

District Safeguarding Officer Report to Spring Synod 2018

Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church

Following the recommendations of the Past Cases Review Report, a significant amount of work was undertaken to review and update the Methodist Safeguarding Handbooks (2010), which resulted in the publication of the revised Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church in June 2017. Primarily to allow for continual updating in light of ever evolving legislation, government guidance and best practice within the field of safeguarding, at a Connexional level the procedures are being made available in electronic version only. However, please be aware that the District has funded the printing of hard copies of the policy (June 2017 edition) for each circuit.

Since the publication of the revised procedures in June 2017, the Connexional Safeguarding Team has continued to receive feedback in relation to policy changes, particularly regarding additions to the model church / circuit policies. In light of this, a number of amendments have been made to the procedures including revised model circuit / church safeguarding policies which should now be adopted by every circuit and church within the Yorkshire North and East District. The revised policies can be found via the following link and all amendments are marked in red: <http://www.methodist.org.uk/for-ministers-and-office-holders/safeguarding/policies-procedure-and-information/policies-and-guidance/>

Creating Safer Space Advanced Module Training (formerly Leadership Module)

As it is now more than five years since the Leadership Module training was initially rolled out throughout the Connexion, over the last 18 months a working group has been undertaking a review of these training materials. This work has concluded with the launch of the Creating Safer Space Advanced Module, which is split into three parts:

- Essential preparation (1 hour 30 minutes)
- Core learning session (4 hours)
- Handbook (a resource for further study)

The aim of the Advanced Module is to consolidate and develop previous safeguarding learning and to:

- explore what this means in delegates' designated role of responsibility within the church;
- further equip participants with skills and resources to be confident in promoting good practice in the church and community; and
- extend participants' understanding of responding well to different groups within the church community.

Please note that following the Methodist Conference 2017, Local Preachers and Worship Leaders are now required to attend Advanced Module Training. Dates for this training within the Yorkshire Plus Region will be publicised shortly.

Past Cases Review (PCR)

The Connexional Safeguarding Team is continuing its work to bring all PCR cases to a close by the end of this Connexional year. A significant amount of work is being undertaken to bring PCR cases within the Yorkshire North and East District to a conclusion and I extend my thanks to all those who have already provided their time and assistance in relation to these enquiries.

Safeguarding Contracts (formerly Covenants of Care)

Following changes to Methodist procedures in relation to Safeguarding Contracts, a District review of all Safeguarding Contracts is being undertaken. It continues to be a policy requirement for all contracts to be reviewed and notified to the DSO on an annual basis as a minimum. If you have any questions about such arrangements then please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

If you wish to know more about the background to the changes in these procedures then a copy of the final report of the Covenant of Care Working Group can be found via the following link: <http://www.methodist.org.uk/media/1086/council-17-41-covenants-of-care-april-2017.pdf>

Resources on the Methodist Church Website

The safeguarding pages of the Methodist Church website have been updated with a number of useful resources. Among other things this includes revised safeguarding forms, helpful contact details and template role outlines. The safeguarding pages can be found via: <http://www.methodist.org.uk/ministers-and-office-holders/safeguarding>