

SAFEGUARDING POLICY FOR THE NEWCASTLE CENTRAL AND EAST METHODIST CIRCUIT

Statement of Safeguarding Principles

It is the Methodist Church's intention to value every human being as part of God's creation and the whole people of God. 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.

Principles

Safeguarding is about the action the Church takes to promote a safer culture. This means we 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 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 checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

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 social services 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 Circuit Safeguarding Officer, we will support risk assessment of those who present a safeguarding 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.

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

Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy for the Newcastle Central and East Methodist Circuit.

This policy was agreed at the Circuit Meeting held on 16th September, 2026.

It will be reviewed at Circuit Meeting in September 2027 (exact date tbc)

1.The Policy

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 Newcastle Central and East Circuit is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults and affirms that the needs of children and of young people when they are vulnerable and at risk are paramount.

The Newcastle Central and East 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 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.

The Newcastle Central and East 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 Newcastle Central and East 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, child sexual exploitation 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.

The Newcastle Central and East Circuit commits itself to:

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 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.

2. **IMPLEMENT** the Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance, government legislation and guidance to achieve safe practice in the circuit and in the churches.

3. 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.

4. **AFFIRM** and give thanks for the work of those who are workers with children and vulnerable adults and acknowledge the shared responsibility of us all for safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults on our premises.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this safeguarding policy is to ensure 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 Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church (2023). The full implementation of these policies should ensure that:

- The Church (and all associated activities) is a safer place for everyone.
- Communities we serve have confidence that children and vulnerable adults are as safe as possible and that their wellbeing is enhanced in the life of the Church.
- People in the church are alert to unsafe practices and are able to challenge them.

• Office holders are safely recruited, trained for their roles and are accountable for their activities.

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

• People who abuse are held accountable to the law and the risk they pose is managed while they are supported and challenged to address their motivations and behaviour.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1. Circuit Meeting

It is the responsibility of each Circuit Meeting to appoint a Circuit Safeguarding Officer and there should be no gaps in this crucial provision. It is not appropriate for a minister in pastoral charge or Circuit Superintendent to fill any gap, because of the potential conflict of roles but an individual Safeguarding Officer may cover the role in more than one location. The role will usually be undertaken on a voluntary basis, although expenses should be met. Ultimate responsibility for safeguarding within the Circuit lies with the Circuit Meeting. The Circuit Safeguarding Officer should be a member of the Circuit Meeting or have the right to attend at least annually to report on implementation of the safeguarding policy. Where an individual holds 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.

The Newcastle Central and East Circuit appoints Michael Ball as Circuit Safeguarding Officer (Adults & Children) and supports him in this role.

The Circuit Meeting holds the following responsibilities, which may be delegated to the Circuit Safeguarding Officer, if appropriate:
1. Giving support and advice to the Circuit Superintendent and the Circuit Stewards regarding safeguarding matters.
2. With the support of the Circuit Superintendent, prompting recording and reporting of any safeguarding concerns of which they are made aware. This will include

appropriate referral to statutory agencies and the Regional Officers for Safeguarding (ROSs), as required by Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance.

3. Making appropriate arrangements for the secure storage, retention and appropriate sharing of safeguarding information held by the Circuit.

4. Promoting the safety and well-being of all children and vulnerable adults within the Circuit.

5. Presenting a report to each Circuit Meeting about safeguarding events (noting the need for confidentiality regarding specific cases) and reminding relevant parties (where necessary) that safeguarding should be a standing item on the Circuit Meeting agenda.

6. Receiving and reviewing church risk assessments and training schedules for each church in the circuit and sharing with the Circuit Meeting annually.

7. Attending the Circuit Staff meeting as necessary to discuss concerns brought to their attention.

8. Liaising with individual Church Safeguarding Officers to offer guidance and checking they are complying with Methodist Church Safeguarding Policies, Procedures and Guidance. This should include at least one annual meeting.

