

# North Kent Methodist Circuit

## Policy for Safeguarding Children and Adults at risk

**This Policy** was agreed at the Circuit Meeting held on 17 May 2017. It will be reviewed in May 2018.

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

The **North Kent Circuit** recognises that no one is invulnerable but that there is a particular care for those whose vulnerability is increased by situations, by disabilities or by a reduction in capacities. It is recognised that this increased vulnerability may be temporary or permanent and may be visible or invisible, but that it does not diminish a person's humanity.

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

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, 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 vulnerable.

### **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 Methodist Safeguarding Handbook (2010)* (updated in 2015) and the procedure *Safer Recruitment for employees and volunteers*.

The **North Kent Circuit** appoints Mrs Sue Byard as Safeguarding Adults Coordinator and Mrs Sue Byard as Safeguarding Children Coordinator 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 Safeguarding Adults Coordinator and a Safeguarding Children Coordinator 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 Safeguarding Adults Coordinator and the Safeguarding Children Coordinator 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 Adults Coordinator and Circuit Safeguarding Children Coordinator**

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.

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

In planning the event attention must be given to the following issues 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.

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

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