

34. Proposed Supervision and Professional Development Model for District Safeguarding Officers

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Resolutions	34/1. The Conference receives the Report. 34/2. The Conference directs the Council to proceed with producing detailed and costed proposals for professional supervision of District Safeguarding Officers based on the approach to supervision as set out in paragraphs 3.0 – 8.12 of the report.

Summary of content and impact

Subject and aims	To make proposals regarding the introduction of a standardised approach to professional supervision arrangements for District Safeguarding Officers (DSOs).
Background context and relevant documents (with function)	Provision of DSO time and resourcing has grown incrementally across the Connexion as safeguarding demands have increased. As a result, there is no consistency in respect of employment arrangements, practice standards or professional support requirements. This report focuses on the intention to provide systematic standardised professional supervision to all DSOs, as required by the Conference, in order to ensure that there is a common approach to managing casework and encouraging continuing professional development.
Consultations	The Safeguarding Committee, District Chairs, DSOs and District Safeguarding Groups.

1.0. The Conference of 2016 resolved that:

- 1.1. *The Conference directs the Methodist Council to bring to the 2017 Conference, as part of the 2017/18 budget preparation, fully costed proposals for achieving professional supervision for all District Safeguarding Officers. [DR 7/12/3]*

2.0. Introduction

- 2.1. District Safeguarding Officers (DSOs) are critical to promoting and ensuring safeguarding practice is understood and delivered in each District. The majority of Districts employ paid DSOs, one uses volunteers and two have appointed ministers to fulfil the role in meeting the Christian obligation to take care of, and safeguard the most vulnerable as well as ensuring that the Methodist Church's reputation with statutory agencies and the wider general public is protected and enhanced.
- 2.2. In order to achieve this, it is important that DSOs are working to the same standards and can display consistent practice across the Connexion. The connexional Safeguarding Adviser has visited Districts to meet with DSOs, district safeguarding teams and District Chairs in order to identify local challenges and achievements, assess individual job descriptions and supervision arrangements. What has emerged from this exercise is a desire for professional supervision

for each DSO enabling greater standardisation and consistency in the work, undertaking of risk assessments and delivery of training.

- 2.3. In the following discussion it is assumed that DSOs have a single role. Currently two DSOs are ordained (one a deacon and one a presbyter). Therefore, consideration will be given to their circumstances (and anyone in the future) whereby the different supervision arrangements they may be subject to from different parts of the church will be coordinated and a clear agreement established with those who have supervisory/ line management responsibility.
- 2.4. The Council has directed the Strategy and Resources Committee, in consultation with the Safeguarding Committee and the Chairs' Meeting, to
 - (a) identify a pattern of supervision for DSOs;
 - (b) propose an appropriate budget for such supervision;
 - (c) report to the Council no later than January 2018.
- 2.5. The 2018 Conference will therefore be presented with detailed and costed proposals, which will form part of the budget narrative.

3.0. What supervision means

- 3.1. Development of a formal professional supervision structure for DSOs is consistent with the broad aims of supervision arrangements which are being introduced over the coming years for ministers (subject to the Conference agreement of a supervision policy in 2017). Both initiatives are indicative of a growing awareness that supervision is good for the accountability of the individual being supervised and the Church and Conference with whom they are in Full Connexion as well as providing a framework within which their own support and development needs can be addressed.
- 3.2. This does not mean that the supervision of DSOs has the same theological and ecclesiological understanding as undergirds the supervision proposals for ministers, but it will follow the core functions with a focus on professional safeguarding casework, practice and decision-making. This draws on standard models of social work casework management.
- 3.3. Bringing supervision proposals for ministers and DSOs to the Conference emphasises the connection and coherence of approach with the final report from the Past Cases Review Implementation Group and enhances the Church's further development of robust safeguarding provision to meet current demands and continue to establish firm foundations for future expectations.

4.0. Safeguarding and supervision

- 4.1. Supervision is a two-way dialogue defined as "a process by which one worker is given responsibility by the organisation to work with another worker(s) in order to meet certain organisational, professional and personal objectives" (Tony Morrison, 2001).
- 4.2. Research indicates that there is a strong link between the quality of supervision and outcomes for children and adults, including safeguarding and protection.
- 4.3. For the purposes of Methodist safeguarding supervision, we are concentrating on casework and professional development functions.
- 4.4. Supervision for DSOs will provide a structure for looking at:
 - Accountability

- Learning and development
- Support and challenge

5.0. The ten aims of supervision

- 5.1. To enable the effective safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk.
- 5.2. To ensure the DSO is supported to carry out their duties effectively and efficiently and that work has clear purpose and delivers good outcomes for the beneficiaries.
- 5.3. To provide a reflective space for professional safeguarding discussion, challenge, advice and consideration of options and approaches.
- 5.4. To ensure the skills of the DSO continue to be developed.
- 5.5. To identify solutions to address issues of practice or policy as they arise.
- 5.6. To ensure good practice and to challenge and manage poor practice.
- 5.7. To ensure that health and well-being at work matters are addressed.
- 5.8. To assist in the continuous professional development of the DSO.
- 5.9. To ensure good practice in relation to equalities and diversity.
- 5.10. To ensure that professional practice and regulatory requirements are met.

