

# **SAFEGUARDING**



## **Policy and Procedures for Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults**



## **Policy and Practice relating to Coventry Methodist Central Hall**

### **Statement of safeguarding principles**

Every person has a value and dignity, which comes directly from the creation of humans in God's own image and likeness. Christians see this potential 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. Safeguarding is defined as protecting the health and wellbeing of children, young people and vulnerable adults. It is about implementing the necessary measures to prevent harm to children, young people and vulnerable adults who are most at risk of abuse and harm. It is integral to the mission of the Methodist Church to value every human being as part of God's creation. At the heart of the Methodist community is a deep sense of the place of welcome, hospitality and openness, which demonstrates the nature of God's grace and love for all. Our church communities are called to be places where the transformational love of God is embodied and life in all its fullness is a gift, which is offered to all people. Everyone has the right to protection from abuse and to be treated no less favourably than others, irrespective of any personal or protected characteristic. There are no distinctions regardless of age, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion/ beliefs, pregnancy/maternity, marriage/civil partnership and gender reassignment.

### **Principles**

We are committed to:

- the care and nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with, all children, young people and adults
- safeguarding and protecting all children, young people and adults when they are vulnerable
- establishing safe, caring communities, which provide a loving environment where there is informed vigilance as to the dangers of abuse.

We will carefully select and train all those with any responsibility within the Church, in line with safer recruitment principles, including the use of criminal records disclosures and registration with<sup>1</sup> the relevant vetting and barring schemes.

We will respond without delay to every safeguarding concern, which suggests that a child, young person or adult may have been harmed, working in partnership with the police and local authority in any investigation.

We will seek to work with anyone who has suffered abuse, developing with them an appropriate ministry of informed pastoral care.

We will seek to challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust.

Working with the District Safeguarding Officer, we will support risk assessment of those who present a safeguarding

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<sup>1</sup> Or membership of (PVG scheme Scotland).

risk within a church environment. We will ensure appropriate pastoral care is offered and measures are taken to address identified risks including referral to statutory agencies, suspension and the use of safeguarding contracts. We will recognise and apply the restrictions to appointment laid down in Standing Order 010 of the Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church.

In all these principles, we will follow legislation, guidance and recognised good practice.

### **Learning from the Past Cases Review**

In 2010, the Methodist Conference agreed the need for a review of past child and adult protection cases. This took place between 2013 and 2015 and the results were published in *Courage, Cost and Hope: the Report on the Past Cases Review 2013-2015*. Key findings from the review of past cases identified ten themes, which overlap and interconnect in many ways. In summary, these are:

THEME 1 – Abuse and risk are still not always recognised • Behaviour which might be of concern is still not recognised. • In particular, behaviour which is potentially grooming behaviour is not recognised. • Patterns of worrying behaviour are not recognised. page 1

THEME 2 – The huge and ongoing impact of abuse on those who have been harmed “The ongoing pain and distress of victims/survivors is deep and lasting. It is amplified when they feel they have not been listened to. It is still not always recognised/responded to well.” *Courage, Cost and Hope: the Report on the Past Cases Review* (p. 30)

THEME 3 Abuse, which has occurred in a Church setting, is even more distressing and a devastating breach of trust.

THEME 4 There is a need for a further development of listening skills

THEME 5 – People in the Church are still not responding well to serious situations • Well-meaning people can be naïve. • Ministers can be very anxious about safeguarding. This may lead to concerns not being shared and sometimes safeguarding is not seen as a team activity.

THEME 6 – People find it difficult to put respectful uncertainty into practice There is a lack of skill in dealing with contradictory information and a discomfort with challenging situations in which colleagues and friends who have done good things have caused harm.

THEME 7 – Responding well to the congregation in difficult safeguarding situations continues to be a challenge Ministers often struggle to deal with conflicts and tensions within congregations. “The impact of abuse within a Church community is often deep and lasting and sometimes cannot be resolved by those enmeshed in it.” *Courage, Cost and Hope: the Report on the Past Cases Review* (p. 35)

THEME 8 - Recording Practice has improved but record-keeping is still not consistent.

THEME 9 Effective working with other agencies still requires development

THEME 10 There has been and remains, insufficient understanding of the significance of safeguarding concerns by those who hold leadership roles in the Methodist Church. There are many instances when those in roles of leadership within the Church (for example, local preachers, worship leaders, stewards) have behaved in a way that is not consistent with safeguarding. Yet among some in the Church, there is limited appreciation that this may present a risk to others and is not appropriate role modelling.

