts are difficult for some people (eg God the father, God as a loving mother, trust and submitting to God).
- Acknowledge that Mothering Sunday, Father's Day, special services and times of year can be very difficult for some people.
- Bear in mind that all ages and all genders can be abused.
- Recognise that abuse can include sexual, physical, emotional, domestic, spiritual, financial abuse and neglect. Often someone who is abused will experience more than one of these and their abuse can include other forms. This is explained further in the Key definitions and issues in safeguarding section (p.33).
- Be aware that people who have been abused may have triggers that cause flashbacks (eg sights, sounds, smells).
- Preach in a manner that is affirming and non-aggressive.
- Be aware that certain statements may cause hurt (eg "The church is a family of brothers and sisters", "God is like our loving parent", "God wants to be in control").
- Allow people to sit where they are comfortable. Some may not want to sit by others, some may want to sit at the back, by the door or at the end of the row so they feel they can leave easily.
- Recognise that some aspects of church life can be difficult for people for a variety of reasons. Sharing the Peace by touching or hugging, making eye contact when saying the Grace, chatting over coffee after the service or kneeling for communion can be difficult for some. Avoid thinking, "It's just the way we do it here".
- Do not make those who have experienced abuse feel uncomfortable, different or wrong.
- Avoid making people's financial donations public. Be sensitive to the fact that some may feel an obligation to give, even when this may be more than they can afford.
- Recognise and celebrate that for some donating to the church will be in the form of time, experience, supporting fundraising, youth activity and so on.
- Remember that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility. It should be a way of life, not an add-on or a tick box.



References

M Erooga, D Allnock and P Telford, *Towards safer organisations II: Using the perspectives of convicted sex offenders to inform organisational safeguarding of children* (London, NSPCC, 2012)

M Erooga (ed), *Creating safer organisations: Practical steps to prevent the abuse of children by those working with them* (London, Wiley-Blackwell, 2012)

K Kaufman and M Erooga, *Risk profiles for institutional child sexual abuse: A literature review* (Sydney, Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, 2016)

Methodist Church. *The Theology of Safeguarding* (2021)

Methodist Church website – Reflect and respond study guide

methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/support-for-survivors/survivor-resources/

The impact of abuse

When someone experiences abuse, the impact can be devastating. When this abuse takes place within a church setting, the reverberations can and do touch the families of both the survivor and perpetrator, as well as the whole church congregation and local community.

The impact on individuals

We are all different, therefore the effects of abuse can materialise in a number of ways. If an individual doesn't display some of the well-known traits, it does not mean they have not suffered abuse or that the abuse did not have a detrimental effect on them.

Research indicates that when the abuse has taken place in a church setting the impact can be that much more intense on the individual who has experienced abuse. This is because the Church is considered a 'safe place'; God's House and the betrayal and defamation of this safe space can leave those who have experienced abuse rejecting everything to do with religion and the Church.

Those who have experienced abuse can feel betrayed both by the abuser and by God. They can also experience:

- physical harm
- serious injury
- loss of trust in others
- low self-esteem
- the crushing of their spirit
- anger: not only towards the abuser but also towards others who did not protect them
- sleeping and eating disorders
- depression
- difficulties in relating to other people
- mental health difficulties, including drug or alcohol problems
- difficulty in concentrating
- feelings of loss
- feelings of betrayal
- feelings of powerlessness
- obsessional behaviour
- post-traumatic stress disorder.

But they may also experience:

- increased awareness of risk for self or others
- increased commitment to promoting safety for others
- enhanced personal resilience – if the trauma can be worked through.

The impact on families

The impact of abuse will differ from family to family and will depend on the relationships and dynamics. The following may be consequences of abuse:

- distress: that their loved one has been harmed
- guilt: that they did not prevent it happening
- loss of confidence: in their ability to protect
- divisions: factions within families can develop
- fractured relationships
- feelings of loss
- feelings of betrayal
- feelings of powerlessness.

For more information on responding well to those impacted by abuse, please see Section 4 of the *Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church* (methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/policies-procedures-posters-and-leaflets/policies-and-guidance).

The impact on churches

The impact of abuse will be different for different churches at different times. The following may be consequences of abuse:

- loss of confidence in its role
- loss of trust in church members, leaders and the structures of the church
- anger towards the perpetrator and towards those who did not prevent the abuse
- denial of the abuse or the seriousness of the abuse
- potential divisions: factions in support of the abuser and the person who has been abused can develop
- feelings of betrayal by the abuser
- loss of the ability to have confidence in one another
- feelings of powerlessness to effectively carry out its role.

Support for survivors can be found at

methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/support-for-survivors

Prevent, protect, promote

Our role in the Methodist Church is to ensure we are doing everything possible to create safe spaces for everyone.

We do this in a number of ways:

- **Prevent** opportunities for abuse.
- **Protect** those who are vulnerable.
- **Promote** good safeguarding practice.

Safer recruitment practice

If we take care to ensure those who work with vulnerable groups are recruited and supported robustly, we can ensure that we have the most appropriate people in those roles.

Twelve steps to safer recruitment for volunteers

For further information see Section 3 of *Safer Recruitment Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church* (methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/policies-procedures-posters-and-leaflets/policies-and-guidance).

- 1** Before you begin, ensure that you have an up-to-date recruitment and selection policy that describes the process and roles.
- 2** Ensure there is a safeguarding policy which is reviewed annually and includes a commitment to safer recruitment.
- 3** Check and update role description and person specification for the role(s). This will be a role outline for volunteer posts. Consider whether the activities specified require a criminal record check.
- 4** Ensure that you have an appropriate advertisement prepared that contains all necessary information about the role, a timetable for recruitment and your commitment to safeguarding.
- 5** Ensure that you have compiled a suitable candidate information pack containing all the required information about the organisation, role, recruitment timetable, safeguarding policy/statement, application form and confidential declaration.
- 6** Scrutinise each application carefully and fairly with reference to the criteria for the role before carrying out interviews or discussions with candidates.
- 7** Carry out appropriate checks for your shortlisted candidates, including references. Confirm identity and relevant certificates of qualifications/course attendance, as appropriate.
- 8** If there are several candidates, ensure all shortlisted candidates receive the same letter of invitation to interview, supplying them with all necessary information.
- 9** Conduct a face-to-face interview or discussion for all shortlisted candidates based on an objective assessment of the candidate's ability to meet the person specification and job/role description.
- 10** Ensure that all specific questions designed to gain required information about each candidate's suitability have been asked, including those needed to address any gaps in information supplied on the application form.
- 11** Select a preferred candidate based upon their suitability for the role.
- 12** Ensure that your preferred candidate is informed in writing that the offer of employment (including volunteer positions) is conditional on receiving satisfactory information from all necessary checks.