6.0. Supervision Agreement

- 6.1. Each DSO will have a Supervision Agreement with their supervisor (see Appendix 1 for draft agreement template) which will set out a structure and framework for supervision and be reviewed on an annual basis.

7.0. Content of supervision

- 7.1. Update on actions from previous supervision.
- 7.2. Progress of casework, review and evaluation of outcomes to include adherence with Methodist policies and procedures, regulatory requirements and professional standards.
- 7.3. Safeguarding, protection and health and safety matters.
- 7.4. Equalities and diversity matters.
- 7.5. Professional development, learning and support needs.
- 7.6. Additional agenda items brought by either the supervisor or supervisee.

8.0. Supervision meetings

- 8.1. There will be set supervision meetings approximately every 4 - 6 weeks. The supervisor will be available for consultation and advice during normal working hours as well. At least every second supervision meeting should be face to face and other meetings can be by telephone or Skype. This will ensure that each DSO receives eight to twelve formal supervision sessions annually with a face-to-face contact at least quarterly.
- 8.2. Each supervisor will cover DSOs in regional proximity to each other and this will lend itself to opportunities for further group supervision and peer-to-peer support arrangements but this will be in addition to core individual supervision arrangements.
- 8.3. Supervision will take place in a confidential and uninterrupted setting that can include by phone or Skype.
- 8.4. If the DSO requires more frequent supervision, for any reason, or feels that supervision is not meeting their needs this should be discussed with the supervisor.
- 8.5. All supervision meetings should be recorded and notes agreed and signed by both parties. The author will record any amendments or disagreement regarding the content of the notes

on the relevant record. Each set of notes should be dated with the name of the person who authored them.

- 8.6. All actions should be clearly identified.
- 8.7. All actions should be followed up in subsequent supervision sessions and all outcomes recorded.
- 8.8. Service users should not be explicitly referenced in supervision minutes. Initials should be used instead.
- 8.9. Where a discussion takes place and/or actions are identified in relation to a service user, this information should be recorded on the case file.
- 8.10. Supervision notes are the property of the Methodist Church and are accessible to the DSO, supervisor, DSO line manager and the Safeguarding Adviser.
- 8.11. Records may be made available during a management investigation or if required by an external agency for a legitimate purpose. The District Chair or Safeguarding Adviser must approve all access to records.
- 8.12. Access to supervision notes must be provided to regulatory bodies but only with confirmation of identification of the inspector/s and there is a legitimate purpose (ie inspection) and in any legal proceedings.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

34/1. The Conference received the Report.

34/2. The Conference directed the Council to proceed with producing detailed and costed proposals for professional supervision of District Safeguarding Officers based on the approach to supervision as set out in paragraphs 3.0 – 8.12 of the report.



**Supervision Agreement between
(DSO) and (CST Supervisor)**

1. **Connexional Safeguarding Team Supervision** functions to
 - assess and support the DSO's work
 - provide support and challenge to the DSO
 - assist in the ongoing professional development of the DSO
 - mediate between the DSO, the Church and other stakeholders

Both parties agree the purpose of good supervision is to enable more effective work practices, which lead to better outcomes for children, young people, adults, families and other stakeholders we support.

2. **The content and focus of supervision meetings will be based on**
 - A mutually agreed agenda
 - An overview of (DSO's) workload and action planning for the work
 - Monitoring (DSO's) workload capacity, to ensure the workload is reasonable and achieved
 - A recognition of (DSO's) professional achievements, knowledge and skills whilst also attending to (DSO's) ongoing development needs
 - An environment where equality and diversity practice can be developed on a continual basis
 - (DSO's) annual appraisal goals, which will include linking of theoretical frameworks to practice
 - (DSO's) desire to reflect on their work and to be challenged

3. **Agreed supervision arrangements**
 - Formal Supervision meetings will take place at least 4-6 weekly.
 - Supervision meetings will last between 1-2 hours.
 - (Supervisor) will record supervision meetings and take up amendments/ corrections at the next meeting.
 - One copy will be retained by each person. The record is the property of the Methodist Church. (Supervisor) will retain his/her copy securely and confidentially. Records may be made available in a disciplinary or grievance investigation, or if required by an external agency for a legitimate purpose. When a member of staff leaves the Methodist Church the supervision file will be forwarded to HR and retained in accordance with their policies.
 - If there is a dispute about the record, both parties should discuss this to seek an agreement, which will be recorded as an addendum to the supervision record and signed by both parties. In cases where there is no agreement, this will be recorded in the same way.
 - Supervision records are confidential between the parties involved and, when required, the Methodist Church.
 - When a discussion is regarding a service user, member of staff or worker in another agency, the record will not directly identify personal information (i.e. by using initials only). This is in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and to avoid the supervision record becoming part of a person's personal details, available upon request.

4. **Agreed conduct in supervision meetings:**

- (DSO) and (supervisor) commit to planning for supervision, reviewing the notes from the last meeting and bringing items for the agenda
- Both parties recognise that openness to learning and honesty will enable supervision to be most effective
- Both parties commit to good timekeeping
- Both parties agree that challenges and criticism should be framed constructively
- Both parties agree that challenges, criticism and questioning are a two-way process, the expertise does not lie only with the supervisor and that the supervisee's feedback on the supervision received is an integral part of supervision.

Signed

Signed

Date