
SAFEGUARDING

Darlington District and Newcastle District

Updates

There have been a lot of changes in the last few weeks. This has included the publication of the new Policies, Procedures and Guidance and the decisions taken at Conference.

The new Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church are now available on the Methodist Church website (www.methodist.org.uk/ministers-and-office-holders/safeguarding/methodist-safeguarding-policy/safeguarding-policy-procedures-and-guidance). This document is to replace the policies and procedures from 2011 and the status of this document is mandatory - see below.

Status of policy, procedure and guidance.

This document sets out the policy, procedures and guidance relating to safeguarding within the Methodist Church. The provisions outlined are informed by current legislation and accepted good practice from within the Church, statutory agencies and other community organisations with safeguarding responsibilities.

Following consultation, the policy and procedures laid down in this document have been approved by the Methodist Council and therefore are mandatory. Sections that are clearly identified as 'guidance' are regarded as good practice. Therefore it is highly advisable, although not compulsory, to adhere to these guidelines. (Page 9 - Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church)

The document has been made available online and will be updated and amended as necessary, with any amendments being noted on Page 2. If Circuits or individuals wish to print this off, care needs to be taken to ensure paper copies are kept up to date. The new policy needs to be shared around in Circuits so that all are aware of the policy that the Methodist Church is using. Each Circuit will have their own arrangements of how they disseminate this information. A useful place for this to be discussed and shared would be at annual meetings held with local Church Safeguarding Officers.

Please ensure that all local church and Circuit Safeguarding policies are updated in line with the new model policies.

As mentioned at the last meeting for Circuit Safeguarding Officers (CSOs), two meetings will be held for CSOs in the Autumn in place of our usual one. This will give us an opportunity to look at all the recent changes. The dates and venues for these meetings will be published over the summer.

Alongside the regular CSO meetings in the Autumn, two meetings are being planned with a specific focus on Safeguarding Contracts and Monitoring and Support Groups. These meetings will be aimed at those currently involved with Monitoring and Support Groups, however I would encourage someone from each Circuit to attend as situations that may require a Safeguarding Contract can arise at any time.

News From Conference

The Past Cases Review Implementation Group gave their final report to Conference this year. It was agreed that the ongoing work and learning following the Past Cases Review would come under the responsibility of the Safeguarding Committee.

"The 23 recommendations of the Past Cases Review are now all underway with a change of culture within the church reported as becoming increasingly apparent. Almost 80% of the 1,885 cases that came to light as part of the review have now been completed and it is hoped that those outstanding will be completed later this summer."

Recording Pastoral Visits - It has been agreed at Conference that all those with pastoral 'oversight' or 'charge' must record basic information of visits/contacts, but those who are volunteer pastoral visitors are not required to. However, they can do so and it is deemed that it is good practice to do so.

- name of person visited
- date of visit
- venue
- reason for the visit
- necessary action, if any, who it involves
- date of next visit.
- an additional section of the record could include observations on behaviour, statements made or information shared.

Covenants of Care - Conference has also agreed the final report from the Covenant of Care Working Group. This gives new procedures to follow for welcoming into church life those who may pose a risk. This includes a format for Annual Review and a process by which a Covenant of Care can be ended. The report also recommended that Covenants of Care be known as Safeguarding Contracts. Monitoring and Support groups are required to send an annual review of the Safeguarding Contract agreement to the Regional Safeguarding Officer and the Connexional Safeguarding Team, and conditions of the contract can be reviewed by means of a new risk assessment every three years. A training course will be designed by the Connexion to assist volunteers offering to serve on Monitoring and Support groups

District Safeguarding Officers - Conference agreed the proposed Supervision and Professional Development Model for District Safeguarding Officers and the paper on Calculating Safeguarding Time Required in Districts. Discussion will be held within the Region over the next few months on assessing the Safeguarding needs within the districts. This will then be followed up by a conversation with the Connexional Safeguarding Advisor to confirm that the suggested hours are appropriate.

Risk Assessment - In April, Methodist Council agreed new procedures for Risk Assessments. This includes clarity over when a risk assessment is carried out, clear information for the subjects of a risk assessment and those who provide pastoral support in such situations.

Training - As from this September, there is the requirement that training is completed every 4 years. The Leadership Module is currently being updated and should be in place in 2018. As an outcome of the Past Cases Review, Local Preachers and Worship Leaders are also being added to the list of those required to complete the Leadership Module.

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