Recruitment may follow slightly different processes depending on whether the role is paid or voluntary. Paid roles will have reference to employment law. For more help or advice about safer recruitment you may want to contact the District Lay Employment Advisor (if your district has one). Further safer recruitment resources are available at methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/safer-recruitment/.

DBS/PVG checks

DBS/PVG checks are one way that organisations can safeguard children and vulnerable adults by safely recruiting staff and volunteers. The DBS/PVG check provides a record of a person's criminal convictions and cautions. It assists employers to make informed decisions about suitability for specific roles. However, while DBS/PVG checks reduce the likelihood of issues arising when people are in post, they are no guarantee that safeguarding concerns will not occur.

DBS/PVG checks provide information about what is known of a person's history. It is vital to maintain safeguarding approaches that continue to protect vulnerable groups even after staff/volunteers are safely recruited. In the words of the Revd Jonathan Hustler, Secretary of the Conference: "Safer recruitment is more than the undertaking of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks".

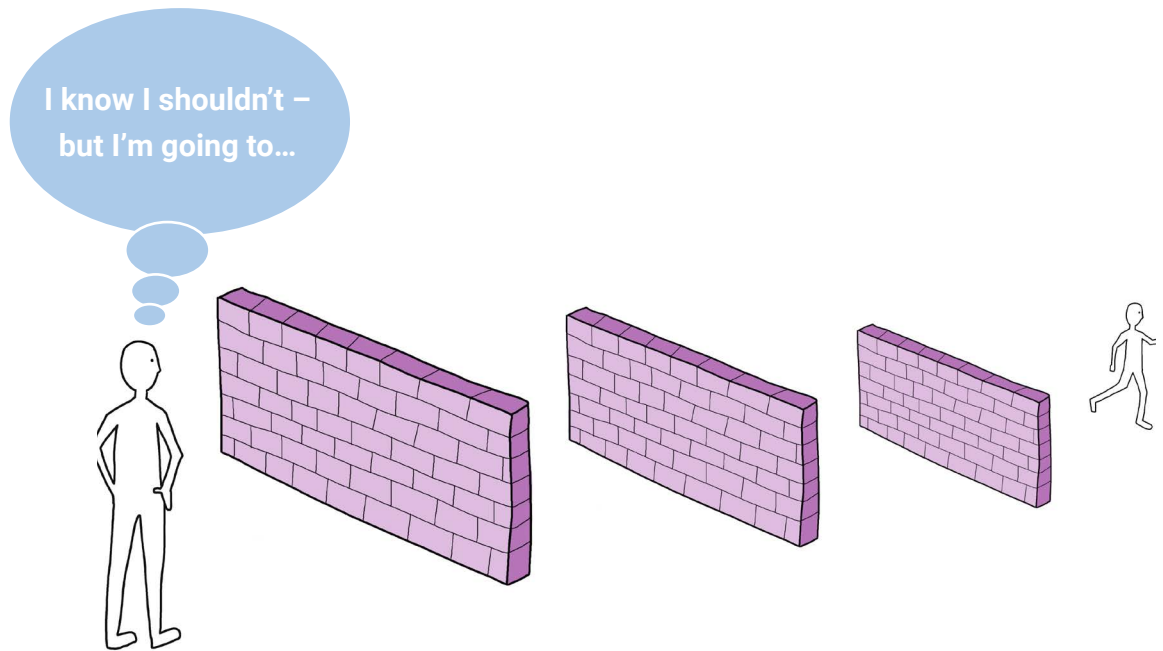
The blemished disclosures process

The whole process regarding a blemished or unclear disclosure is handled by the Connexional Safeguarding Team and you are not required to do anything at a local level unless directed by them to do so.

In any situation where the applicant is already undertaking responsibilities associated with the role, suspension must be considered as a neutral act until the process has reached a conclusion.

Safer cultures – creating barriers

Sociologist David Finkelhor¹, considered the four barriers that need to be overcome to enable abuse to take place. He refers to these as the four pre-conditions to child sexual abuse, although his model can also be applied to other forms of abuse. It has also been used to help those who have experienced abuse to challenge any thoughts they may have that they were responsible for, or should have stopped, the abuse. The image below is based upon his theory.



Motivation

- wants to
- fantasises

Overcoming internal inhibitors

- ignoring conscience and consequence
- justifies
- normalises
- dehumanises child

Overcoming external inhibitors

- groom those who may be protective
- creates opportunities
- draws others into 'bending the rules' or becoming an accessory

Overcoming resistance

- reduces risk of disclosure by making the child compliant
- threats/bribes/shames
- adult authority role accessory

¹ Adapted from: D Finkelhor, *Child Sexual Abuse: New Theory and Research* (Macmillan, 1984)

Marcus Erooga is an independent safeguarding consultant who works with organisations to maximise their safeguarding practice and minimise the possibility of children being harmed while in their care. For many years, Marcus worked at the NSPCC in various roles. During this time, he conducted research with child sex offenders who offend within organisations. From 1999 to 2018 Marcus was a visiting research fellow of the Centre of Applied Childhood, Youth and Family Research at the University of Huddersfield. He was an expert witness for the IICSA (the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse) Residential Schools inquiry.

Although it is often believed that those who abuse become part of an organisation with the sole intention of finding victims, this is not always the case. In his 2009 research² Marcus Erooga identified a number of what he described as “opportunistic offenders”: those who abuse because potential victims were available, potentially vulnerable and the organisational setting either inadvertently facilitated, or failed to prevent, abusive activity.

Erooga went on to describe how the safeguarding culture within an organisation could put barriers in place as this diagram shows.



² M Erooga, D Alnock, P Telford, *Towards Safer Organisations II Using the perspectives of convicted sex offenders to inform organisational safeguarding of children* (NSPCC, 2009)

Key messages from Marcus Erooga's research

- The importance of adherence to basic recruitment and staffing good practice.
- Screening, including DBS/PVG, is necessary but not enough.
- A conscious, consistent, thorough process of obtaining, collating, analysing and critically evaluating information about applicants is required.
- Organisational commitment to the well-being of both children and staff can have a significant preventive effect.

What does this mean for our churches?

Both Finkelhor and Erooga identify that abuse takes place where barriers to potential perpetrators are inadequate and that to enable the abuse to take place there will be elements of power, control, manipulation and grooming.

So how can we ensure our churches are safe spaces for all?

