



Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy **for the Gloucestershire Circuit**

This updated policy was agreed at the Circuit Assembly held on Sunday, 22nd May, 2016. It will be reviewed annually by the Circuit Assembly.

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 male and female 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 Gloucestershire Circuit recognises that none of us is invulnerable but that there is a particular need to care for those whose vulnerability is increased by situations, by disabilities or by reduction in capacities. 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; we seek to affirm the gifts and graces of all God's people.

The Gloucestershire Circuit is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and vulnerable adults and recognises that their needs are paramount, and acknowledges that this is the shared responsibility of us all.

This policy addresses the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults. It is intended to be a dynamic policy and 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 individuals affected by abuse.

The Gloucestershire Circuit fully agrees with the Connexional statement made 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 Gloucestershire Circuit recognises the serious issue of the abuse of children, young people and vulnerable adults and recognises that this may take the form of physical, emotional, sexual, financial, spiritual or institutional abuse. It acknowledges the effects abuse 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 Gloucestershire 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, and to working with the Statutory Authority. 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.

The Gloucestershire Circuit commits itself to ensuring the implementation of Connexional Safeguarding Policy, government legislation and guidance and safe practice, in the circuit and in its churches.

The Gloucestershire Circuit commits itself to the provision of support, advice and training for lay and ordained people that will ensure everyone is clear and confident about their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable.

Explanation of terms and concepts

In this document and generally, the terms and concepts below are used in the following ways:

Adult/child protection: This is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. It refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect children/vulnerable adults who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm, including neglect.

Abuse: This 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.

Children: those under the age of 18;

DBS: Disclosure and Barring Service, made up of the Criminal Records Bureau and the Independent Safeguarding Authority. DBS checks are required for some jobs and voluntary roles to help make safer recruitment decisions and to prevent unsuitable people working with children and vulnerable adults.

Leader: anyone who has supervisory, organisational or decision-making responsibilities in the context of the work with children, young people or vulnerable adults;

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

Circuit Safeguarding Officer: the officer appointed by the Circuit Assembly to oversee the implementation of safeguarding policy and practice, and to act as a point of reference for safeguarding matters in the circuit.

Statutory Authority: within the Circuit, this is Gloucestershire County Council. A safeguarding concern can be reported (known as raising a concern) by telephoning 01452 426868 for adults or 01452 426565 for children.

Vulnerable adults: Refers to any adult aged 18 or over who, by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness or other situation is permanently or for the time being unable to take care of her/himself, or to protect her/himself from significant harm or exploitation.

Worker: refers to those who work with children or vulnerable adults, whether paid or voluntary.

All of us, and especially our church workers in the circuit, should be aware of various different types of abuse:-

Physical Abuse: where the person's body is hurt or injured;

Emotional Abuse: where persons do not receive appropriate love and affection, may be frightened by threats or taunts, or are given responsibility inappropriate for their years;

Sexual Abuse: where adults (and sometimes other children, young people or vulnerable adults) use children or vulnerable adults to satisfy their sexual desires. This includes acts that a vulnerable adult has not or cannot consent to;

Neglect: where adults persistently fail to care for children, young people and vulnerable adults, or fail to protect them from danger, thus impairing health and development;

Financial Abuse: This can take the form of fraud, theft or taking property without permission. This could involve small or large amounts of money.

Purpose

The purpose of this safeguarding policy is to ensure procedures are in place and people are clear about roles and responsibilities for children, young people and vulnerable adults in our care and using our premises. It is to be read in conjunction with the Methodist Safeguarding Handbook (2010).

Roles and responsibilities

The **Circuit Superintendent**, with the assistance of the Circuit Safeguarding, Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Officer, will:

1. Ensure all churches have appropriate and up-to-date safeguarding policies in place;
2. Support those in pastoral charge in exercising responsibility for the implementation of safeguarding policy and practice;
3. Ensure the provision of pastoral support for those involved in issues of abuse and in management of sex offenders;
4. Ensure training opportunities are in place for all workers with children, young people, and vulnerable adults, for staff of the circuit and for members of the local churches in the circuit;
5. Ensure the Circuit Assembly appoints a Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Officer and that the details of that person are passed to the District office;
6. Ensure the Circuit Assembly reviews this policy annually;
7. Support the Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Officer in his work, providing access to resources to enable him to fulfil his function.

The **Circuit Executive** will:

Ensure agreed procedures are in place for Circuit and ecumenical events that involve children, young people or vulnerable adults.

The **Circuit Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Officer** will:

1. Support and advise the Circuit Superintendent and Staff, the Circuit Executive/Officers and Church representatives in fulfilling their roles;
2. Provide a point of reference to advise on safeguarding issues;
3. Ensure that Circuit safeguarding records are updated and safely secured;
4. Organise and advertise safeguarding training opportunities for volunteers and staff within the Circuit and District;
5. Liaise with the District Safeguarding Group(s);
6. With the support of the Superintendent ensure that any incidents and allegations are followed up or referred as necessary.

The Gloucestershire Circuit has appointed Peter Gardner as the Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Officer, and supports him in his role.

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

It is essential that Circuit events that involve children, young people or vulnerable adults do not slip through the net because they are not owned by one church.

- i. All those involved in leading and running the event must follow standard safeguarding procedures, including treating people with respect and dignity, and not meeting or working alone with a child, young person or vulnerable adult where the activity cannot be seen.
- ii. The event must be planned effectively and attention given to the following issues:
 - Risk assessment and suitability of the activity and the premises.
 - The appointment of a team to take charge of the event, including safeguarding and first aid personnel who have received appropriate training. Particular health or ability needs should be taken into account.
 - Numbers of children, young people or vulnerable adults involved.
 - Transportation, following good practice guidelines.

Safeguarding concerns and complaints procedure

Any safeguarding concern within our Circuit should be raised with the local church safeguarding officer, the local minister, one of the local church stewards, and/or with the Circuit safeguarding officer or the Superintendent Minister, who will respond according to the Safeguarding Handbook (2010) and Connexion, District and/or Circuit guidelines (including on the national Methodist Church website), including where appropriate by seeking outside intervention from the statutory authorities. Any person may in any event seek the intervention of the statutory authorities, although sometimes it may be appropriate to raise the matter first with the church safeguarding officer, the minister, one of the church stewards, and/or the Circuit safeguarding officer or the Superintendent Minister.

More general and non-safeguarding complaints within the Circuit can sometimes be dealt with internally by the organisations involved. However, if a complaint is made to any individual, it should be notified to the local minister, one of the local church stewards, and/or the local church safeguarding officer, who will arrange to meet with the complainant and, if appropriate, attempt to resolve the complaint. If the complaint cannot be resolved, consideration will be given to invoking the formal complaints system of the Methodist Church. This will involve initially speaking with the Local Complaints Officer, the Revd James Tebbutt in his capacity as the Superintendent Minister (or if necessary, for example in his absence, the Deputy Superintendent Minister, or the District Chair can be contacted).

Dated: 14th May 2017

Signed : Revd Dr James Tebbutt, Chair of Circuit Assembly