



North West England District Safeguarding Policy

Connexional Year 2024 - 2025

For review before September 2025

Document Management

Version	Year	Amendments Made
1	2024-25	Adopted by the District Policy Committee 9.9.24

District Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy for North West England District (NWED) *Connexional Year 2024 – 2025*

It is to be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church (most current)

1. The Policy

NWED is committed to safeguarding and protecting all children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable (henceforth referred to as *all who may be vulnerable*) and firmly believes that the needs of any person when they are vulnerable are paramount.

1.1 NWED fully agree with the Connexional Team 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.

1.2 NWED recognises that any of us may be vulnerable at times, but that a particular care is required for those whose vulnerability is increased by circumstance, disability or decrease in capacity. It is recognised that this increased vulnerability may be temporary or permanent, visible or invisible, but that it does not diminish people's humanity as we seek to affirm the gifts and graces of all God's people.

1.3 NWED recognises the serious issue of the abuse of all who may be vulnerable 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). We acknowledge the effects these may have on people and their development, including their spiritual and religious development. We acknowledge our responsibility for ensuring that all people are safe in our care and that their dignity and right to be heard is maintained. We accept our responsibility to support, listen to and work for healing with survivors, offenders, communities and all those who care about them. We take seriously the promotion of everyone's welfare so that each of us can reach our full potential in God's grace.

1.4 NWED commits to:

1.4.1 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 by anyone in a position of trust.

1.4.2 Ensure the **IMPLEMENTATION** of Connexional Safeguarding Policy, government legislation and guidance and safe practice in all our church communities.

1.4.3 The **PROVISION** of support, advice and training for lay and ordained people so that they are clear and confident about their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all who may be vulnerable. NWED affirms the role of the District Safeguarding Group (DSG).

1.4.4 AFFIRMS and gives thanks for the work of those who are workers with people who may be vulnerable, recognising that we all have the shared responsibility for safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults who are on our premises throughout the NWED.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this safeguarding policy is to ensure:

2.1 that everyone within NWED is clear about their own role(s) and responsibilities for safeguarding and protecting all who may be vulnerable with whom we interact, who participate in activities within our church communities and who use our premises

2.2 that we promote and facilitate good practice that will enable appropriate and prompt action to be taken to ensure the wellbeing of all who may be vulnerable.

2.3 that consistent safeguarding procedures are in place across the churches, circuits and church communities of NWED.

2.4 that office holders are safely recruited, trained for their roles and are accountable for their activities.

2.5 that people who have experienced abuse are accepted, empowered and supported in maintaining control over their lives and making informed choices without coercion.

2.6 that those who may pose a risk are held accountable for their actions and their risk assessed and managed to enable them to be supported, and challenged, to engage with our church communities where appropriate.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 District Chair

The District Chair/Secretary of the Admin & Compliance Hub/deputy chair attends the DSG and, on behalf of NWED, should:

3.1.1 Manage and support the work of the District Safeguarding Team (DST).

3.1.2 Through the DSOs, ensure that Superintendent Ministers are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and enable skills training opportunities to be made available.

3.1.3 Use the expertise and advice of the DSOs and DSG, and as appropriate, Connexional Team personnel.

3.1.4 Through the DSOs, ensure that all circuits, churches and church communities create and implement their own policies.

3.1.5 Support the DSOs and the DSG in their work by ensuring that an independent chair is appointed and that the group are capable of taking forward reports of incidents and allegations promptly and in accordance with good practice.

3.1.6 Ensure that, where there are district meetings and events, the district policy is implemented.

3.1.7 Ensure that each Superintendent guarantees that an audit/monitoring form has been completed, confirming that policies are in place in each circuit, church and church community and that these have been annually reviewed.

3.1.8 Ensure that each Superintendent provides the DST with a copy of the circuit audit of churches, together with the identified action plan after the first Circuit Meeting of each connexional year. The monitoring of these will inform the DSG's report to the District Policy Committee.

3.2 Independent Chair of the DSG

As part of the implementation of the recommendations from the President's Inquiry (Safeguarding) 2011, the Methodist Conference affirmed in 2012 that every district must have a group to focus on safeguarding work with children and vulnerable adults and should have an independent Chair¹ who should be:

3.2.1 strongly committed to supporting the DSO.

3.2.2 well-respected.

3.2.3 able to serve as a "critical friend" and challenge robustly the district where necessary. This individual should not be the DSO, the District Chair/Secretary of the Admin & Compliance Hub/deputy chair, or a close relative of those fulfilling these roles.