## **Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy**

### **for Coventry Methodist Central Hall**

This policy was agreed at a Church Council held on **25<sup>th</sup> February 2021**.

The Methodist Church, along with the whole Christian community, believes each person has a value and dignity which comes directly from God's creation 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 Church fully supports the personal dignity and rights of all children, young people and adults, as enshrined in the Human Rights Act 1998 and the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. It recognises that safeguarding work is undertaken within a British legislative and associated government guidance framework, which sets out a range of safeguarding duties and responsibilities.

**Coventry Central Hall** Methodist Church is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults and affirms that the needs of children or of people when they are vulnerable and at risk are paramount.

**Coventry Central Hall** Methodist Church recognises that it has a particular care for all who are vulnerable whether as a result of disabilities or 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 our wish 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.

**Coventry Methodist Central Hall** 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.*

Safeguarding is about the action the Church takes to promote a safer culture. This means **Coventry Methodist Central Hall** will:

- promote the welfare of children, young people and adults
- work to prevent abuse from occurring
- seek to protect and respond well to those that have been abused.

We will take care to identify where a person may pose a risk to others and offer support to them whilst taking steps to reduce such risks. The Methodist Church affirms that safeguarding is a shared responsibility. Everyone associated with the Church who comes into contact with children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable has a role to play, supported by consistent policies promoting good practice across the whole Church. The Church and its individual members will undertake all appropriate steps to maintain a safer environment. It will practise fully and

positively Christ's ministry towards children, young people and adults who are vulnerable and respond sensitively and compassionately to help keep them safe from harm.

**Coventry Methodist Central Hall** commits itself to:

- Promote a safer environment and culture.

- Safely recruit and support all those with any responsibility for children and adults within the church.

The Church will select and scrutinise all those with any responsibility for children and adults within the Church, in accordance with the Church's safeguarding policy and practice guidance. It will train and equip church officers to have the confidence and skills they need to care for and support children, young people and adults and to recognise and respond to abuse. This will be done by providing consistent and accessible safeguarding training.

- Respond promptly and appropriately to every safeguarding concern or allegation.

- Care pastorally for victims and survivors of abuse and other people who have been affected. Care pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns of allegations of abuse and others who have been affected.

- Carry out risk assessments and put safeguarding measures in place where individuals pose a present risk to children, young people or vulnerable adults.

## Church Council

It is the responsibility of each Church Council to appoint a Church Safeguarding Officer and there should be no gaps in this crucial provision. The safeguarding officer should be a member of the Church Council or have the right to attend at least annually to report on implementation of the safeguarding policy. Where an individual covers the role in more than one location, they must be able to cover the activities identified in the relevant role outline and be facilitated to attend meetings to report on safeguarding in each location.

It is not appropriate for the minister in pastoral charge to hold the church safeguarding officer role because of the potential conflict with their own responsibilities. It is acknowledged that to avoid any disruption in safeguarding provision, it may be necessary for the minister in pastoral charge to take responsibility for some or all of the activities temporarily while other arrangements are made. However, this should only be for a very short period to enable the sharing of the role with another church or the identification of an alternative person to take on the role.

The role will usually be undertaken on a voluntary basis although expenses should be met.

Ultimate responsibility for safeguarding within the church lies with the Church Council.

Coventry Methodist Central Hall appoints **Elaine Davenport** as church Safeguarding Officer (Adults) .

and **Elaine Davenport** as church Safeguarding Officer (Children) and supports them in their role, which is to:

- provide support and advice to the minister and the stewards in fulfilling their roles with regard to

safeguarding.

- ensure that a suitable, signed church safeguarding policy is displayed at all times in the church on a safeguarding noticeboard, along with names of current safeguarding officers, national helplines and other suitable information. This must be renewed annually.
- record all safeguarding issues that are reported to the church safeguarding officer, according to Methodist policy and procedure.
- promote appropriate routes for reporting of concerns
- identify and inform those who are required to attend safeguarding training and maintain records of attendance. Work with the circuit safeguarding officer and DSO to arrange training.
- attend training and meetings relating to the role
- work in partnership with the lettings officer, stewards and user groups to promote good safeguarding practice on church premises. This will include gaining written confirmation that hirers of church premises are aware of the church safeguarding policy or are using an appropriate policy of their own.
- check that safeguarding is included as an agenda item at all Church Council meetings and report to the Church Council annually.
- inform all those with responsibility for recruitment, whether paid or voluntary, of their obligation to follow safer recruitment procedures.
- advise the circuit safeguarding officer and/or DSO of any issues with compliance with safeguarding training, policy or safer recruitment requirements and respond promptly to any request from them about audit of safeguarding activities.