9. Working with the Superintendent Minister, ministers and the ROSs regarding safeguarding concerns.

10. Attending and active participation at safeguarding training, district safeguarding events and meetings.

11. Working with local ecumenical partners and their safeguarding representatives.

12. Reviewing safeguarding policies for each church in the Circuit prior to presentation to the Circuit Meeting.

13. Supporting the Circuit Superintendent with the annual review of the Circuit Safeguarding Policy and sending a copy to the ROSs.

14. Maintaining of a record of all people within the Circuit who have completed Foundation Module, Foundation Refresher Module (prior to 2020), together with dates of attendance.

15. Ensuring that training is offered to those working with children and vulnerable adults, who hold an office of responsibility or are in other applicable roles, as defined in the Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance.

16. Overseeing timely delivery of appropriate training, in liaison with the Church

Safeguarding Officers and accredited Circuit Trainers.
17. Advising all churches in the Circuit of the requirement to adopt a safer recruitment policy and to carry out required procedures when appointing staff or volunteers.
18. Carrying out DBS verification on behalf of the Circuit.
19. Retaining records of names of those at circuit level who have DBS checks.
20. Providing 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. Assisting the ROSs with the setting up of Monitoring and Support Groups for those subject to safeguarding contracts and reminding the chairs of groups when reviews are due.
22. Maintaining a directory of useful names and contact details.

Where a Circuit Safeguarding Officer carries out the above activities, there is a requirement for supervisory oversight which will be arranged by the Superintendent Minister and carried out by them or a nominated substitute. Records of oversight meetings will be signed and agreed.

Supervision will include consideration of wellbeing and discussions of the areas of activity included within the role on a regular basis.

3.2 Superintendent Minister

The Superintendent Minister holds the following responsibilities:

1. Ensuring all churches have appropriate and up-to-date safeguarding policies in place.
2. Supporting those in pastoral charge in exercising responsibility for the implementation of safeguarding policy and practice.
3. Ensuring the provision of pastoral support for those involved in issues of abuse and in management of those who present a safeguarding risk.
4. Ensuring training opportunities are in place for all workers with children and vulnerable adults, for Circuit Staff and for members of the local churches in the circuit in accordance with Appendix 9 of the Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance.

5. Ensuring the Circuit Meeting appoints a Circuit Safeguarding Officer (Adults & Children) and that the details of that person are passed to the District Office.
6. Ensuring the Circuit Meeting reviews this policy annually.
7. Supporting the Circuit Safeguarding Officer (Adults & Children) in his work, providing access to resources to enable him to fulfil his functions.

3.3 Circuit Stewards

The Circuit Stewards must ensure that agreed procedures are in place for Circuit and ecumenical events which involve children, young people or vulnerable adults.

Procedures for circuit events involving children, young people or vulnerable adults

It is essential that circuit events that involve children or vulnerable adults do not slip through the net because they are not owned by one church. Circuit events must be notified to the ROSs prior to final agreement with the event organiser to ensure that all permissions, risk assessments and good practice guidelines are in place.

Responsibility for those planning and leading the event

All those involved in planning, leading and running such Circuit events must be aware of the procedures.

The event should have been planned effectively and attention given to the following issues:

1. Risk assessment and suitability of the activity and the premises

2. The appointment of a team to take charge of the event, including safeguarding and first aid personnel (particular health or ability needs should be taken into account)

3. Numbers of children, young people or vulnerable adults involved

4. Transportation – ensuring the following of good practice guidelines.

This information is to be sent to the ROSs for approval PRIOR to the event being agreed.

Key concepts and definitions

i) Child: Anyone who has not yet reached their 18th 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.

ii) Young Person: over compulsory school age and under the age of 18.

iii) 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.

iv). Safeguarding: protecting children or vulnerable adults from maltreatment; preventing impairment of their health ensuring safe and effective care.

v). 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.

vi). Abuse and neglect may occur in a family, in a community or 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. It may be an infliction of harm or a failure to prevent harm.

Signed ..... Chair of Circuit Meeting

Dated: 16th September, 2026