Behaviour possibly indicative of manipulation and grooming

Possible deterrents

Befriending, supporting, giving gifts, helping, isolating, threatening, embarrassing.

Individuals



Those within the church recognise vulnerability or increased risk and are alert. Strong pastoral community.

Building trust with more than one family member, become a family friend, being helpful then indispensable, seen as a good influence.

Families



All events and activities are appropriately risk assessed. All volunteers appropriately recruited and supported.

Being useful, available, reliable, valuable, volunteering, becoming indispensable.

Church community



Church members understand their own roles and responsibilities. All roles filled using safer recruitment principles. All roles attend safeguarding training as appropriate. Use respectful uncertainty. Safeguarding policies are prominent, understood and referred to.

Giving reasons for pushing boundaries, minimise and normalise behaviour, persuade to bend the rules leading to guilt by association.

Those in positions of influence



Recognise the risks and respond as per policy, use opportunities for reflection and support:

- supervision
- staff meetings
- liaison with specialist staff members eg District Safeguarding Officer.

Your church, circuit and district safeguarding officers are available to discuss any concerns or queries you might have about situations within your church community.

Promoting a safeguarding culture

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

We each have a responsibility to play our part in promoting safeguarding as positive and valuable, making safeguarding normal and routine.

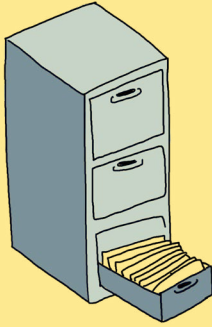
This may include:

- ensuring safeguarding posters are visible, attractive and up to date
- raising safeguarding issues at meetings, as naturally as we would church cleaning
- recognising and drawing attention to good practice when we see it.

Record and report

The Past Cases Review (2015) highlighted that of the 1,885 cases identified, only 57 per cent had records relating to the safeguarding concern.

Record-keeping was identified as one of the key learning themes in the report *Courage, Cost and Hope* (methodist.org.uk/media/4409/past-cases-review-2013-2015-final.pdf) which recognised that whilst practice had improved, there was still room for improvement.



Why safeguarding records are needed

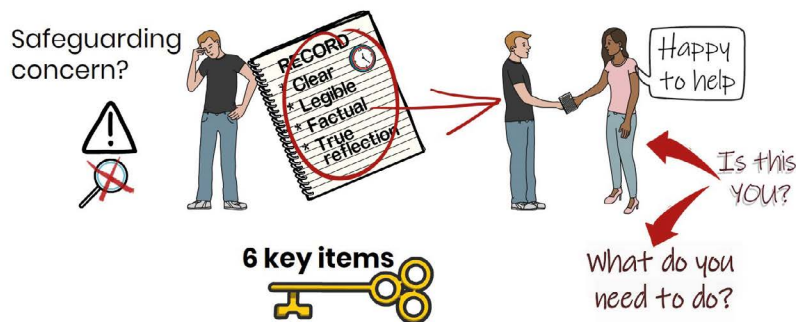
In the church context, whenever a safeguarding concern is raised in relation to a child or adult, safeguarding records are needed in order to:

- ensure that what happened and when it happened is recorded
- provide a history of events so that patterns can be identified
- provide a record of any advice given at the time, and by whom
- provide a record of any actions taken and the reasons for it – defensible decision making
- provide a basis of evidence for future safeguarding activity, in case records are required for formal processes
- promote accountability
- allow for continuity when there is a change of personnel.

Key things to remember

- Any written notes you take could later be used as evidence in court.
- There is the possibility of subject access requests (ie the person you are writing about may have the right to read what you have written about them).

What to include in a safeguarding record



1. How do you know?
2. What happened?
3. Who was involved?
4. When and where?
5. Who have you referred it to?
6. Sign and date your record

It is important that all records are kept in a secure place and only shared in accordance with legislation, government guidance and Methodist Church policy, procedures and guidelines. See Section 5 of *Safer Recruitment Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church* (methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/policies-procedures-posters-and-leaflets/policies-and-guidance) for more details about information sharing and confidentiality.

Best practice

Wherever possible, take notes during any conversation (or immediately afterwards, if more appropriate). Ask consent to make notes and take age and understanding into account. Explain why you would like to take notes, and that the person can have access to the information they have shared with you.

Be clear about what is fact; what is information from other people; and what is opinion or judgement which must be backed up by as much evidence as possible.

If the record includes information from other people, try to use the exact words spoken by the other person – and put it in speech marks. For example, David Fisher said, “The Revd Smith asked me to visit Ms Kelly at home.”

Keep a log of all actions you have taken and details of referrals to statutory agencies. Where possible, ask the person who has raised the concern to review the notes and confirm that they are an accurate record.

Remember defensible decision making, data protection and information sharing procedures – see definition of terms on p.35-36.
Share records with the District Safeguarding Officer within 24 hours.

Listening to those who raise concerns

If you are approached by anyone wishing to talk about a concern, follow these guidelines.

- Consider whether the time and place are appropriate for you to listen with care and security. Do not defer listening, but seek the other person's agreement to find a suitable place to listen.
- Stay calm and listen to the information very carefully, showing you are taking seriously what you are being told. Do not pass judgement, minimise or express shock or disbelief at what you are being told.
- Listen with undivided attention and help the other person to feel relaxed. Do not put words into their mouth.
- Take into account the person's age and level of understanding. It may be appropriate to ask if they mind you taking notes while they talk or at the end so you can check with them that you have understood everything correctly – but only if it is appropriate.
- Do not make promises you cannot keep.
- Do not promise confidentiality but explain what you will do with the information. See Section 5 of Procedures for the management of safeguarding information (methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/policies-procedures-posters-and-leaflets/policies-and-guidance), which has information on sharing and confidentiality.
- Find out what the person hopes for.
- Reflect back key points of what has been said to confirm that you have understood what has been communicated.
- Provide a privacy notice and explain in a clear and simple manner the information contained in it. You can find a privacy notice to download at methodist.org.uk/media/26452/safeguarding_concern_personal_data_processing_statement_and_info_receipt-reporting_person-july_2022.docx
- Either during (if appropriate) or after, make notes of what was said, including the date, time, venue and the names of people who were present. Sign the record.
- The District Safeguarding Officer should always be advised when a referral is made to Children's Services or the police.
- Provide the person who raised the concern with the means to contact you. Be clear about how and when you will give feedback. Be prepared to continue to be there for the person. Be dependable.
- Do not contact the person about whom allegations have been made.
- Offer reassurance that disclosing is the right thing to do

(Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church Section 4.1.1)

How to report

When someone in the church has concerns, or is made aware of concerns, they must consult with the minister, church or circuit safeguarding officer within one working day. Agree who will contact the District Safeguarding Officer.