#### **a) Purpose**

The purpose of the church safeguarding policy is to check that procedures are in place and provide clarity about the roles and responsibilities of those trusted with promoting the church as a safe space for all its users. It is to be read in conjunction with the Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance (July 2023)

#### **b) Good practice**

We believe that good practice means:

- i) All people are treated with respect and dignity.
- ii) Those who act on behalf of the Church should not meet or work alone with a child or vulnerable adult where the activity cannot be seen unless this is necessary for pastoral reasons, in which case a written record will be made and kept noting date, time and place of visit.
- iii) The church premises will be assessed by the church safeguarding officer with the property steward and/or their representatives at least annually for safety for children and vulnerable adults and a written risk assessment report will be given annually to the Church Council. This will include fire safety procedures. The Church Council will consider the extent to which the premises and equipment are suitable or should be made more suitable.
- iv) Any church-organised transport of children or vulnerable adults will be checked to ensure that the vehicle is suitable and insured and that the driver and escort (where required) are appropriate. (See 6.10.7.1 of the

Safeguarding Policies, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church). A record to be kept in the church file for each driver/car.

- v) Activity risk assessments will be undertaken before any activity takes place to minimise the risk of harm to those involved. Approval will be obtained from the event leader/minister. A written record of the assessment will be retained securely.
- vi) Promotion of safeguarding is recognised to include undertaking those tasks which enable all God's people to reach their full potential. The Church Council will actively consider the extent to which it is succeeding in this area.

These things are to safeguard those working with children, young people and those adults who may be vulnerable.

#### **c) Appointment and training of workers in the church**

Workers will be appointed after a satisfactory DBS disclosure and following the safer recruitment procedures of the Methodist Church. Each worker will have an identified supervisor who will meet at regular intervals with the worker. A record of these meetings will be agreed and signed and the record kept. Each worker will be expected to undergo Foundation Module (2020 edition Modified 2022) safeguarding training, within the first 6 months (agreed by Methodist Conference in 2011 - *Creating Safer Space Report*) of appointment. The other training needs of each worker will be considered (such as food hygiene, first aid and lifting and handling).

#### **d) Pastoral visitors**

Pastoral visitors will be supported in their role with the provision of Foundation Module (2020 Edition modified 2022) safeguarding training upon appointment. If they are undertaking tasks for which a DBS would be required, this will be undertaken prior to appointment.

#### **e) Guidelines for working with children, young people and vulnerable adults**

A leaflet outlining good practice and systems should be given to everyone who works with children, young people and vulnerable adults. This leaflet will be reviewed annually<sup>2</sup>.

#### **f) Ecumenical events**

Where ecumenical events happen on church premises, safeguarding is the responsibility of this Church Council.

#### **g) Events with church groups off the premises**

Adequate staffing, a risk assessment and notification of the event will be given to the church safeguarding officer PRIOR to the agreement for any event or off site activity. Notification of the event will be given to the church council secretary, **Naume Chiimba - Rusike**

If the activity is unusual or considered to be high risk the church safeguarding officer will contact the circuit safeguarding officer in order that it can be ratified or any queries raised.

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<sup>2</sup> The Code of Safer Working Practice can be found at Appendix V of the Methodist Church Safeguarding Policies, Procedures and Guidance.

#### h) Other groups on church premises

Where the building is hired for outside use, the **hirer** signing the letting agreement

([www.tmcp.org.uk/property/letting-property-and-third-party-use](http://www.tmcp.org.uk/property/letting-property-and-third-party-use)) will be given a copy of that agreement [...].

The lettings secretary will consider the various users of the building in making lettings. All lettings will be notified to the church safeguarding officer who will keep the records and take advice as appropriate from both the DSO and circuit safeguarding officer.

#### i) Complaints procedure

There is a formal complaints procedure within the Methodist Church, which allows issues to be raised about actions or behaviour by a member or officer of the Church. In addition, employed staff will be subject to relevant contractual procedures. All complaints will be responded to with care, diligence and impartiality. The provisions of Part 11 of the Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church will be followed.

A complaint should be addressed to the superintendent minister, the Revd. Marcus Torchon. If a complaint is made to another person it should be referred to them. Meetings will be arranged with the person making the complaint and, usually, the person against whom the complaint has been made, in an attempt to resolve it. If the complaint is against the superintendent, it should be sent to the District Chair, the Revd. Novette Headley at 36, Amesbury Rd, Moseley, Birmingham B13 8LE.

