

## Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy for

### Wales Methodist Synod

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

The Wales Methodist Synod 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.***

The Wales Methodist Synod 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 capacities. 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 Wales Methodist Synod recognises the serious issue of the abuse of children and adults at risk 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.

The Wales Methodist Synod commits itself to respond without delay to any allegation or cause for concern that a child or an 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.

The Wales Methodist Synod commits itself to ensuring the implementation of Connexional safeguarding policy, government legislation and guidance and safe practice in circuits and churches.

The Wales Methodist synod 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 at risk. It affirms the role of the Synod safeguarding group.

### **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 adults at risk 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).

### **a) Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **Synod Chair**

The Synod Chair attends the North and South Synod safeguarding groups and should:

- Manage and support the work of the Synod safeguarding officers.
- Through the Synod safeguarding officers, ensure that superintendent ministers are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and enable skills training opportunities to be made available.
- Use the expertise and advice of the Synod safeguarding officers, Synod safeguarding groups and, as appropriate, Connexional Team personnel.
- Through the Synod safeguarding officers, ensure that all circuits and churches create and implement their own policies.
- Support the Synod safeguarding officers and the Synod safeguarding groups in their work by ensuring an independent chair is appointed and that the group are capable of taking forward reports of incidents and allegations promptly and in accordance with good practice.
- Ensure that, where there are Synod meetings and events, the Synod policy is implemented.
- Ensure each superintendent completes an audit/monitoring form after the first Circuit Meeting of each Connexional year confirming that policies are in place in each circuit and church and that these have been annually reviewed. Each superintendent shall send a copy of their circuit's policy to the Synod safeguarding officer for scrutiny by the Synod safeguarding group. The monitoring of this will be a subject of the Synod safeguarding group's report to the Synod Policy Committee.

#### **Independent Chairs of the Synod Safeguarding Groups**

As part of the implementation of the recommendations from the President's Inquiry (Safeguarding) 2011, the Methodist Conference affirmed in 2012 that every district/synod must have a group to focus on safeguarding work with children and adults at risk and should have an independent Chair, as set out in the Safeguarding Framework (2010), who:

- should be strongly committed to supporting the Synod safeguarding officer
- should be well-respected
- should be able robustly to challenge the Synod where necessary
- should not be a Synod safeguarding officer, the Synod Chair, or a close relative of those fulfilling those roles.

## **Synod Safeguarding Groups**

The Synod safeguarding group will promote the safeguarding of children and adults at risk across the Synod. This responsibility includes ensuring that:

- The groups are independently chaired; their business managed in an effective manner and they have a representative membership of ordained and lay people across the Synod including people with experience and/or professional background in safeguarding.
- The groups provide support and guidance to the Synod safeguarding officers, including confidential advice and discussion on complex cases.
- Any incidents and allegations are followed up or referred on as necessary with the support of the Synod Chair (NB the responsibility lies with the Chair or the relevant person in pastoral charge).
- A response is provided to requests for help, advice, information and training.
- Programmes of awareness, training and good practice are initiated.
- Publicity is given to its contact numbers.
- Synod and Connexional policies are effectively implemented.
- The Chair, superintendents and Synod Policy Committee are updated on any changes to safeguarding policy, practice and guidance.
- Two meetings are organised annually to provide support and information on safeguarding issues to superintendents, circuit and church safeguarding officers; these will be coordinated by the Synod administrator.
- A report is delivered to the first Synod Policy Committee meeting of each Connexional year by a member of the Synod safeguarding groups, which will include a note on the monitoring of Synod events.
- Collaborative work is undertaken with other relevant groups (eg Connexional, regional and ecumenical partners and professional colleagues) on safeguarding issues.

## **Synod Safeguarding Officers**

The Synod safeguarding officers have a key role within the Wales Methodist Synod and are required to:

- oversee church, circuit and district compliance with the Methodist Church's safeguarding procedures
- be the focal point of contact for advice and the taking of referrals on all safeguarding matters (the Synod safeguarding officers MUST always be informed of a disclosure or concern about abuse in their circuits)
- be contacted by churches about all safeguarding issues, be fully involved and oversee all situations of concern including the establishment and review of all "safeguarding contracts".
- liaise regularly with designated officers of the local authority and the police as necessary.
- undertake safeguarding risk assessments for the Connexional Safeguarding Advisory Panel

- take a lead on working with individual cases in the Synod, including representing the Church in meetings with external organisations
- have a clear understanding of the issues facing faith communities as they seek to make their places of worship a safe place for children and adults at risk.
- be committed to personal continuing development and to the provision of safeguarding training opportunities within the Synod.

## **b) Key Concepts and Definitions**

- i. Adults at Risk: 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 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** 16<sup>th</sup> June 2018



**Signed**

**Synod Chair**

**Date for review** June 2019