



South Molton & Ringsash Methodist Circuit

Circuit Safeguarding Policy

Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy

Philosophy

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 purpose of this safeguarding policy is to ensure that procedures are in place and people are clear about roles and responsibilities for children and vulnerable adults in our care and using our premises. It is to be read in conjunction with the policies and guidance at
<https://www.methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/policies-procedure-and-information/policies-and-guidance/>

The South Molton & Ringsash Methodist 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 recognised that this increased vulnerability may be temporary or permanent and may be visible or invisible, but that it does not diminish our humanity and seeks to affirm the gifts and graces of all God's people. This policy addresses the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults. It is intended to be a dynamic policy. It is intended to support the Church in being a safe, supportive and caring community for children, young people, vulnerable adults, for survivors of abuse, for communities and for those affected by abuse.

The South Molton & Ringsash Methodist Circuit fully agrees with the statement 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 South Molton & Ringsash Methodist Circuit recognises the serious issue of the abuse of children and vulnerable adults and recognises that this may take the form of physical, emotional, sexual, financial, spiritual, discriminatory, domestic or institutional abuse or neglect, abuse using social media or human trafficking (slavery). It acknowledges the effects these may have on people and their development, including 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 of us can reach our full potential in God's grace.

Commitment

The South Molton & Ringsash Methodist Circuit commits itself to:

Respond without delay to any allegation or cause for concern that a child or vulnerable adult may have been harmed, whether in the Church 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 committed criminal offences.

Ensure the implementation of the Connexional Safeguarding Policy, government legislation and guidance and safe practice in the circuit and in the churches.

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.

Affirm and gives thanks for the work of those who are workers with children and vulnerable adults and acknowledges the shared responsibility of us all for safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults who are on our premises.

Commitment to the support and care of victims and survivors.

The church will give the utmost care, respect and support to those who have been hurt in the life of the church. It will seek to offer safe spaces for those who wish to share their experiences and/or take them seriously and seek advice at the earliest opportunity.

Ultimate responsibility for safeguarding within the circuit lies with the **Circuit Meeting**. The Meeting should appoint a Circuit Safeguarding Officer. It is not appropriate for a minister in pastoral charge or circuit superintendent to fill any gap, because of the potential conflict of roles. The role will usually be on a voluntary basis, although expenses should be met. At least annually the Circuit Safeguarding Officer should be invited to attend a Circuit Leadership Team meeting.

The role of the Circuit Safeguarding Officer:

1. Support and advice to the Superintendent and the church safeguarding officers in fulfilling their roles.
2. Be the point of reference for individual church safeguarding officers throughout the circuit to guide and advise them on Methodist Church safeguarding policy requirements.
3. Liaison with the District Safeguarding Officer as per the District Safeguarding Policy 2019
4. Provide support to the Superintendent, make sure that any incidents and allegations are followed up or referred as necessary, especially in linking with the District Safeguarding Officer;
5. Reporting (in conjunction with the Superintendent and relevant minister) any concerns to the District Safeguarding Officer without delay firstly by phone and then as advised by the District Safeguarding Officer the appropriate recording form.
6. Support the Superintendent with regard to reports required by the District or Connexion
7. Ensure that safeguarding is on the Circuit Meeting agenda as a 'standing' item and present a report to each meeting about safeguarding events (noting the need for relevant confidentiality)

regarding specific cases).

8. Attendance at the circuit staff meeting as necessary to discuss concerns brought to their attention i.e. ensure they are known to the circuit staff team and what action has been taken;
9. Attendance at training as necessary.
10. Attendance at District safeguarding events.
11. Membership of and active participation in District safeguarding meetings as called by the District safeguarding officer
12. Source of up-to-date knowledge of current policies and practice in statutory services and within the church.
13. Organisation of and contribution to safeguarding training for all those working in voluntary and paid roles within the circuit.
14. Maintenance of a record of all people within the circuit who have received Foundation Module training, Foundation Module Refresher training together with dates of attendance
15. Ensuring that all persons receive appropriate Methodist training when working with children and vulnerable adults, hold an office of responsibility, or are in other applicable roles as defined in the Methodist Church policy.
16. Overseeing timely delivery of appropriate training, in liaison with the church safeguarding officers and accredited circuit trainers
17. Ensuring that all circuit churches adopt a safer recruitment policy when appointing staff, or volunteers when implemented;
18. DBS verification on behalf of the circuit.
19. Retaining records of names of those at circuit level who have DBS checks.
20. Be a point of reference for reminders to Church Safeguarding Officers about the need to apply or reapply for checks in accordance with the Methodist Church policy (for updates, the period is currently every five years).
21. Maintenance of a directory of useful names and contact details.

The Circuit Safeguarding Officer will be a member of the District Safeguarding Group (DSG). This serves to inform the role with up to date information which can be implemented more quickly and gives an opportunity for the circuit to be represented at the DSG with relevant issues and practices. <https://swpmethodist.org.uk/dsg/>

The Superintendent and the Circuit Leadership Team (CLT) will have oversight of:

- Systems for overseeing those who need safeguarding training, DBS clearances and key holders;
- Connexional and District Safeguarding information on its website with particular links to contact numbers for those in a safeguarding role and to District and Connexional safeguarding links;
- Safer recruitment of all volunteers;
- Commitment to Foundation and Advanced training as appropriate;
- Use of letting agreements when outside groups use our premises;
- Risk assessments for special events or activities;
- Ensuring that the circuit churches safeguarding policies are up to date.
- Review of the circuit safeguarding policy at least annually and provision of an updated copy to the District Safeguarding Officer.
- The process for making a complaint so that people can be put in touch with the Superintendent or the Chair of District if about the Superintendent.

This policy was agreed at the Circuit Meeting held on 10/09/2025

Signed A. Hindell:

Superintendent Minister and Chair of Circuit Meeting

Circuit Safeguarding Officer

South West Peninsula District Safeguarding page: <https://swpmethodist.org.uk/safeguarding-2/>

Regional Officers for Safeguarding

Andrew Vaughan

vaughana@methodistchurch.org.uk

Chrissie Slaney

Chrissie.slaney@swpmethodist.org.uk

Connexional Safeguarding Casework Supervisor for the South West

Alison Corner

cornera@methodistchurch.org.uk