



SAFEGUARDING RISK ASSESSMENT GUIDE

What happens at a Safeguarding Panel



What Happens at a Safeguarding Panel?

This leaflet may be a useful resource in the following circumstances:

- Where you are the subject of a Connexional Risk Assessment
- Where you are the pastoral supporter or someone with line management or oversight of the subject of a Connexional Risk Assessment
- Where you are attending a Safeguarding Panel as a District Chair or their representative.

A comprehensive guide to the process is available via the Safeguarding Risk Assessment Policy and Procedures, which can be found on the Methodist Church website. There are additional information resources available online for other parties involved in the process.

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Types of Panel

Where a Safeguarding Panel has been deemed necessary following a District or Connexional Risk Assessment, the Safeguarding Panel may convene as a face-to-face meeting or via a telephone conference. Panels are arranged in advance on set dates during the year.

Telephone Panel - This form of panel is used for risk assessments relating to volunteers but can also be used for staff employed by district and less complex issues. The risk assessor will be available to be spoken to by phone during the teleconference. The subject of the assessment is not part of the conference call but can submit any comments to the Panel, prior to the teleconference.

Face-to-Face Panel - This form of panel is convened in a suitable location and will include the option of attendance by the subject of the assessment. The risk assessor will also attend in all cases. This is usually the preferred form of panel for ministers. If the subject of the assessment chooses not to attend, the Panel may revert to a teleconference if they deem this suitable, bearing in mind the circumstances of the case.

Due to Covid 19, face-to-face panels will take place via video conferencing for the foreseeable future. Please discuss any concern you may have or support you may need to take part with the Casework Supervisor from the Connexional Safeguarding Team who is managing the process.

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Members of the Safeguarding Panel

Panels consist of three members. One member of the panel will have been in a senior leadership role within the Methodist Church and two other members will have significant professional experience in the field of safeguarding. All members will be taken from the Safeguarding Committee of the Methodist Church.

Format of a Face-to-Face Safeguarding Panel

1. Panel planning discussion

Present: Panel, caseworker

A note-taker may be present throughout a Safeguarding Panel where there is a need for additional administrative support.

2. Introductions

Present: All

This may include a prayer at the discretion of the Chair of the Panel.

3. Questions to the risk assessor

Present: Panel, risk assessor, caseworker.

4. Discussion with additional attendees

Present: Panel, caseworker,

Information can be provided by written submission prior to the panel date or via teleconference if the party is unable to attend the panel date.

5. Discussion with the subject of the assessment

Present: Panel, subject of the assessment, pastoral supporter (if present), caseworker.

(The Panel may invite the risk assessor to be present at this discussion, dependant on the circumstances of the case.

This provides an opportunity for the person who has been assessed to respond to queries from the Safeguarding Panel and to share any information or thoughts that (s)he feels have not already been expressed.

The subject of the assessment will be advised that they may leave at this point and be informed of the outcome in writing or they may stay and await provisional outcome.

6. Panel considerations

Present: Panel, caseworker.

A representative of the local district identified by the District Chair can attend to provide guidance to the Panel in relation to local circumstances. This discussion may be able to take place via teleconference (where available) or via written submission if the representative is unable to attend in person.

7. Outcome

Present: Panel, subject of assessment (optional), pastoral supporter (if present), caseworker.

The outcome given on the day is provisional until confirmed by letter, following further consultation with the relevant District Chair.

Participation at Safeguarding Panels

It is important that any support needs which may affect any party's participation at a face-to-face or video conference panel are notified as soon as possible to the Connexional Safeguarding Team. Appropriate adjustments will be made, where possible, to facilitate the involvement of all parties.

Where a face-to-face panel has been arranged, late notice changes may not be possible. Panel members are volunteers who come from across the UK and travel arrangements are made in advance. The costs of attendance a Safeguarding Panel are paid by the Methodist Church. Those who are either subject to a risk assessment or in pastoral support should contact the Connexional Safeguarding Team to discuss travel and accommodation needs before booking.

For further information about the risk assessment process

Please contact the Connexional Safeguarding Team:

safeguarding@methodistchurch.org.uk

020 7467 5189