3.3 District Safeguarding Group

The DSG will promote the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults across the district in line with the agreed Terms of Reference (TORs) for the DSG. This responsibility includes ensuring that:

3.3.1 The group is independently chaired; its business managed in an effective manner, and it has a representative membership of ordained and lay people across the district, including people with experience and/or professional background in safeguarding.

¹ [conf2012-pc-20-presidents-inquiry-safeguarding.doc \(live.com\)](#)

3.3.2 The group provides support and guidance to the DSOs.

3.3.3 Any incidents and allegations are followed up or referred on as necessary with the support of the District Chair (*NB the responsibility lies with the Chair or the relevant person in pastoral charge*).

3.3.4 A response is provided to requests for help, advice, information and training.

3.3.5 Programmes of awareness, training and good practice are initiated.

3.3.6 Publicity is given to its contact numbers.

3.3.7 District and Connexional policies are effectively implemented.

3.3.8 The Chair, Superintendents and District Policy Committee are updated on any changes to safeguarding policy, practice and guidance.

3.3.9 Meetings are organised at least annually by mission area leads to facilitate provision of support and information on safeguarding issues to Superintendents, circuit and church safeguarding officers, other safeguarding leads and safeguarding trainers.

3.3.10 A report is delivered at least annually to the District Policy Committee/Synod from the DSG.

3.3.11 Collaborative work is undertaken with other relevant groups (e.g. Connexional, regional and ecumenical partners, uniformed organisations and professional colleagues) on safeguarding issues.

3.4 District Safeguarding Officers

The DSOs have a key role within NWED and are required to:

3.4.1 oversee church, circuit and district compliance with the Methodist Church's safeguarding procedures.

3.4.2 be accessible to church communities about all safeguarding issues, be fully involved and oversee all situations of concern including the establishment and review of all safeguarding contracts.

3.4.3 liaise appropriately with designated officers of the local authority, the police and ecumenical colleagues as necessary.

3.4.4 undertake safeguarding risk assessments for the implementation of safeguarding contracts and relating to specific cases.

3.4.5 take a lead on working with individual cases in the district, including representing the Church in meetings with external organisations.

3.4.6 discuss cases within supervision with the relevant Connexional Casework Supervisor.

3.4.7 have a clear understanding of the issues facing faith communities as they seek to make their places of worship a safe place for all who may be vulnerable.

3.4.8 be committed to continuing personal development and to the provision of safeguarding training opportunities within the district.

3.5 Circuit meetings

3.5.1 It is the responsibility of each circuit meeting to appoint a circuit safeguarding officer and there should be no gaps in this crucial provision.

3.5.2 It is not appropriate for any minister to fill such a gap.

3.5.3 If it is not possible to fill this role then responsibility will automatically defer to the circuit stewards until a suitable person can be appointed.

3.6 Church councils

3.6.1 It is the responsibility of each church council to appoint a church safeguarding officer and there should be no gaps in this crucial provision.

3.6.2 It is not appropriate for any minister to fill such a gap.

3.6.3 If it is not possible to fill this role then it may be necessary to consider whether support may be available from other churches, during which time responsibility will automatically defer to the church stewards.

4 Local Definitions

4.1 Active preaching ministry - preaching at least once a quarter on the plan, or in other circumstances (such as with ecumenical partners or filling in for 'local arrangement services').

4.2 Active pastoral ministry - giving support to individuals on behalf of the Methodist Church, normally when requested to take such role by a minister or pastoral committee. This might involve:

4.2.1 Having a set group of people to stay in touch with, by phone or in person.

4.2.2 Being present at a worship or social event at least once a quarter in a pastoral capacity, whether alone or with others.

4.2.3 Undertaking occasional visits on behalf of the church to people in their homes, hospital or residential care.

4.2.4 Taking funerals or other offices at least once a quarter.

4.2.5 Where a minister is no longer active the formal exemption form should be completed: [ministerial exemption from dbs-information sheet and application-june 2023.pdf](https://www.methodist.org.uk/ministerial-exemption-from-dbs-information-sheet-and-application-june-2023.pdf) ([methodist.org.uk](https://www.methodist.org.uk))

4.3 Worship Leader *as required to complete Advanced Module Safeguarding Training*

4.3.1 Those Worship Leaders appointed by Church Council, who are subject to all the consequences of being accountable, including for safeguarding issues.