Do not notify the person about whom allegations have been made at this point, even if that person is one of the above, until discussions have been held with the relevant church officers/statutory agencies.

In an emergency it may be necessary to phone the police and/or statutory services first and contact the District Safeguarding Officer later.

For more information on what to do if you have a safeguarding concern and referring to statutory agencies, please see Section 4 – Procedures for responding well to safeguarding incidents, *Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church* (methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/policies-procedures-posters-and-leaflets/policies-and-guidance).



Further safeguarding resources

For quick access to all resources, visit methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/training/advanced-module-2023-edition-participants and use the links in the online handbook.

Methodist Church resources

<i>Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church</i>	methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/policies-procedures-posters-and-leaflets
<i>Courage, Cost and Hope: The Past Cases Review of the Methodist Church, 2015</i>	methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/courage-cost-and-hope-past-cases-review
<i>Positive Working Together – Guidelines for situations of bullying and harassment</i>	methodist.org.uk/for-churches/guidance-for-churches/positive-working-together
Safeguarding training	methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/training
Contact your District Safeguarding Officer (DSO)	methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/safeguarding-contacts/contact-your-district-safeguarding-officer-dso
The Well Learning Hub <i>Resources and support for those working within children, youth and family ministry</i>	methodist.org.uk/our-work/children-youth-family-ministry/the-well-learning-hub-equipping-and-supporting-workers
Social media guidelines	methodist.org.uk/our-work/children-youth-family-ministry/the-well-learning-hub-equipping-and-supporting-workers/policy-and-practical-help/social-media-guidelines
Guidelines for organising events for children and young people	methodist.org.uk/our-work/children-youth-family-ministry/the-well-learning-hub-equipping-and-supporting-workers/policy-and-practical-help/organising-events
Survivors' resources	methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/support-for-survivors
Domestic abuse resources	methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/domestic-abuse

DBS/PVG checks

DDC
Tel: **0845 644 3298**
or **0116 260 3055**
Email: contact@ddc.uk.net

Due Diligence Checking Ltd (DDC)
The registered body that processes all DBS/PVG applications for the Methodist Church.

Organisations offering support and advice (children)

Action For Children
actionforchildren.org.uk

Action for Children is a leading children’s charity running over 500 projects and working with children and young people affected by poverty, disability and abuse.

AFRUCA
afruca.org
Tel: **020 7704 2261**

AFRUCA: Africans Unite Against Child Abuse works in UK Black and ethnic communities to protect and safeguard children from abuse, modern slavery and exploitation and tackle cultural and religious practices that harm children.

Barnardo’s
barnardos.org.uk

Barnardo’s work to protect, support and nurture the UK’s most vulnerable children by helping families. It supports care leavers, those looking to gain workplace skills, LGBTQ+ young people and those at risk of homelessness, and children and young people who have been abused. It manages fostering and adoption services.

CEOP
ceop.police.uk/safety-centre

Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) helps to keep children and young people safe from sexual abuse and grooming online. It offers guidance, advice and accepts direct reporting with links to a range of information about keeping children of all ages safer from online child sexual abuse.

Childline
childline.org.uk
Tel: **0800 1111**

A free, private and confidential 24-hour service where children and young people up to the age of 19 years old can talk about anything that concerns them with trained counsellors. The website also provides further information e.g. about bullying, feelings, sex.

NSPCCnspcc.org.ukAdvice line for
parents/adults:**0808 800 5000**

NSPCC The NSPCC website has many useful resources, including research studies and fact sheets.

Family LivesTel: **0808 800 2222**

Family Lives (formerly Parentline Plus) is a resource for parents, volunteers and workers providing a range of services, including 'Positive Boundaries' which focuses on sexual bullying, peer-on-peer sexual exploitation and developing positive gender relationships.

**Lucy Faithfull
Foundation**lucyfaithfull.org.uk

Lucy Faithfull Foundation is a UK-wide child protection charity dedicated solely to preventing child sexual abuse. It provides services for organisations, professionals and the public including risk assessments and intervention; expert training; specialist consultancy, and public education.

Stop It Now!stopitnow.org.ukConfidential
helpline:**0808 1000 900**

Stop It Now! is the Lucy Faithfull child sexual abuse prevention campaign and confidential helpline for any adult concerned about sexual abuse. This helpline will engage with perpetrators of abuse, and so it is a very important resource.

Parents Protectparentsprotect.co.ukConfidential
helpline:**0808 1000 900**

Parents Protect helps parents and carers protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation; has resources to help a family draw up a safety plan and offers confidential helpline support.

Organisations offering support and advice (vulnerable adults)

Hourglasswearehourglass.org

Helpline:

0808 808 8141

Hourglass (formerly Action on Elder Abuse) has a mission to end the harm, abuse and exploitation of older people in the UK.

Age UK
ageuk.org.uk
Free 24-hour advice line:
0800 678 1602

Age UK's website has many useful resources including research studies and fact sheets, as well as information on protecting yourself or others from abuse.

Mencap
mencap.org.uk
Helpline:
0808 808 1111

Mencap Learning Disability Helpline provides advice and information on all issues relevant to people with learning disabilities and their families in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Respond
respond.org.uk
Tel: **020 7383 0700**

Respond is a national charity supporting children and adults with learning disabilities who have experienced abuse or trauma. Respond provides therapeutic support as well as practical advice and information. Its helpline is for people with learning disabilities themselves, as well as family, carers and professionals supporting them.

The National Autistic Society
autism.org.uk
Tel: **0808 800 1050**

The National Autistic Society is a leading UK charity for people with autism and their families. It provides information, support and campaigns for a better world for people with autism.

Sibs
sibs.org.uk

Sibs provides information and support to people growing up with – or have grown up with – a sibling with any disability, long term chronic illness or life limiting condition.

The Challenging Behaviour Foundation
challengingbehaviour.org.uk
Tel: **0300 666 0126**

The Challenging Behaviour Foundation provides telephone and e-mail support from a family support worker on challenging behaviour associated with severe learning disabilities and related issues.

The Association for Real Change
arcuk.org.uk
England:
01246 555 043
Northern Ireland:
028 9038 0960
Scotland:
0131 663 4444

The Association for Real Change (ARC) is a national charity supporting providers of learning disability and autism services, people with a learning disability, autism, or other additional support needs, and their families.

Organisations offering support and advice (domestic abuse and violence)

Women's Aid
womensaid.org.uk
 24/7 free helpline:
0808 2000

Women's Aid are working to improve society's response to domestic abuse to ensure that every survivor gets the support they need, whoever and whenever they ask for help.

