

This policy is effective 1st November 2022. Draft distributed to Leadership Team and reviewed by Superintendent Minister and District Safeguarding Officer (DSO).

Re:new Church is non traditional Church that gathers weekly under the 'New Places For New People' initiative of the Methodist Church and may from time to time organise other events such as Alpha Courses and home groups. As we do not meet on Methodist Property and are not constituted as a traditional Methodist Society we have adopted those sections of the Model Methodist Church policy which are relevant and necessary.

The Methodist Church believes each person has a value and dignity which comes directly from God's creation in God's own image and likeness and sees 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. Re:new 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.

We recognise that we have a particular care for all who are vulnerable whether as a result of disabilities or 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 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. It is intended to be a dynamic policy.

We fully agree 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 Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church – Updated October 2019".

We recognise the serious issue of the abuse of children and vulnerable adults and recognise 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). We acknowledge the effects these may have on people and their development, including spiritual and religious development and accept responsibility for ensuring that all people are safe in our care and that their dignity and right to be heard is maintained. We accept our responsibility to support, listen to and work for healing with survivors, offenders, communities and those who care about them and take seriously the promotion of welfare so that each of us can reach our full potential in God's grace.

We commit ourselves to:

1. RESPOND without delay to any allegation or cause for concern that a child or vulnerable adult may have been harmed or may suffer harm, 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. IMPLEMENT the Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance; government legislation and guidance and safe practice in the circuit and in the churches.
3. PROVIDE support, advice and training for lay and ordained people to ensure that 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 children and vulnerable adults who are on our premises.

Leadership Team And Safeguarding Officer

It is the responsibility of the Leadership Team to appoint a Church Safeguarding Officer and there should be no gaps in this provision. It is not appropriate for the minister to fill any gap, because of the potential conflict of roles. 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 Leadership Team.

Members of the **leadership team** are Alan Irvin, Trevor Blacklock (Safeguarding Officer), Jennifer Blacklock, Cate Irvin and Kate Welsh.

As of 1st November 2022 Trevor Blacklock has been appointed as church **Safeguarding Officer** for children and adults.

The **Safe Guarding Officer** will adhere to the Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church – Updated October 2019 which includes:-

- 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 displayed at all times on the churches social media platforms, and shared with the REFUSE cafe SG Officer along with 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 church safeguarding officer, according to Methodist policy and practice and promote the requirement for others to do the same.
- identify and inform 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
- check that safeguarding is included as an agenda item at all Leadership meetings and report to the Leadership Team 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.

Policy

a) Purpose

The purpose of the church safeguarding policy is to check that procedures are in place and provide clarity about the roles and responsibilities of those trusted with promoting the church as a safe space for all its users. It is to be read in conjunction with the Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance (2019).

b) 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 record [...] will be made and kept noting date, time and place of visit. Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church – Updated October 2019

iii) The SG Officer should be familiar with safety procedures relating to the cafe including emergency evacuation procedures and highlight any concerns to the cafe management and Re:new Leadership Team and liaise with the cafes Safe Guarding Officer regarding common risks.

iv) Any church-organised transport of children or vulnerable adults will be checked to ensure that the vehicle is suitable and insured and that the driver and escort are appropriate. A record to be kept in the church file for each driver/car.

v) 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 [...].

vi) Promotion of safeguarding is recognised to include undertaking those tasks which enable all God's people to reach their full potential. The Leadership Team will actively consider the extent to which it is succeeding in this area.

c) Appointment and training of workers in the church

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 (agreed by Methodist Conference in 2011 -Creating Safer Space Report) of appointment. The other training needs of each worker will be considered (such as food hygiene, first aid and lifting and handling).

d) Pastoral visitors

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

e) Guidelines for working with children, young people and vulnerable adults A leaflet outlining good practice and systems should be given to everyone who works with children, young people and vulnerable adults. This leaflet will be reviewed annually³.

f) Ecumenical events

³ The Code of Safer Working Practice can be found at Appendix V of the Methodist Church Safeguarding Policies, Procedures and Guidance. It will be available from Methodist Publishing

<https://www.methodistpublishing.org.uk/books/pe750-sg-16/safeguarding> (currently under review).

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g) Events with church groups off the premises

Adequate staffing, a risk assessment and notification of the event will 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.

i) Complaints procedure

There is a formal complaints procedure within the Methodist Church, which allows issues 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. The provisions of Part 11 of the Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church will be followed.

A complaint should be addressed to the superintendent minister, the Revd. Ian Kent 5 Newcastle Rd.

Chester-le-Street, DH3 3TS. If a complaint is made to another person it should be referred to them. 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, the Revd. Stephen Lindridge at 246 Wingrove Road, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE4 9EJ.

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.

j) Key concepts and definitions

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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 their status or entitlements to services or protection.

ii) Vulnerable adults: any adult aged 18 or over who, owing to disability, mental function, age or illness or traumatic circumstances, may not be able to take care or protect themselves.

iii) Safeguarding: 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, a community or 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.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Church Council. Next review date: 30th October 2022 or earlier.

Signed



(Alan F. Irvin)

Dated: 1st November 2023)