Safeguarding officers must be informed of any complaint or issue relating to the potential abuse of children or adults who may be vulnerable. They will support prompt action to respond to the circumstances of any safeguarding concern, whether or not any party involved wishes to make a formal complaint through the Methodist Church.

#### Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Church Council.

#### j) Key concepts and definitions

- i) 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 **their** status or entitlements to services or protection.
- ii) Vulnerable adults: any adult aged 18 or over who, owing to disability, mental function, age or illness or traumatic circumstances, may not be able to take care or protect themselves.
- iii) Safeguarding: protecting children or vulnerable adults from maltreatment; preventing impairment of their health and ensuring safe and effective care.
- iv) 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.
- v) Abuse and neglect may occur in a family, a community or 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. It may be an infliction of harm or a failure to prevent harm.



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|--------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Signed ..... | Chair of Church Council | Reviewed .....  |
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| Signed ..... | Chair of Church Council | Reviewed: ..... |
| Signed ..... | Chair of Church Council | Reviewed .....  |

**Safeguarding is not just a matter for those who are directly involved in working with children, young people and vulnerable adults, it is the responsibility of every individual and organisation which uses the premises.**

### **TO PROTECT CHILDREN / YOUNG PEOPLE AND VULNERABLE ADULTS YOU MUST:**

- Ensure that all activities are open and transparent
- Treat everyone with respect
- Provide an example you wish others to follow
- Plan activities which involve more than one adult being present
- Respect a child's, young person's or vulnerable adult's personal privacy
- Provide opportunities for children, young people and vulnerable adults to talk about any concerns they may have
- Develop an atmosphere in which children, young people and vulnerable adults are encouraged and feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes and behaviours they do not like
- Avoid physical horseplay with children and young people
- Recognise that special care and arrangements are required in sensitive situations, such as when dealing with bullying, bereavement or abuse. These meetings must always take place where they can be observed by a colleague, and must always be reported to the leader and the responsible person.
- When taking groups away in addition to all other requirements, ensure separate sleeping accommodation for leaders and young people and between age groups
- Always remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned

### **WHEN WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE:**

#### **DO:**

- Treat children and young people as individuals
- Treat children and young people with respect

#### **YOU MUST NOT:**

- Allow abusive peer activities ie: initiation ceremonies, bullying, ridiculing.
- Have any improper physical or verbal contact and must ensure that any physical or contact games cannot lead to contacts of this nature

- Allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention- seeking behaviour such as tantrums or crushes
- Exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues
- Show favouritism to any individual
- Make suggestive remarks or gestures
- Rely on just your good name to protect you
- Believe 'it couldn't happen to me'

## RESPONDING TO A CHILD'S / YOUNG PERSON'S DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE OR SUSPECTED ABUSE:

- Listen but **DO NOT** question the child / young person
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing but DO NOT promise confidentiality
- Reassure them that are not to blame
- Record everything said as soon as possible in their words using any particular terminology used by the child / young person - recording name, time, date and signing and dating it
- Explain what will happen next
- Pass all the information on to the Minister or Safeguarding Officer - they will then follow the correct procedures

*If you think a child is in immediate danger, you need to phone the police or Local Authority Children's Services straightaway*

## YOU MUST NEVER INVESTIGATE ACTUAL OR SUSPECTED ABUSE

## WHEN WORKING WITH VULNERABLE ADULTS:

### DO:

- Be careful in the use of language. Always use positive language, eg: a person has a physical. mental or learning disability
- Treat vulnerable adults with the same respect as you would when speaking to or about anyone else always referring to them by name
- Make sure everyone has clear access to everything to enable independence which is always the preferred option but remember to be available to offer help should it be needed
- Check building for accessibility eg: doors, ramps, accessible toilets, clear signs, lighting
- Learn and use proper sign language for anyone who has a hearing impairment or those with learning difficulties
- Always give them the same respect as anyone else eg: knock on the door before entering their home or room, ask permission to join them, respect their home and possessions.
- Respect differences - whether in appearance, sexuality, ability or ideas

- Make sure everyone has access to projected words, images and presentations by being able to sit where it suits them to see the screen and by offering written copies even in advance if necessary.
- Ask first before initiating any physical contact eg: touch on arm
- Respect the person's dignity, feelings and personal space. Ask about personal preferences, forms of address and how much help might be needed.
- Remember the needs of carers for breaks or to be supported in other ways eg: someone to listen to them
- Where necessary and possible, use interpreters and alternative methods of communication with the vulnerable adult or find out where these can be accessed.

