



The **Methodist** Church

Durham City Methodists Safeguarding Policy

Incorporating the Chinese Church as a class of DCM

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.

Principles

We are committed to:

- the care and nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with, all children, young people and adults
- the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults when they are vulnerable
- the establishing of 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 the relevant vetting and barring schemes.

We will respond without delay to every complaint made which suggests that a child, young person or adult may have been harmed, cooperating 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 the risk assessment of those who present a safeguarding risk within a church environment. We will seek to offer pastoral care and support, including supervision and referral to the proper authorities, suspension and the use of safeguarding contracts to any member of our Church community known to have offended against a child, young person or vulnerable adult.

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

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy for Durham City Methodist Church (DCM) incorporating the Chinese Church as a Class of DCM

This policy was agreed at the Durham City Methodist Church Council on 20th June 2023

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.

Durham City Methodist Church incorporating the Chinese Church which is a class of DCM 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.

Durham City Methodist Church incorporating the Chinese Church 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.

Durham City Methodist Church incorporating the Chinese Church 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.

Durham City Methodist Church Incorporating the Chinese Church 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.

Durham City Methodist Church incorporating the Chinese Church 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.
2. Ensure the IMPLEMENTATION of Connexional Safeguarding Policy; government legislation and guidance and 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 those who work with children and vulnerable adults and also acknowledge the shared responsibility of all of us for safeguarding vulnerable adults who are on our premises.

Durham City Methodist 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 the 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 to fill any gap, because of the potential conflict of roles. 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.

Durham City Methodist Church Council which incorporates the Chinese Church appoints Mr John Scott (children and young people) and Mr Stuart Lawson (adults and vulnerable people) and Mr Stuart Lawson (until 31 October 2023 for Chinese Church pending the appointment of a member of the Chinese Church) to Church Safeguarding Officers, the role of 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 available at all times in the church, along with the 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 safeguarding officer, according to Methodist safeguarding policy
- 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 Church Safeguarding Officers to arrange training.
- Attend training and meetings related to the role.
- Work in partnership with others including stewards and user groups to promote good safeguarding practice on church premises. This may 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 District Safeguarding Officer 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.

Purpose

The purposes of this safeguarding policy are 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 Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church (2020).

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 note of this 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 the risk assessment report will be given annually to the Church Council in written form. 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 the vehicle is suitable and insured and that the driver and escort are appropriate. An agreed record to be kept in the church file for each driver/car.
- v) 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.

Appointment and training of workers.

Workers will be appointed after a satisfactory DBS disclosure and following 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)

safeguarding training, within the first 6 months of appointment. The other training needs of each worker will be considered (eg food hygiene, first aid, lifting and handling, etc).

Pastoral visitors

Pastoral visitors will be supported in their role with the provision of safeguarding training upon appointment. If they are undertaking tasks for which a criminal record check would be required, this will be undertaken prior to appointment.

Guidelines for working with children, young people and vulnerable adults

A leaflet outlining good practice and systems will be given to everyone who works with children, young people and vulnerable adults. This leaflet will be reviewed annually. Church Councils may produce their own material or use appropriate connexional leaflets (eg the Quick Reference Guide or Code of Safer Working Practice).

Ecumenical events

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

Events with church groups off the premises

Adequate staffing, a risk assessment and notification of the event to be given to the church safeguarding officers PRIOR to the agreement for any event or off site activity. Notification of the event will be given to the church council secretary Mr Paul Harrison.

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.

Other groups on church premises

Where the building is hired for outside use, the person signing the letting agreement (www.tmc.org.uk/property/letting-property-and-third-party-use) will be given a copy of the church safeguarding policy and any other documents needed. 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 District Safeguarding Officer and Circuit Safeguarding Officer.

Complaints procedure

There is a formal complaints procedure within the methodist church, which allows concerns 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.

A complaint should be addressed to the superintendent minister, Rev John Squares. If a complaint is made to another person it should be referred to him. 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, Rev Richard Andrew.

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 wishes to make a formal complaint through the Methodist Church.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Church Council. The date of the next review is **June**

2024

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 his/her status or entitlements to services or protection.
- ii) Vulnerable Adults: 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.
- iii) Safeguarding and 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, 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. It may be an infliction of harm or a failure to prevent harm.

Signed

Chair of Church Council

Dated 20th June 2023