Restored
restored-uk.org
 Tel: **020 3906 3930**

Restored offer a safe space for Christian survivors of domestic abuse. Their mission is to speak up about the realities of violence against women and girls, and to equip the Church to stand against domestic abuse and support survivors. They offer a guide for churches to address domestic abuse.

Respect
respect.uk.net
 Helpline for male victims:
0808 8010 327
 Helpline for perpetrators:
0800 802 4040

Respect is the charity that leads on the development of safe, effective work with perpetrators, male victims, and young people using violence in their close relationships.

Organisations offering support and advice (survivors of abuse)

MACSAS
macsas.org.uk
 Helpline:
08088 01 03 40

Minister and Clergy Sexual Abuse Survivors (MACSAS) supports women and men who have been sexually abused, as children or adults, by ministers, clergy or others under the guise of the Church, whether they have remained within their Christian communities or have chosen to leave.

NAPAC
napac.org.uk
 Helpline:
0808 801 0331

National Association of People Abused in Childhood (NAPAC) offers support to adult survivors of all types of childhood abuse, including physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect.

One in Four
oneinfour.org.uk
020 8697 2112

One in Four specialises in supporting people who have experienced sexual violence and abuse, particularly survivors of child sexual abuse and trauma through counselling, advocacy and through the judicial system.

Organisations offering support and advice (mental health)

<p>Mind mind.org.uk Infoline: 0300 123 3393</p>	<p>Mind offers information and support for anyone living with or supporting someone with a mental health problem.</p>
<p>Mental Health Foundation mentalhealth.org.uk/explore-mental-health/a-z-topics/online-mental-health-support</p>	<p>Mental Health Foundation offers online support and links including information, research, online communities, smartphone apps, online self-help programmes and online therapy.</p>
<p>The Campaign Against Living Miserably thecalmzone.net Helpline: 0800 58 58 58</p>	<p>The Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM) is leading a movement against suicide offering website advice and a free, confidential helpline about a whole range of concerns, such as anxiety, relationship concerns, health worries, money worries or suicidal thoughts.</p>
<p>Place2Be Place2be.org.uk/our-services/parents-and-carers/supporting-your-child-s-mental-health Tel: 020 7923 5500</p>	<p>Place2Be offers support and training for parents and schools in managing children's mental health.</p>
<p>YoungMinds youngminds.org.uk/parent Parents' helpline: 0808 802 5544</p>	<p>YoungMinds offers support and guidance for young people up to 25 years old and their parents/carers when they are struggling with their mental health, providing a helpline and webchat for parents.</p>

Organisations offering other support and advice

Samaritans
samaritans.org
 Tel: **116 123**

Samaritans are there to talk to, no matter how small the issue may feel to be; they will listen, won't judge or say what to do. They offer a confidential service covering a range of areas, not just for those who are feeling suicidal.

Unseen
unseenuk.org
 Helpline:
08000 121 700

Unseen provides safe houses and support in the community for survivors of trafficking and modern slavery. They also run the modern slavery and exploitation helpline and work with individuals, communities, business, governments, other charities and statutory agencies to stamp out slavery for good.

Key definitions and issues in safeguarding

Key definitions in safeguarding

Key issues for safeguarding within the Methodist Church

	Page		Page
Child	33	Boundary drift	34
Child protection	33	Data protection and	
Harm and significant harm	33	information sharing	35
Manipulation and control	33	Disguised compliance	35
Risk	33	Low level concerns about adults	36
Safeguarding	34	Recognising signs	36
Safeguarding children	34	Respectful uncertainty	36
Vulnerable adults	34		

Types of abuse are not mutually exclusive and not all abuse is easy to categorise. However, knowing the types of abuse can help recognise when abuse is occurring. Types of abuse are defined on p.37-44.

Key definitions and issues in safeguarding

Child

In England and Wales, this is anyone who has not yet reached their eighteenth birthday (with the exception of some 16–17-year-olds in particular contexts). In Scotland, this is anyone who has not yet reached their sixteenth birthday. The fact that a child [in England and Wales] 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 (*Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018*).

Child protection

Activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm (*Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018*).

Harm and significant harm

‘Harm’ means ill-treatment or impairment of health and development.

‘Significant harm’ is the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of the children and is based on comparing the child’s health and development to that which could be reasonably expected of a child of a similar age (*Children Act, 1989 and 2004; Adoption and Children Act, 2002*).

Manipulation and control is a phrase used to describe how people who want to harm children, young people and vulnerable adults get close to them (and often to their families) and gain their trust. The process involves the creation of relationships either built upon trust or dependency, in order to gain access to the vulnerable person for the purposes of perpetrating harm. This can take place over long periods of time, even years. The term ‘manipulation and control’ is most commonly used in the context of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or trafficking of children and young people. Nevertheless, grooming is also relevant to harm perpetrated against vulnerable adults, such as financial abuse.

Risk

The probability of something happening and the potential harm it could cause. The more likely an event, and the greater the damage caused by it happening, the greater the overall risk.

Safeguarding

The term safeguarding denotes measures to protect the health, well-being and human rights of individuals, which allow children and adults to live free from abuse, harm and neglect (*Safeguarding people, Care Quality Commission, 2014*).

Safeguarding children

The process of protecting children from abuse or neglect, preventing impairment of their health and development, and ensuring they are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care that enables children to have optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully (*Safeguarding Children, Ofsted, 2011*).

Vulnerable adults

In England and Wales, a 'vulnerable adult' is defined as an individual over the age of 18 who is not able to protect themselves from significant harm or exploitation due to a substantial functional, mental or physical impairment. This includes elderly adults and those with cognitive impairments. Being vulnerable does not necessarily mean that an adult lacks competency.

In Scotland, 'adults at risk' are defined as those aged 16 and over who are unable to safeguard their own wellbeing, property, rights or other interests; are at risk of harm; and, because they are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity, are more vulnerable to being harmed than adults who are not so affected (*Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act, 2007*).

Key issues for safeguarding within the Methodist Church

Boundary drift

Sometimes, the breach of a boundary within a relationship is part of a grooming process, but at other times a boundary breach is made innocently or with good intention. However, once boundaries are breached, it becomes more difficult to restore a relationship in which proper boundaries are respected (*Safeguarding Children: dealing with low-level concerns about adults, 2017*).

Organisations in which boundaries are adhered to in every respect are likely to be the safest environments (*Creating Safer Organisations, 2015*).

Data protection

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018 does not prevent information sharing, rather it sets out how an individual's personal data can be shared appropriately.