4.3.2 Other leaders of worship, who are not so appointed, and help out with own arrangements are in a different position. However, where they are leading worship on a regular basis (*i.e. taking overall responsibility for own arrangement services or taking other substantial leadership roles within worship more than once a quarter*) but are not formally appointed then the Church Council should consider formal appointment.

4.4 DBS for Trustees of all levels of church meeting

4.4.1 Trustees on the governing body of charities that work with children and vulnerable adults are eligible to apply for an enhanced DBS check if the charity provides regulated activities for those specified groups.

4.4.2 The Charity Commission ‘strongly recommends that charities obtain the relevant DBS checks for which the ‘trustee position is eligible.’

4.4.3 The Methodist Church requires that trustees undertake an enhanced DBS check where regulated activity for children and vulnerable adults is provided.

4.4.4 All trustees must complete the Trustee Eligibility Form annually

[trustee-declaration-and-eligibility-form-20-may-2022.pdf \(methodist.org.uk\)](https://www.methodist.org.uk/trustee-declaration-and-eligibility-form-20-may-2022.pdf)

Other information contained herein

- Appendix 1 - Key concepts and definitions
- Appendix 2 – Local and National Governance Structure for Safeguarding
- Appendix 3 - Foundation Module Safeguarding Training Attendance
- Appendix 4 - Advanced Module Safeguarding Training Attendance
- Appendix 5 - Further Guidance relating to Safeguarding Training

Signed: <i>District Chair</i>	
Print name:	Revd Dr James N Tebbutt
Dated:	9.9.24
<i>Date for review: September 2025</i>	

Appendix 1

Key concepts and definitions

- **A child** is anyone who has not yet reached their eighteenth birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, a member of the armed forces, in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change his/her status or entitlements to services or protection.
- **Vulnerable adult**: Any adult aged 18 or over who, due to disability, mental function, age or illness or traumatic circumstances, may not be able to take care or protect themselves against the risk of significant harm, abuse, bullying, harassment, mistreatment or exploitation. (*Thirtyone:Eight*)
- **Safeguarding and protecting** children or vulnerable adults from maltreatment; preventing impairment of their health and ensuring safe and effective care.
- **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, either by things that are done, or things that are not done, deliberately or in error. This includes (but is not restricted to) neglect, sexual exploitation, trafficking, modern slavery, financial abuse, institutional abuse.
- **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 vulnerable adult, or by strangers; by an adult or by a child; by male or female. It may be an infliction of harm or a failure to prevent harm.

Appendix 2 – Local and National Governance Structure for Safeguarding **To be updated as clearer**

Appendix 3 - Foundation Module Safeguarding Training Attendance

Core List – Required Attendance

- Presbyters with an active preaching or pastoral ministry
- Deacons with an active preaching or pastoral ministry
- Pre-ordination students and probationers
- Lay employees and volunteer workers with pastoral responsibility
- Pastoral visitors
- Anyone working with children in the name of the church
- Anyone working in activities targeted at adults who are vulnerable (*e.g. luncheon club for the housebound*)
- Circuit stewards
- Church stewards
- Local preachers: should enrol and complete the Foundation Module at the earliest opportunity after receiving a Note to Preach. Both Foundation and Advanced modules must be completed by the end of the second year of training and before their second interview on trial, whichever occurs first
- Worship leaders: should enrol and complete the Foundation Module at the earliest opportunity after commencing training. Both Foundation and Advanced modules must be complete by the end of the second year of training and before their appointment by the Church Council, whichever occurs first
- Church and circuit safeguarding representatives
- Choir/music group/drama leaders – *where there are children or vulnerable adults in the group.*
- District staff especially policy committee members, complaints and discipline, mediators
- Core teaching staff at Methodist Church Training Institutions
- Connexional staff with direct safeguarding links e.g. children and youth workers
- Monitoring and Support group members (for Safeguarding Contracts)
- Young Leaders (ages 16-18)
- Members of the Safeguarding Committee

Warmly invited but not mandatory

- Leaders of other groups or organisations that regularly hire or use Methodist premises for work with children and vulnerable adults but do not have access to safeguarding training elsewhere and do not have their own safeguarding policy
- Remaining Choir/music group/drama leaders

- Any other group leaders within the church, who may have adults who are vulnerable within their group.
- Property stewards and other key holders
- Caretakers
- Church/circuit meeting secretaries
- Church/circuit/district administrators
- Remaining District and connexional staff
- Remaining teaching staff at Methodist Church Training Institutions

Renewing Training

The 2016 Conference decided that the frequency of undertaking Creating Safer Space training should change from five to four years from September 2017 in order to make sure that training content can keep pace with changes in legislation and safeguarding practices².

