



UNITED CHURCH DORCHESTER



POLICY

The **Methodist** Church 



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 with¹ the relevant vetting and barring schemes.

We will respond without delay to every complaint made which suggests that an adult, child or young person 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.

We will seek to offer pastoral care and support, including supervision and referral to the proper authorities, 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.



¹ The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy for United Church Dorchester

This policy was agreed at a Council of Stewards held on 7 February 2018

The Methodist and URC Churches, along with the whole Christian community, believe 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.

United Church Dorchester 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.

United Church Dorchester 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 adults who are at risk of abuse. 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, adults at risk, for survivors of abuse, for communities and for those affected by abuse.

United Church Dorchester fully agrees with the Connexional 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.

United Church Dorchester 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 or institutional abuse or neglect. 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.

1. We commit ourselves to **RESPOND** without delay to any allegation or cause for concern that a child or adult at risk 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. We commit ourselves to ensuring the **IMPLEMENTATION** of Connexional Safeguarding Policy; government legislation and guidance and safe practice in the circuit and in the churches.
3. We commit ourselves to 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 at risk.
4. We **AFFIRM** and give thanks for the work of those who are workers with children and adults at risk and acknowledge the shared responsibility of all of us for safeguarding adults at risk who are on our premises.

United Church Dorchester appoints Mrs Heather Bland as Church Safeguarding Officer (Adults) and Mrs Janice Young as Church Safeguarding Officer (Children and Young People) and supports them in their role which is to:

- i) support and advise the minister and the stewards in fulfilling their roles
- ii) provide a point of reference to advise on safeguarding issues
- iii) liaise with Circuit and District Safeguarding Officers
- iv) promote safeguarding best practice within the local church with the support of circuit ministers
- v) ensure proper records are kept of all incidents/concerns according to Methodist policy and practice see [Safeguarding Records: Joint Practice Guidance for the Church of England and the Methodist Church - Updated Jan 2015](#).
- vi) ensure that all safeguarding training which is required is regularly (triennially) undertaken by those in post and appropriate records kept and made available
- vii) attend training and meetings organised to support the role
- viii) oversee safeguarding throughout the whole life of the church e.g. lettings, groups property, etc.
- ix) report to the Council of Stewards annually
- x) ensure the Church completes a yearly audit/monitoring on safeguarding confirming that policies are in place for the church and all groups and lettings in the church and that these have been annually reviewed
- xi) ensure the Church completes a risk assessment on each area of activity in the church and this is stored and reviewed at least annually. This should be made available if asked for
- xii) ensure that the Church recruits safely for all posts
- xiii) ensure that the Church has a safeguarding noticeboard with copy of the current, signed safeguarding policy, contact numbers for local and national helplines and other suitable information

a) 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 (2017).

b) Good Practice

We believe good practice means that:

- 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 adult at risk 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 adults at risk and the risk assessment report will be given annually to the Council of Stewards in written form. This will include fire safety procedures. The Council of Stewards 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 adults at risk will be checked to ensure the vehicle is suitable and insured and that the driver and escort are appropriate. An agreed record 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 Council of Stewards 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 working with vulnerable people

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 basic safeguarding training, 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.) and each worker will have an annual review conducted by a named member of the Council of Stewards and another worker within the organisation.

d) Pastoral visitors

In terms of safeguarding, Pastoral Visitors will be supported in their role with the provision of basic safeguarding training upon appointment and then triennially.

e) Ecumenical events

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

f) Events with church groups off the premises

Adequate staffing, a risk assessment and notification of the event to 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 Mrs Heather Bland. The Church Safeguarding Officer will forward it immediately to the Circuit Safeguarding Officer in order that an appropriate response can be made. The District Safeguarding Officer and District Safeguarding Group will need to be informed of all off site events.

g) Other groups on church premises

Where the building is hired for outside use, the person signing the letting agreement will be given a copy of this policy and the leaflet². 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 CSO.

h) Complaints procedure

It is hoped that complaints can generally be dealt with internally by the organisations. However, a complaint may be made to a person who will be appointed by the Council of Stewards, currently Mrs Heather Bland. If a complaint is made to another person, it should be passed to Mrs Heather Bland who will arrange to meet with the complainant and attempt to resolve the complaint. If the complaint cannot be resolved, consideration will be given to invoking the complaints system of the Methodist Church which will involve initially speaking with the Local Complaints Officer who is Jane Fisher, District Safeguarding Officer.

i) Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Council of Stewards. The date of the next review is January 2019

k) Key concepts and definitions

- i) Adult at risk: An adult at risk of harm is defined as someone who has needs for care and support (whether or not the needs are being met), and is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect and is unable to protect themselves.
- ii) Safeguarding and protecting children or adults at risk from maltreatment; preventing impairment of their health and ensuring safe and effective care.
- iii) 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.
- iv) 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.

Dated _____

Signed _____ Chair of Council of Stewards

Signed _____ Superintendent Minister (Methodist)

Signed _____ URC Minister

The **Methodist** Church 