The Data Protection Act (2018) stipulates that safeguarding children and individuals at risk is a processing condition that allows practitioners to share information, including without consent. It goes on to add that in the circumstances where consent cannot be given, it is not reasonable to expect a practitioner to attempt to obtain consent if that would place a child at risk. Put simply, the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children and young people safe (*Government guidance, July 2018*).

Information sharing procedure

The following procedure should be adopted when receiving a request for information or making such a request where the information required is personal data. For further information please see Section 5: Procedures for the management of safeguarding information (methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/policies-procedures-posters-and-leaflets/policies-and-guidance) of the *Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church*.

Note: As part of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, there is currently a legal requirement under Section 25 of the Inquiries Act for churches and other relevant organisations in England and Wales to retain documents relating to child protection and allegations of child abuse made against individuals or the organisation. This also includes child protection policy documents. The legal requirement not to destroy such material has precedence over retention requirements under the Data Protection Act 2018 for the duration of the inquiry.

Disguised compliance

Disguised compliance involves adults giving the appearance of cooperating with professionals in order to avoid raising suspicions and allay concerns (*NSPCC – Disguised compliance: learning from case reviews, 2016*).

Low level concerns about adults

A low-level concern is any concern that an adult has acted in a way that is inconsistent with the Codes of Safer Working Practice – Section 3.2 *Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church in Britain* (methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/policies-procedures-posters-and-leaflets/policies-and-guidance). It includes conduct that does not meet the threshold of harm or is not considered serious enough for more formal intervention measures. Government guidance states that 'low-level' concerns should not be considered as insignificant. It further adds that a concern 'no matter how small' if it is causing those observing the behaviour to have a 'sense of unease' or 'nagging doubt' (Section 4.1.2).

Recognising signs

There should be clear procedures in place to keep children and vulnerable adults safe. Everyone should know these procedures so they can recognise when they are not being followed.

Inappropriate behaviour from an adult may, or may not, be a sign of abuse. It should always be reported. Cultural sensitivity should not stand in the way of reporting a safeguarding concern.

Behavioural signs of abuse can include: becoming quiet, withdrawn or anxious; being aggressive or angry for no obvious reason; sudden changes in their character, such as appearing helpless, depressed or tearful; any unexplained change in behaviour; looking unkempt, dirty or thinner than usual; always wearing clothes which cover their body; physical signs, such as bruises, wounds, fractures or other untreated injuries. These signs don't necessarily mean a child or vulnerable adult is being abused or is at risk: there could be other things happening which are affecting them. However, recognising, recording and reporting these signs helps keep everyone safe.

Respectful uncertainty

Take what people say seriously but look for other information to corroborate or challenge their account.

Types of abuse

	page
Abuse using social media	38
Adultification of children from ethnic minorities	38
Adverse childhood experiences	38
Coercive control	39
Criminal exploitation	39
County lines	39
Discriminatory abuse	39
Domestic abuse	40
Emotional abuse	40
Financial abuse	41
'Honour'-based violence	41
Institutional abuse	41
Modern slavery	42
Neglect	42
Adult self-neglect	42
Physical abuse	42
Sexual abuse	43
Child sexual exploitation	43
Female genital mutilation	43
Spiritual abuse	44
Trafficking	44
Unlawful marriage	44

Types of abuse

Abuse using social media (children and adults)

Online abuse includes any type of abuse that happens on the web – including abuse on social media or online gaming platforms, via smart mobile phones or tablets, and on any other platforms and devices.

Adults

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.

Children

Children may experience cyber-bullying, grooming, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or emotional abuse online. Even if there is no physical contact, abuse can still take place – whether that is by someone a child knows or by a stranger who may have attempted to befriend them virtually.

Adultification of children from ethnic minorities

Adultification bias is a form of racial prejudice where children of minority groups, typically Black children, are treated by adults as being more mature than they actually are. Actions committed by these children that would be deemed normal for child development are more likely to be treated as opportunities for discipline and children are more likely to be seen as having malicious intentions.

This can impact upon child protection and safeguarding practices, resulting in rights being diminished and notions of vulnerability being displaced by notions of responsibility and culpability.

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)

The term adverse childhood experiences refers to traumatic events that occur in childhood or adolescence. ACEs can be a single event or occur repeatedly over a period of time creating prolonged threats to the safety and well-being of a child and their physical, sexual, emotional, psychological and mental health. Examples of ACEs include physical, sexual, emotional abuse; neglect; living with someone who is dependent on alcohol and/or drugs; witnessing domestic abuse; living with someone with serious mental illness; losing a parent through divorce, death or abandonment.

The impact of experiencing ACEs can have a detrimental effect on the future physical and mental health of a child and become a barrier to a healthy adult life. Research shows that it increases the risk of mental ill-health, violence in adult relationships and post-traumatic stress.

Coercive control

Coercive control is a pattern of behaviour that creates an unequal power dynamic and enables someone to exert power over another person through fear and control. It can happen in any type of relationship and is not limited to domestic abuse. Coercive behaviours can include threats and insults; exerting financial control; isolating the other person or using sexual coercion.

Criminal exploitation

Criminal exploitation often, but not exclusively, involves adult gang members taking advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or vulnerable adult into criminal activity such as drug-related crime. It is often associated with county lines. The victim may have been groomed into criminality therefore they may appear to have given consent to be involved but can still be the victim of exploitation. Criminal exploitation does not always take place in person and can occur through the use of technology. Criminal exploitation of children also includes children engaged in forced labour or forced to commit theft.

County lines

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in supplying illegal drugs to suburbs, market towns and coastal areas, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of 'deal line'. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money.

Discriminatory abuse

This occurs when values, beliefs or culture result in the misuse of power that denies opportunities to some individuals or groups based on the nine protected characteristics listed on the Equality Act 2010. See equalityhumanrights.com for a list of protected characteristics.

Domestic abuse

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This includes, but is not limited to, sexual, psychological, physical, financial and emotional abuse; 'honour'-based violence; female genital mutilation (FGM); and forced marriage.

Controlling behaviour subjugates the victim by taking away their access to support and resources (often their own) resulting in a lack of independence and an over-regulation of their day-to-day lives. This often erodes their capacity to make any decisions in respect of themselves. Coercion refers to deliberate acts of assault and threatening behaviour that humiliates and intimidates the victim into agreeing to things they do not wish to engage or comply with. It is important to be clear that domestic abuse can affect anyone regardless of sexuality, gender or age.

