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Subject: Safeguarding updates - essential information

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To: Philippa Read <safeguarding@methodistsoutheast.org>

Sent to Superintendents, Circuit/Area Safeguarding Officers, Circuit/Area Administrators

Please ensure that this email is forwarded for the attention of every church leadership team in your Circuit/Area.

Further to the March Safeguarding newsletter, here are some updates:

Training

All Advanced & Foundation Module training courses are postponed, until further notice

Conversations are ongoing between the Connexional Safeguarding Team and the Connexional Safeguarding Committee regarding the situation in which we currently find ourselves. Given that the impact of Coronavirus may have an effect on social gatherings for months to come, they are currently considering the best way to facilitate the training whilst taking this into account. Therefore, progressing the Advanced and Foundation Module courses at a District or Circuit level cannot happen until authorisation and instruction has been received from the Connexional Safeguarding Committee.

Temporary change to Safeguarding Training requirements – the ‘four year cycle’

‘Due to the travel and contact restrictions that have been imposed to cope with the spread of Covid 19 the Methodist Church has had to make many changes to its normal programmes and plans.

This has also had an impact for those members, officers and ministers who are required to undertake Foundation and Advanced Module safeguarding training every four years due to the cancellation of some training courses.

It has therefore been agreed that, for all those who have reached the four year point since they last undertook the relevant training, a temporary six month extension will be applied in order to allow for the current lockdown period and allow new training dates to be planned for in the Autumn.’

Jonathan Hustler, Secretary of Conference
Henry Lewis, Chair Safeguarding Committee

Train the Trainers – update for Foundation Module 2020 version

This course has been able to take place online, in accordance with Connexional guidelines.

Three such courses have run in the South East District in conjunction with the Learning Network, resulting in 37 trainers from 14 Circuits being updated to present the 2020 version of the Foundation Module, once we can meet again.

Please get in touch regarding any need for further Train the Trainers courses to be arranged.

Reopening of Churches

You will no doubt be aware of the Government's statement that places of worship may reopen from today for the purposes of private prayer. Of course, there are multiple steps that need to be taken rather than simply reopening, which your superintendents will have made you aware of. There are frequent updates to Methodist guidance in relation to Coronavirus available here, including the tasks that MUST be completed before the reopening of a Methodist church: <https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/coronavirus/official-guidance/>

Additionally, please find attached a useful document from the Connexional Safeguarding Team entitled 'Promoting effective safeguarding practice as Churches come out of lockdown'; it will be useful to use this in conjunction with the other planning documents.

As individual churches, your leadership team will be working to ensure that informed decisions and plans are made, and liaising with your church councils. Superintendents should be kept up to date with the decisions reached for each church.

Please let me know if you have any queries from a safeguarding perspective regarding reopening.

DBS

As previously reported, temporary changes have been made in order to verify DBS documents remotely. Information can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/covid-19-changes-to-dbs-id-checking-guidelines>

The issue of several ministers and officers receiving incorrect renewal notifications has been raised. Please let me know if there are any issues with this for you locally, so it can be resolved with DDC.

Thank you for your continued commitment to ensuring best safeguarding practice in these unusual times.

Kind regards,

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