

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy for the Darlington District

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 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 Darlington Methodist District is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and vulnerable adults and that the needs of children or of people when they are vulnerable is paramount.

The Darlington Methodist District 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 Darlington Methodist District 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 Darlington Methodist District 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.

The Darlington Methodist District 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. It commits itself to challenge the abuse of power of anyone in a position of trust.

The Darlington Methodist District commits itself to ensuring the implementation of Connexional Safeguarding Policy, government legislation and guidance and safe practice in circuits and churches.

The Darlington Methodist District 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 may be vulnerable. It affirms the role of the District 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 vulnerable adults in our care and using our premises. It is to be read in conjunction with the Methodist Safeguarding Handbook (2010).

a) Roles and responsibilities

District Chair

- Support Superintendent Ministers in their implementation of safeguarding policies.
- Ensure that Superintendent Ministers are aware of their responsibilities in this area and will enable training opportunities to be made available.
- Use the expertise and advice of the District Safeguarding Group and, as appropriate, Connexional personnel.
- Ensure that all circuits and churches create and implement their own policies
Action The District Chair will support the District Safeguarding Group in this area as requested.
- Each Superintendent will complete an audit/monitoring form after the first Circuit Meeting of each Connexional year confirming that policies are in place in the circuit and each church and that these have been annually reviewed. The Superintendent will send copies of policies to the District Safeguarding Group as requested by the District Safeguarding Group.
- Ensure that where are District Meetings and events, the district policy is implemented
- Support the District Safeguarding Group in taking forward incidents and allegations promptly and in accordance with good practice.
Action The monitoring of this will be a subject of the District Safeguarding Group report to the District Policy Committee.

District Safeguarding Group

- Ensure a response to requests for help, advice, information and training.
- Ensure support in implementing District and Connexional policy.
- The District Safeguarding Adults group will promote safeguarding adults awareness training across the District and will ensure that publicity is given to its contact numbers.
- The District Safeguarding Group will ensure that the Chair, Superintendents and District Policy Committee are updated on any changes to safeguarding policy, practice and guidance. A report will be delivered to the first District Policy Committee meeting of each Connexional year by a member of the District Safeguarding Group, which will include a note on the monitoring of District events.
- Initiate programmes of awareness and good practice.
- Work collaboratively with other relevant groups (e.g. Connexional, Regional and ecumenical partners and professional colleagues) in safeguarding issues.
- With the support of the District Chair ensure that any incidents and allegations are followed up or referred as necessary.(1)

b) 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 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: Monday 7 June 2011

Signed: 

District Chair

Date for review: 1 May 2012

(1) N.B. the responsibility lies with the Chair or the relevant person in Pastoral Charge.

