

Bude and Holsworthy Methodist Circuit (37/11)

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES, SAFEGUARDING POLICY, & CHURCH GUIDELINES (2023)

Author	Version	Date Adopted:
BandH (37/11) Safeguarding Team.	4.0	Circuit: 25/11/2024

Part One: Introduction and Statement of Safeguarding Principles

The Policy

This policy addresses the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults. The policy is one which will develop in the ensuing years as Safeguarding needs and procedures are identified. The policy 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.

Statement of Safeguarding 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.

Part Two: Circuit Safeguarding Policy

**SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY
Bude and Holsworthy Circuit**

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 Bude and Holsworthy Circuit (the Circuit) and

(Name of Church.....)

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

The Bude and Holsworthy Circuit (the Circuit) and

(Name of 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 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 Bude and Holsworthy Circuit (the Circuit) and

(Name of 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.

The Bude and Holsworthy Circuit (the Circuit) and

(Name of 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, 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 Bude and Holsworthy Circuit (the Circuit) and

(Name of 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. 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.

Purpose

The purpose of this safeguarding policy is to ensure that 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 (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.

Roles and Responsibilities

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 Circuit Meeting appoints the Circuit Safeguarding Officer(s) who are supported by the Superintendent Minister.

This Circuit appoints:

- a) Mrs Ros Watson (Deputy: Revd Graham Slingo)
(Name) as Circuit Safeguarding Officer (Adults)
- b) Mrs Ros Watson (Deputy: Revd Graham Slingo)
(Name) as Circuit Safeguarding Officer (Children)

as Circuit Safeguarding Officer(s)

Church Council

Legal responsibility for safeguarding rests with the members of church council. The safeguarding officer should be a member of the Church Council or have the right to attend at least annually to report on the 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.

The Church Council appoints:

- a).....
(Name) as Church Safeguarding Officer (Adults)
- b).....
(Name) as Church Safeguarding Officer (Children)

as Church Safeguarding Officer(s),

Role descriptions for both Circuit and Church Safeguarding Officers can be found at Appendices ‘A’ and ‘B’

Contact Details

Relevant safeguarding contact details are regularly updated; such updates are given to Church Safeguarding Officers to be displayed on all church premises.

Superintendent Minister

The Superintendent Minister will:

- Ensure that all churches have appropriate and up-to-date safeguarding policies in place.
- Support those in pastoral charge in exercising responsibility for the implementation of safeguarding policy and practice.
- Ensure the provision of pastoral support for those involved in issues of abuse and in the management of those who present a safeguarding risk.
- Ensure that training opportunities are in place for all workers with children, vulnerable adults, for staff of the circuit and for members of the local churches in the circuit, in accordance with Appendix 9 of the Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance.
- Ensure that the Circuit Meeting appoints a circuit safeguarding officer/s and that the details of each person are passed to the district office.
- Ensure that the Circuit Meeting reviews this policy annually.
- Support the circuit safeguarding officer (Adults) and the circuit safeguarding officer (Children) in their work, providing access to resources to enable them to fulfil their functions.

Circuit stewards

Circuit stewards must ensure that agreed procedures are in place for all circuit and ecumenical events that involve children or vulnerable adults.

Part Three: Good Practice

Good Practice

We believe good practice means that:

- All people are treated with respect and dignity.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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 (where required) are appropriate. An agreed record kept in the church file for each driver/car.
- 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.
- 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 necessary to safeguard those working with children, young people and those adults who may be vulnerable.

Appointment and training of workers in the church

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

Pastoral visitors

In terms of safeguarding, Pastoral Visitors will be supported in their role with the provision of basic safeguarding training (Foundation Module) upon appointment. If they are undertaking tasks for which a criminal record check (DBS) would be required, this will be undertaken prior to appointment.

Guidelines for working with children, young people and vulnerable adults

A leaflet will be produced and reviewed annually to be given to each worker with children, young people and vulnerable adults outlining good practice and systems. ****Check**** The leaflet will be reviewed annually with this policy [Church Councils may produce their own material or use appropriate Connexional leaflets (Quick Reference Guide and Code of Safer Working Practice Leaflet)].

Ecumenical events

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

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.

Responsibility for those planning and leading the event

All those involved in leading and running the event must be aware of the procedures involved. The event should have been 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 (particular health or ability needs should be taken into account)
- Numbers of children, young people or vulnerable adults involved.
- Transportation following good practice guidelines.

Events with Church Groups off the Premises

Adequate staffing, a risk assessment and notification of the event are to be given to the Church Safeguarding Officer PRIOR to the agreement for any event or off site activity. 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 Church Safeguarding Officer should be informed. The Church Safeguarding Officer will keep the records and take advice as appropriate from Circuit Safeguarding Officer.

Part Four: Safeguarding 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.

All complaints should be addressed to the superintendent minister. If a complaint is made to another person it should be referred to the superintendent. 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.

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.

In cases of emergency, for instance, when a child or young person or vulnerable adult is at risk or in danger, then the police may be contacted via the 999 system. Lesser concerns may be reported to police via the 101 system or to the local Social Services, NSPCC, or Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub.

Part Five: Key concepts and definitions

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 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.
- Worker: anyone working with children or vulnerable adults in the name of the Methodist Church, whether in a paid or voluntary capacity

Key concepts:

- Safeguarding: 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 any activity which is undertaken to protect children/specific adults who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm, including neglect.
- 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.

Part Six: Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Circuit Meeting/ Church Council, the first review to be twelve months after its adoption.

Signed: at circuit meeting, paper copy on file
Revd Meg Slings (Superintendent) Chair of Circuit Meeting

Date: ...25th November 2024.....

Signed

Name: Chair of Church Council

Date:

Role Descriptions

Appendix 'A'

Role of Circuit Safeguarding Officer (CSO)

(Reporting to: The Superintendent minister)

1. Support and advice to the circuit superintendent and the circuit stewards regarding safeguarding matters.
2. With the support of the circuit superintendent, prompt recording and reporting of any safeguarding concerns of which they are made aware. This will include appropriate referral to statutory agencies and DSOs, 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 check 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 DSO regarding safeguarding concerns.
10. Attending and active participation at safeguarding training, district safeguarding events and meetings.
11. Work 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 DSO.
14. Maintaining of a record of all people within the circuit who have received 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, holding 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. 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 DSO with setting up 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.

Accountability

The Circuit Safeguarding Officer will be responsible to the Circuit Meeting, through the superintendent minister.

DBS check

Due to the nature of the post, the post holder will be required to submit to a DBS check, to be reviewed on a five-yearly basis.

Appendix 'B'

Church safeguarding officer: Role description

Main tasks

The following tasks will form a core part of the church safeguarding officer's role:

- provision of support and advice to the minister and the stewards in fulfilling their roles with regard to safeguarding
- ensuring 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
- recording of all safeguarding issues that are reported to the church safeguarding officer, according to Methodist policy and procedures
- promotion of appropriate routes for reporting of concerns
- identify 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 others including stewards and user groups to promote good safeguarding practice on church premises. This will include confirming in writing 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.

Person specification

- Some knowledge and experience of working with children, young people or vulnerable adults would be helpful.
- A basic understanding of safeguarding issues and a willingness to attend any necessary training.

- Good communication and administrative skills.

Accountability

The Church Safeguarding Officer will be responsible to the Church Council, through the minister.

DBS check

Due to the nature of the post, the post holder will be required to submit to a DBS check, to be reviewed on a five-yearly basis.