

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy for *The Reading and Silchester* Methodist Circuit.

This policy was agreed at the Circuit Meeting held on 10th June 2013 and will be reviewed annually.

The Methodist church, along with the whole Christian Community, believes each person has a value and dignity which comes 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 *Reading and Silchester Methodist Circuit* recognises that none of us is invulnerable but that there is a particular care for those whose vulnerability is increased by situations, by disabilities or by reduction in capabilities. 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.

The *Reading and Silchester Methodist Circuit* is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and vulnerable adults and that the needs of children or people when they are vulnerable is paramount.

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 and vulnerable adults, for survivors of abuse, for communities and for those affected by abuse.

The *Reading and Silchester Methodist Circuit* fully agrees with the Connexional statement reiterated in creating a 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 *Reading and Silchester Methodist Circuit* recognises the serious issue of 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 responsibilities 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 *Reading and Silchester Methodist 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. Allegations or concerns should be referred to the Superintendent Minister and the Circuit Safeguarding Co-ordinator. It commits itself to challenge the abuse of power of anyone in a position of trust. It will endeavour to provide pastoral care by a group of people appointed by the Circuit and provides appropriate supervision for these people. It commits itself to informed pastoral support to those who have committed criminal offences and will follow the guidelines for the setting up of small groups to support offenders as laid down in the Safeguarding policy of the Methodist Church 2010. See section 69 'involvement of sex offenders in local church page 58 onwards. See the 'Covenant of Care' S010/690.

The Circuit will advise Local churches on any complaints that cannot be resolved in the church. These should be referred to the Superintendent Minister who will work with the church to resolve the issue.

The *Reading and Silchester Methodist Circuit* commits itself to ensuring the implementation of Connexional Safeguarding Policy; government legislation and guidance and safe practice in the circuit and in the churches, informing Local Churches of changes and updates to policies and Government legislation.

The *Reading and Silchester Methodist Circuit* commits itself 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 many be vulnerable. Foundation training courses for everyone taking on a new role with either children or vulnerable adults will be run every six months from November 2012 by the Circuit to ensure that everyone is trained in Safeguarding awareness to equip them carry out their role in the local church or Circuit with a better understanding of creating a safer space.

Purpose

The purposes of this safeguarding policy are to ensure 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 both the Methodist Safeguarding Handbook (2010) and Recruiting Safely Methodist Policy 2010.

Safer Recruitment is the responsibility of both the local churches and the Circuit. The policy and its process must be followed this applies to the recruitment of both volunteers and paid employees, also see section under ‘Circuit Stewards’.

The *Reading and Silchester Methodist Circuit* appoints **Sally Brimicombe** as Safeguarding Co-ordinator for Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults and support him/her in their role.

a) Roles and responsibilities

Superintendent

1. Ensure that 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 policies and practices.
3. Ensuring 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, vulnerable adults, for staff of the circuit and for members of the local churches in the circuit.
5. Ensure the Circuit Meeting appoints a Safeguarding Co-ordinator for Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults and that the details of that person are passed on to the District office.
6. Ensure the Circuit meeting reviews this Policy annually.
7. Support the Circuit Safeguarding Co-ordinator (children, young people and vulnerable adults) in their work, providing access to resources to enable them to fulfil their functions.
8. Delegate to Circuit Safeguarding Co-ordinator where appropriate.
9. Ensure that Safer Recruitment practices are in place and processes followed.
10. Ensure an audit form is completed after the first Circuit meeting of each Connexional year confirming policies are in place in the circuit and each church and that these have been reviewed annually. Send copies to the District Safeguarding Group as requested by the District Safeguarding Group.

Circuit Stewards

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

Support Superintendent and Circuit Safeguarding Co-ordinator in their roles when working with local churches safeguarding issues.

Ensure that training initiatives are developed, delivered and the office holders attend.

Ensure Safer Recruitment processes are followed as in ‘Recruiting Safely’ Methodist Church policy 2010 – it is expected this policy will be updated during 2013 following final amendments to the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

Circuit Safeguarding Co-ordinator (children, young people and vulnerable adults).

1. Support and advise the Circuit Superintendent and Circuit stewards in fulfilling their roles.
2. Provide a point of reference to advice on safeguarding issues.
3. Liaise with District Safeguarding Group(s).
4. With the support of the Superintendent ensure that any incidents and allegations are followed up or referred as necessary.
5. Attend the Circuit Staff meeting to discuss urgent confidential concerns and report to the Circuit Superintendent.
6. Work with the Superintendent and Circuit Stewards and Ministers in Pastoral Charge to ensure the Safer Recruitment framework is followed.
7. Oversee and offer Supervision to those involved in Pastoral support for people affected by abuse.
8. Endeavour to provide the management of offenders is in place in local churches inline with standing order SO010, working with the Superintendent when required.
9. Report to Circuit meeting quarterly and Circuit Leadership Team (CLT) on Safeguarding matters.

b) Procedures for circuit events involving children and vulnerable adults

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. Please see information below for both Local church and Circuit run events.

c) Responsibility for those planning and leading the event.

All those involved in leading and running the event must be aware of the procedure. The event should have been planned effectively and attention given to the following issues:

- Risk assessment and suitability of the activity and the premises.
- Risk assessments and planning must be done prior to the date of the event being made public to ensure that procedures are in place. To be reasonably confident of a response from Circuit any information that is required from the Circuit needs to be requested one month before it is needed to allow time to receive any information from either District or the Connexion safeguarding group.

See the website link for small events risks assessment forms and planning advice, this can be found in the ‘large events’ booklet:

<http://www.childrenandyouth.org.uk/worker/best-practice/organising-events-and-residentials-guidance/>

For ‘sleepovers’ see the residential booklet for staff ratios and guidance.

- The appointment of a team to take charge of the event, including safeguarding and first aid personnel. Particular health or ability needs should have been taken into account.
- Numbers of children or vulnerable adults.
- Transportation following good practice guidelines.
- Ensure Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are in place.

d) Key concepts and definitions

- i) **Vulnerable adults:** 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 or himself, or to protect her or himself from significant harm or exploitation.
- ii) **Safeguarding and protecting children or vulnerable adults** from maltreatment; preventing impairment of their health and ensuring safe and effective care.
- iii) **Adult/child protection** is 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 failure to prevent harm.

Dated 10th June 2013

Signed Rev David Shaw Chair of Circuit Meeting

Appendix 1

Recommended staffing levels

The recommended minimum staffing levels for children's groups are given below: More help may be required if children are being taken out, are undertaking physical activities or if circumstances require it.

0 – 2 yrs 1 person for every 3 children 1 : 3

2 – 3 yrs 1 person for every 4 children 1 : 4

3 – 8 yrs 1 person for every 8 children 1 : 8

Over 8 yrs 1 person for the first 8 children then 1 extra person for every extra 12 children

Each group should have at least 2 adults and it is recommended that there should be at least one male and one female.

If small groups are in the same room or adjoining rooms with open access between them then it is possible to have only one adult per group, dependent on the nature of the activity.

Young people who are being encouraged to develop their leadership skills through helping, should always be overseen by an appointed worker who will be responsible for ensuring that good practice and safeguarding procedures are followed and the work they are doing is appropriate to both their age and understanding.

Adults who assist on one or two occasions must be responsible to an appointed worker. Thereafter they should become part of the team and be properly appointed through the normal recruitment process.

(Extract from page 54 Methodist Church Safeguarding Children and Young People 2010 ref: PE503-SG-10)