## **YOU MUST NOT:**

- Assume that help is needed all the time and with everything
- Assume that all people with a disability have to be served and cannot help themselves or express a choice or preference
- Assume that a person with a disability has no need of books etc.
- Use terms that are derogative such as 'handicapped' or 'retarded' or refer to them by their condition
- Touch or move possessions without permission if visiting their homes - some people use familiarity as navigational aids
- Talk to the companion who is at your eye level if a person is using a wheelchair.
- Exclude people from everyday events or special occasions either by not inviting them or by not ensuring proper communication takes place about them
- Talk in childish language - just because someone has a disability doesn't mean they can't hold a conversation with you
- Impose 'ministry' on vulnerable adults without their informed permission or assume everyone share your own Christian values

## **RESPONDING TO A VULNERABLE ADULT'S DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE OR SUSPECTED ABUSE:**

### **Listening to those who raise concerns:**

If approached by anyone wishing to talk about a concern, follow the basic guidelines below:

- Consider whether the time and place are appropriate for you to listen with care and security. Do not defer listening but seek the other person's agreement to find a suitable place to listen.
- Stay calm and listen to the information very carefully, showing you are taking seriously what you are being told. Do not pass judgement, minimise or express shock or disbelief at what you are being told.
- Listen with undivided attention and help the other person to feel relaxed. Do not put words into their mouth.
- Take into account the person's age and level of understanding. It may be appropriate to ask if they mind you taking notes while they talk or at the end so you can check with them that you have

understood everything correctly – but only if it is appropriate

- Do not make promises you cannot keep.
- Do not promise confidentiality but explain what you will do with the information
- Find out what the person hopes for
- Reflect back key points of what has been said to confirm you have understood what has been communicated.
- Provide a privacy notice and explain in a clear and simple manner the information contained in it
- Either during (if appropriate) or after, make notes of what was said, including the date, time, venue and the names of people who were present. Sign the record.
- The DSO should always be advised when a referral is made to statutory services e.g. Children's Services, Adult Social Care, the police.
- Provide the person with the means to contact you and be clear about how and when you will give feedback. Be prepared to continue to be there for the person. Be dependable.
- Do not contact the person about whom allegations have been made.
- Offer reassurance that disclosing is the right thing to do.

#### **IF YOU RECEIVE A SERIOUS ALLEGATION ABOUT AN ADULT OR ABOUT YOURSELF:**

- Immediately tell the Church / Circuit Safeguarding Officer or Minister - if they were not the person about who the allegation was made, if it is the Minister, go to the Superintendent.
- Record facts, time, date, when you recorded it and sign it
- Try to ensure that no-one is placed in a position which could cause further compromise
- Church / Circuit Safeguarding Officer or Minister / Superintendent will then follow the set procedures

#### **SAFER RECRUITMENT AND DBS CHECKS:**

All applicants for paid employment at The Methodist Central Hall, Coventry will be recruited using the 'Safer Recruitment' guidelines and all paid employees and volunteers working with children, young people and / or vulnerable adults will be required to have a DBS check and undertake safeguarding training and updates as required.

All volunteers who show an interest in working with children, young people and vulnerable adults will be expected to complete Safeguarding Form A - part 1 (REGISTRATION FORM FOR VOLUNTARY WORKERS WITH CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND VULNERABLE ADULTS)

## CONTACTS:

| POSITION                      | NAME                | PHONE NUMBER  | E MAIL   |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|--|
| Minister                      | Revd Stephen Willey | 02476 252411  | <a href="mailto:stephen@centralhall.info">stephen@centralhall.info</a><br><a href="mailto:stephenwilley@live.co.uk">stephenwilley@live.co.uk</a> |
| Church Safeguarding Officer   | Elaine Davenport    | 02476311359   | <a href="mailto:elainedavenport@hotmail.com">elainedavenport@hotmail.com</a>   |
| Superintendent Minister       | Rev'd Jill Marsh    | 02476374602   | <a href="mailto:super@covnunmethodist.org.uk">super@covnunmethodist.org.uk</a>   |
| Circuit Safeguarding Officer  | Keith Drinkwater    |               | <a href="mailto:keithdrinkwater@talktalk.net">keithdrinkwater@talktalk.net</a>   |
| District Safeguarding Officer | Sue Holder          | 07508 232 773 | <a href="mailto:&lt;birminghamsafeguarding@birminghammethodist.org.uk&gt;">&lt;birminghamsafeguarding@birminghammethodist.org.uk&gt;</a>         |
| Coventry MASH                 |                     | 024 7678 8555 | <a href="mailto:mash@coventry.gov.uk">mash@coventry.gov.uk</a> ,   |

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