Emotional abuse (children and adults)

Adults

Behaviour that has a harmful effect on an adult's emotional health or development. This can include: scolding or treating them like a child; making a person feel ashamed of involuntary behaviour; blaming someone for attitudes, actions or events beyond their control; use of silence, humiliation, bullying, harassment and verbal abuse to intimidate; controlling behaviour or efforts to create overdependence; lack of privacy or dignity; deprivation of social contact; threats to withdraw help and support; denial of cultural and spiritual needs; denial of choice or failing to respond to emotional needs.

Children

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child so as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child 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, including interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as over-protection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve [the child] seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber-bullying); causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger; or the exploitation or corruption of children (*Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018*).

Financial abuse

The denial of access of the individual to money, property, possessions, valuables or inheritance, or improper use of funds by omission, exploitation or extortion through threats. This includes misuse, embezzlement or theft, or misappropriation of a person's money, property, possessions or benefits. Also, refusing a person access to their own money, property or possessions, failing to account properly for money, property or possessions or applying pressure in connection to wills, property and inheritance, or applying duress to a person in order to secure a loan (*Care and Support Statutory Guidance, issued by the Department of Health under the Care Act, 2014*).

'Honour'-based violence

Violence committed to protect or defend the perceived 'honour' of a family or community. Often committed with a degree of collusion from members of the family or community.

Institutional abuse

This includes neglect and poor practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, or in relation to care provided in one's home. This may range from one-off incidents to ongoing ill treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice or a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation (*Care and Support Statutory Guidance, issued by the Department of Health under the Care Act, 2014*).

Modern slavery

A social and economic relationship in which a person is controlled through violence or the threat of violence, is paid nothing and is economically exploited (*Kevin Bales, Slavery Today, 2008*).

Neglect (adults and children)

Adults

The repeated withholding of adequate care which results in the adult's basic needs not being met. It can be intentional or unintentional and includes acts of omission. This may include denial of educational, social, religious, cultural or recreational needs, lack of adequate heating, lighting, food or fluids. It also includes the inappropriate use of medication, or lack of attention to hygiene, toenails and fingernails or teeth.

Adult Self-neglect

Self-neglect refers to omitting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or environment. For example:

- not meeting basic needs, including personal hygiene and appropriate clothing.
- neglecting to seek help for medical matters.
- not attending to living conditions – letting rubbish accumulate in the garden, or dirt to accumulate in the house.
- hoarding items or animals.

Action to address neglect in adulthood must be balanced with an individual's wish to make decisions for themselves (*Liberty Protection Safeguards, Mental Capacity Act, 2019*).

Children

Child neglect is the ongoing failure to meet a child's basic needs. Neglect can be intentional or inadvertent. A child might be left hungry or dirty, or without proper clothing, shelter, supervision or health care. This can put children in danger and can also have long term effects on their physical and mental wellbeing. Neglect can be sorted into four categories: educational, emotional, medical and physical.

Physical abuse (adults and children)

Adults

The non-accidental infliction of physical force, which results in pain, injury or impairment. This may include assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint and inappropriate physical sanctions (*Care and Support Statutory Guidance, issued by the Department of Health under the Care Act, 2014, updated 2022*).

Children

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 (Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018).

Sexual abuse (adults and children)

Adults

The involvement of an adult with care and support needs in sexual activities or relationships without informed or valid consent. This may involve offensive or inappropriate language (including sexual innuendo and sexual teasing), inappropriate looking, inflicting pornography on an individual, inappropriate touching, masturbation in public, indecent exposure, coercion into an activity, rape or sexual assault, photography, online and social media abuse.

Children

Involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities 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. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse (*Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018*).

Child sexual exploitation (CSE)

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity, either in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity is consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Female genital mutilation (FGM)

Female genital mutilation is a procedure where the female genitals are deliberately cut, injured or changed, without any medical reason. FGM is usually carried out on young girls between infancy and the age of 15, most commonly before puberty starts.

Spiritual abuse

Coercion and control of one individual by another in a spiritual context. The target experiences spiritual abuse as a deeply personal attack. This 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 (*Lisa Oakley and Kathryn Kimmond, Journal of Adult Protection, 2014*).

Trafficking (adults and children)

Adults

The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means 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 (*The Palermo Protocol, Article 3, 2000*).

Children

The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered "trafficking in human beings" (*Council of Europe, ratified by the UK Government in 2008*).

Unlawful marriage

A marriage in which one or both of the parties involved are married without their consent. This includes when someone is forced to marry against their will, and when an adult is unable to give consent to be married, for example due to being intoxicated, or not being competent to give consent to marriage.

Note: Some safeguarding concepts are defined differently in different legal jurisdictions (England, Isle of Man, Jersey, Gibraltar, Guernsey, Malta, Scotland, Wales). For precise definitions, please check the regulations that apply in your jurisdiction.

Appendix 1

Safeguarding in the culture of the Methodist Church

(Adapted from A Reader's Guide by the Revd Dr Nicola Price-Tebbutt)

Safeguarding is about the action the Church takes to promote a safer culture. It is integral to the mission of the Methodist Church and a part of its response and witness to the love of God in Christ. This safer culture in the Church not only creates a safe space for those who have suffered abuse, but also puts barriers in the way of those who wish to cause harm to others.

The *Theology of Safeguarding* report was adopted by the 2021 Methodist Conference and is therefore a significant report in the life of the Methodist Church. The report emphasises that safeguarding is not something we do because we have to, but because it relates to the heart of Christian faith. The introduction to the report reminds us that safeguarding is a shared responsibility:

Safeguarding policies and procedures concern how Methodists order their life together as the Body of Christ. Everyone associated with the Methodist Church has a role to play in promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults, in working to prevent abuse from occurring, and in seeking to protect and respond well to those who have been abused. Compliance with safeguarding procedures and policies is part of faithful discipleship.

This working together and compliance with policies and procedures helps to create a safer culture within the particular context of the Methodist Church. The *Theology of Safeguarding* report helps us reflect on why we can be confident that compliance with safeguarding procedures and policies is part of our faithful discipleship.

This is because with the report concerns some of the fundamental things Christians believe, for example:

- People are made in God's image: God created humanity to be in a loving relationship with God, others and the whole of creation.
- The Church is a community called into being by God, to share God's love and be a sign of grace and hope in all communities, and this involves seeking to be a community marked by love and care for one another and for all whom it encounters.
- There is a recognition of the reality of the human condition, the depths of what people are capable of and the potential of each person to cause damage and to abuse trust and power.
- The Methodist Church seeks to work for justice and prioritise the welfare of the vulnerable in all aspects of its life, in the ways it does things, and where it puts its energy.

