

North Kent Methodist Circuit

Policy for Safeguarding Children and Adults at risk

This Policy was agreed at the Circuit Meeting held on 15 May 2019. It will be reviewed in May 2020.

Statement of Safeguarding Principles

Every person has a value and dignity which comes directly from the creation of humans in God's own image and likeness. Christians see this potential as fulfilled by God's re-creation of us in Christ. Among other things this implies a duty to value all people as bearing the image of God and therefore to protect them from harm.

Principles

We are committed to:

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

We will carefully select and train all those with any responsibility within the Church, in line with Safer Recruitment principles, including the use of criminal records disclosures and registration with the relevant vetting and barring schemes.

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

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

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

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

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

Policy

The Methodist Church, along with the whole Christian community, believes each person has a value and dignity which comes directly from God's creation of humans in God's own image and likeness. Christians see this as fulfilled by God's re-creation of us in Christ. Among other things, this implies a duty to value all people as bearing the image of God and therefore to protect them from harm.

The **North Kent Circuit** is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults and affirms that the needs of children or of people when they are vulnerable and at risk are paramount.

The **North Kent Circuit** recognises that it has a particular care for all who are vulnerable whether by disabilities or by reduction in capacities or by their situation. It is also recognised that this increased vulnerability may be temporary or permanent and may be visible or invisible, but that it does not diminish our humanity.

This policy addresses the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk. It is intended to support the Circuit Churches in being safe, supportive and caring communities for children, young people, adults at risk, for survivors of abuse and those affected by abuse.

The **North Kent Circuit** fully agrees with the Connexional statement of **The Methodist Church** 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 **North Kent Circuit** recognises the serious issue of the abuse of children and adults at risk and that this may take the form of physical, emotional, sexual, financial, spiritual or institutional abuse or neglect. It acknowledges the effect such abuse and/or neglect may have on people and their development, including their 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 person can reach their full potential in God's grace.

The **North Kent Circuit** commits itself to respond without delay to any allegation or cause for concern that a child or adult at risk may have been harmed, whether within one of the Circuit Churches or in another context. It commits itself to challenge the abuse of power of anyone in a position of trust. It commits itself to providing informed pastoral care to those in need, including the supervision of those who have been convicted of or who are alleged to have committed criminal offences against children, young people or adults at risk.

The **North Kent Circuit** commits itself to ensuring the implementation of the Connexional Safeguarding Policy of The Methodist Church, relevant legislation and guidance and safe practice in the Circuit and in the Circuit Churches.

The **North Kent Circuit** commits itself to the provision of support, advice and training for lay and ordained people that will ensure people are clear and confident about their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults who may be at risk.

Policy Purpose

The purpose of this Safeguarding Policy is to ensure: (a) appropriate safeguarding procedures are in place and (b) people are clear about roles and responsibilities for children and adults at risk in the care of the Circuit Churches and who use Circuit Church premises. It is to be read in conjunction with the *Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church (2017)*.

The **North Kent Circuit** appoints Mrs Sue Byard as Circuit Safeguarding Officer (Adults) and Mrs Sue Byard as Circuit Safeguarding Officer (Children) and supports her in these roles.

A. Roles and responsibilities

Superintendent

1. Ensure all churches have appropriate and up-to-date safeguarding policies in place.
2. Support those in pastoral charge in exercising responsibility for the implementation of safeguarding policy and practice.
3. Ensure the provision of pastoral support for those involved in issues of abuse and in management of sex offenders.
4. Ensure training opportunities are in place for all workers with children, adults at risk, for staff of the circuit and for members of the local churches in the circuit.
5. Ensure the Circuit Meeting appoints a Circuit Safeguarding Officer (Adults) and a Circuit Safeguarding Officer (Children) and that the details of that person are passed to the District office.
6. Ensure the Circuit Meeting reviews this policy annually.
7. Support the Circuit Safeguarding Officer (Adults) and a Circuit Safeguarding Officer (Children) in their work, providing access to resources to enable them to fulfil their functions.

Circuit Stewards

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

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

1. Support and advise the Circuit Superintendent and the Circuit Stewards in fulfilling their roles.
2. Provide a point of reference to advise on safeguarding issues.
3. Liaise with the District Safeguarding Group(s).
4. With the support of the Superintendent ensure that any incidents and allegations are followed up or referred as necessary.
5. Attend the Circuit Meeting and report on the implementation of Circuit safeguarding policy and practice.
6. Receive risk assessments, policy and training schedules from churches across the Circuit and report on these to the Circuit Meeting annually.
7. Attend the Circuit staff meeting as necessary to discuss safeguarding concerns brought to their attention.
8. Liaise with the individual Church Safeguarding Officers to ensure that they are being compliant with Connexional policy, procedures and guidance.
9. Work with ministers and the District Safeguarding Officer to address safeguarding concerns.
10. Work with the Superintendent Minister in relation to any safeguarding concerns.
11. Inform the District Safeguarding Officer of any safeguarding concern arising or incident in the Circuit within 24 hours of it arising or happening on the referral form (see *Safeguarding Records: Joint Practice Guidance for the Church of England and the Methodist Church - 2015*).
12. Agree with the Superintendent Minister about how and where records are stored and who should have access.
13. Meet with the Church Safeguarding Officers at least annually.
14. Attend training as necessary.
15. Attend District safeguarding events.
16. Work with Local Ecumenical Partners and their safeguarding representatives.
17. Review the Circuit Safeguarding Policy at least annually and send an updated copy to the District Safeguarding Officer.
18. Advise churches where necessary on their policies.
19. Keep up to date with current policies and practice in statutory services and within the Methodist Church.

B. Procedure for Circuit events involving children or adults at risk

Before a Circuit event involving children or adults at risk can be confirmed to potential participants full details of the event must be notified to the District Safeguarding Officer for prior approval. This is to ensure that an appropriate risk assessment has been undertaken, good practice guidelines are in place and any permission(s) required has been identified and what steps have been or are to be taken to obtain it.

C. Responsibility of those planning and leading a Circuit event involving children or adults at risk

The people who plan such an event must ensure that the following matters have been addressed from a safeguarding perspective:

- A risk assessment should be carried out in which the suitability of the activity and the premises is assessed.

- When appointing a team to take charge of the event, this should include safeguarding and first aid personnel.
- Where known in advance particular health or ability needs of the attendees should be taken into account.
- The number of children or adults at risk involved should be identified to ensure appropriate supervision/support.
- Any transportation should follow good practice guidelines.
- All those involved in leading and running the event must be aware of and ensure the above procedure is adopted for all Circuit events that involve children or adults at risk.

D. Key concepts and definitions

- 1 **Adults at risk:** any adult aged 18 or over who, by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness or other situation is permanently or for the time being unable to take care of her or himself, or to protect her or himself from significant harm or exploitation.
- 2 **Safeguarding and protecting children or adults at risk** from maltreatment; preventing impairment of their health and ensuring safe and effective care.
- 3 **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.
- 4 **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 adult at risk or by strangers; by an adult or by a child. It may be an infliction of harm or a failure to prevent harm.

Dated Signed Chair of Circuit Meeting