The requirement to renew training every four years will only apply to the highest level of safeguarding training undertaken by any individual. If the highest level of training is Foundation Module, then a repeat of this module will be necessary after four years.

Recognition of Church of England Training

The Methodist Church recognises the Church of England Foundation Module (*previously called C1*) as equivalent and qualifying training to the Foundation Module. Therefore, those who have undertaken that Church of England course will have satisfied attendance requirements listed above in the Methodist Church.

Agreed by Methodist Council and Safeguarding Committee 2019

[appendix-9_safeguarding_training_attendance_july_2023.pdf \(methodist.org.uk\)](#)

² [conf-2016-30-Safeguarding.pdf \(methodist.org.uk\)](#)

Appendix 4 - Advanced Module Safeguarding Training Attendance

Core List – Required Attendance

- Safeguarding Officer – District
- Safeguarding Officer – Circuit
- Safeguarding Officer – Church
- Members of the District Safeguarding Group
- Members of the District Policy Committee
- All presbyters or deacons with an active preaching or pastoral ministry (*including supernumerary ministers*)
- Those who are in paid employment or a voluntary role which includes leadership within the Methodist Church, involving direct work with children, young people or vulnerable adults
- Those with responsibility for supervision (*either training or trained and accredited under the Methodist Church Reflective Supervision Policy 2021-26*)
- Lay persons who are appointed to exercise pastoral leadership within a local church
- Local preachers: should enrol and complete the Advanced Module at the earliest opportunity after receiving a Note to Preach and completing the Foundation Module. Both modules must be completed by the end of the second year of training and before their second interview on trial, whichever occurs first
- Worship leaders: should enrol and complete the Advanced Module at the earliest opportunity after commencing training and completing the Foundation Module. Both modules must be complete by the end of the second year of training and before their appointment by the Church Council, whichever occurs first
- Those who deliver the Foundation Module
- Evangelism/mission enablers
- Circuit stewards
- Members of the Connexional Complaint Panels, Discipline Committees, Pastoral and Appeals Committees
- Those in recognised roles involving pioneering, fresh expressions or evangelism
- Mentors for the Youth Participation Scheme
- Members of the Safeguarding Committee

Warmly invited but not mandatory

- Supernumerary ministers apart from those who have an active preaching or pastoral ministry.

Recognition of Church of England Training

The Methodist Church recognises the Church of England Leadership Module (*previously called C2*) as equivalent and qualifying training to the Advanced Module. Therefore, those who have undertaken that Church of England course will have satisfied attendance requirements listed above in the Methodist Church.

Renewing Training

The 2016 Conference decided that the frequency of undertaking Creating Safer Space training should change from five to four years from September 2017 in order to make sure that training content can keep pace with changes in legislation and safeguarding practices.

The requirement to renew training every four years will only apply to the highest level of safeguarding training undertaken by an individual. Where the Foundation and Advanced Modules are required, following attendance at both courses, only a repeat of the Advanced Module will be necessary in future years.

Agreed by Methodist Council and Safeguarding Committee 2019

[appendix-9_safeguarding_training_attendance_july_2023.pdf \(methodist.org.uk\)](#)

Appendix 5 - Further Guidance relating to Safeguarding Training

- People who have received safeguarding training in other roles (*e.g. as a teacher or police officer*) still need to attend because the training is specific to the church context. Their attendance is also valuable because of the expertise they can share with other attendees.

A new office holder will be required to complete the Foundation Module successfully within six months of taking up such a post and subsequently, the Advanced Module as required.

There is a requirement to renew training every four years but only at the highest level of safeguarding training undertaken. If the highest level of training is Foundation Module, then a repeat of this module will be necessary after four years.

- The DSG requires that each Circuit offer the Foundation Module at least once every six months, although this can be done in collaboration with other Circuits.

Under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Safeguarding Trainers must ensure Privacy Notices³ are available to all attendees to explain why and how the Methodist Church will process their data. A signed consent form is not required as attendance at the session implies implicit consent.

³ [Safeguarding Training Participants Privacy Notice \(methodist.org.uk\)](https://methodist.org.uk/safeguarding-training-participants-privacy-notice)