The report helps us to reflect on six key themes that are pertinent to us in our particular context.

1. **Abuse and the human condition** (Section 3 of the *Theology of Safeguarding* report)

The report reminds us how hard it can be to face the reality of human brokenness, and that the Methodist Church has always been realistic about the human condition; acknowledging that human beings are capable of horrific and appalling acts, as well as being capable of acts of inspirational grace and love. Abuse, in all its forms, is sin. Every human being is in need of grace, love, forgiveness and acceptance.

There is increasing awareness and acknowledgment of the existence and effects of abuse (including spiritual abuse) within both the Church and wider society, and recognition of the deep damage, trauma and shattering of self that it causes. Whatever the kind of abuse, many (both within the Church and in wider society) struggle to understand how Christians can be capable of abusive acts; some because it seems to go against everything they say they believe, others because they don't see how it is possible for someone who is 'saved' or 'forgiven' or 'redeemed' to behave in such a way.

In Christian communities we can tend to 'see the best' in people at the expense of seeing 'the worst'. Taking seriously the reality of human sin and capacity for evil is part of understanding the human condition.

2. Theological thinking and how it is used (Section 4 of the *Theology of Safeguarding* report)

The ways in which God is understood and spoken of impacts on human relationships. Section 4 of the report encourages Methodists to think about how theological thinking might be used and misused, for example in relation to:

- how the Bible is used and interpreted and which passages are prioritised
- the language we use when speaking to or about God
- how particular themes or concepts look to those who have been in abusive situations (for example, some understandings of the cross and suffering)
- whose experience is considered and prioritised
- what kind of symbols we use in worship
- which theological themes and resources are helpful, encouraging and life-affirming for those who have experienced abuse.

3. Failure to challenge inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour and to maintain appropriate interpersonal boundaries (Section 5 of the *Theology of Safeguarding* report)

In section 5, the third main theme of the report looks at the failure within the Church to challenge inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour or to maintain appropriate boundaries. All Methodists are encouraged to pay attention to this, as it is a responsibility for us all.

Of course, it is not always easy to tell what is inappropriate because it can range from serious violations to an inappropriate or unwanted touch, or a joke that isn't funny. It is important to recognise differences in people and in cultures: something that is OK for one person may not be for another. Being sensitive to this and giving it attention (including asking someone whether it is OK for them) is a key step.

It is clear that, because people sometimes find it difficult to challenge inappropriate behaviour, such behaviour can go unchecked, and its effects can be diminished or be brushed under the carpet. Methodists are encouraged to think about how challenging harmful behaviour and challenging different forms of abuse and injustice is part of discipleship.

From its beginnings, Methodism has understood mutual accountability and care to both be central aspects of discipleship, relating robust accountability for personal discipleship to spiritual growth.

Christians have a responsibility to reflect on their own behaviour and ways of relating to others, and to challenge other people when their behaviour is harmful, manipulative and undermines others.

4. Welcoming people who have experienced abuse (Section 6 of the *Theology of Safeguarding* report)

Responding well to those who have experienced abuse includes listening well and paying attention to the assumptions we make and the ways in which our patterns of relating and worshipping might unintentionally exclude rather than welcome. This section re-examines the idea of pastoral care, highlighting that listening is not enough and sometimes, if justice is to be part of the response, action is needed. Any response involves examining how power is used in a pastoral relationship, and whose voices and experiences are given priority.

The report particularly picks up on a key Methodist phrase 'All are welcome', which is a phrase about the never-ending boundless love and grace of God. It does not mean that there are no boundaries to the Church's inclusivity and hospitality, not least because those who have experienced abuse and those who have abused should not occupy the same space. A theology of hospitality means that boundaries to this hospitality need to be established not only to prevent harm but also to enable the church to be faithful to its identity as the body of Christ.

5. Power (Section 7 of the *Theology of Safeguarding* report)

Section 7 notes that power is part of church life and encourages us to recognise that power is something we can all have in different ways. The Church is also a human organisation which organises itself and enables the community to live work and worship together. Power takes many forms and its distribution changes. We are encouraged to think about where power is, who has it and how it is exercised in all parts of the Church's life; paying particular attention to those in positions of responsibility and leadership.

6. Forgiveness (Section 8 of the *Theology of Safeguarding* report)

Section 8 of the report reminds us that forgiveness is a gift of God and that no one person can demand or expect it from another. What forgiveness means and what it looks like is something which can vary. It can be a part of healing and letting go, but it is primarily about a person's relationship with God.

- Forgiveness doesn't mean forgetting. It doesn't cancel the effects of the past, but it enables people to live in new relationships to its consequences.
- Forgiveness doesn't cancel obligations or remove responsibility for consequences of actions. It is the person's responsibility to change their behaviour, which may include taking on particular obligations and responsibilities as part of recognising the harm their behaviour has caused and to demonstrate that they are trying to change.
- Forgiveness doesn't mean that the person is wholly reformed or good or that previous patterns of behaviour are left behind. It is a call to a life radically different from the old, in which discipline and accountability are key. Christians believe that God can change lives, but we cannot always know or judge if that has happened.

Conclusion

Safeguarding:

- is a fundamental part of our response to God
- is one way in which members of the church demonstrate care
- helps protect the vulnerable
- signals that the church seeks to be a place which enables human flourishing
- helps maintain the integrity of the Church's witness
- is part of Christian discipleship.

The report concludes:

Bringing about the cultural change needed to fully understand what safeguarding means in every part of the life of the Church is a challenge for everyone within the Church, requiring courage, cost and hope.

Appendix 2

The Domestic Abuse Charter for Churches

The Charter

Domestic abuse is extremely serious, and contrary to a Christian way of living. This church seeks to support those affected by domestic abuse, and their families.

This church/circuit:

- holds that domestic abuse, in all its forms, is unacceptable
- believes domestic abuse is inconsistent and incompatible with the Christian faith
- acknowledges that domestic abuse is a serious and widespread problem that occurs in church families as well as in wider society
- undertakes to listen to, support and care for those affected by domestic abuse
- prioritises the safety of survivors and children affected by domestic abuse
- works with specialist agencies, learning from and supporting them in appropriate ways, and publicising their work
- will play its part in teaching that domestic abuse is unacceptable and contrary to God's purposes and the teachings of the Bible.

(From Methodist Church's Domestic Abuse Policies and Procedures 2021 Edition, methodist.org.uk/media/24055/domestic_abuse_policy_and_procedures_2021_final.pdf)

The **Methodist** Church

Produced by Safeguarding Training Working Group
on behalf of the Connexional Safeguarding Team

methodist.org.uk