

March 2007

Safe guarding

Introduction

by Pearl Luxon

Joint work with the Church of England

In September I began work in a new joint role with the Church of England as the Safeguarding Adviser (child and adult protection). This is a truly exciting development and I hope it will lead to more joint work and ecumenical liaison throughout England. One of the first pieces of joint work has been to develop the annual conference for Methodist District Safeguarding reps/ coordinators with the Anglican Diocesan Advisers.

Safeguarding is not just about paper

It is apparent from the number of enquiries we receive, that many still think the main point of Safeguarding is about criminal record checks. It is part of my task to address that imbalance, but it is also something everyone needs to recognise. Yes, criminal record checks are a significant part of any safe recruitment procedure, but there is a good deal more. We need to refer back to the issues of good practice time and time again in all stages of recruitment. We need also to highlight the other aspects of good practice which follow once someone has been recruited, in supporting and supervising them, and good practice for the church as a whole.

Good practice is therefore ensuring that:

- There is adequate cover (at least two people for each group/ event) and Ofsted recommended ratios are adhered to for all activities
- Emergency cover has been discussed and a plan established
- There are nominated people for Safeguarding in every church and circuit
- Every church has its own Safeguarding Policy
- All those working with children or young people have been through all the stipulated recruitment procedures
- All those working with children and young people meet regularly and have adequate training support and supervision
- All office holders have completed a self-declaration
- Each church has adequate licence or bookings arrangements with all the users of the premises

Not just about paper - but Quality and Caring

Safeguarding is about both the quality of what we do and about the caring way we do it. It is about the church being a caring place and a safer place for children, young people or adults who may be or may become vulnerable. It is about the qualities of good friendship, proper boundaries and accountability, and also of self-care, for all those with responsibility. Unless we care for each other and ourselves properly, we will be more likely to become stressed, not seek help appropriately and will make decisions or cross boundaries that hurt others.

Changes in the law may require even more of us over the next few years, but the Church should always seek the best for people, through well-considered good practices. One of the tasks for the next year with my new role is therefore to communicate more and in different ways both the theological and pastoral reasons for Safeguarding.

- Safeguarding is about enabling the church to be a safer place for all.
- Unless people feel safe enough they will not be able to learn about God's love for them.
- A church that is safer will be a place people want to join and play a full part in, including people who are survivors of abuse.
- Where there are incidents that indicate poor Safeguarding practice, or that are poorly handled, the churches lose people, sometimes severely so.
- The unity and mission of the church is enhanced by the work of the Methodist Church on Safeguarding and Time for Action (CTBI 2002) issues.
- Safeguarding good practice is good news for the whole church.

Jesus called a child, whom he put among them and said 'Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me'. (Matthew 18:2 &4 NRSV)

Tracing Rainbows in the Rain

The Methodist Church set up a group to monitor how we have responded as a Church to the 'Time for Action' report by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (published 2002 – available from sales@mph.org.uk). This first report looked at the way survivors of sexual abuse have been treated in the church, with some 37 recommendations for all churches and denominations. The monitoring group presented a report to the Methodist Conference last year. This report 'Tracing Rainbows Through the Rain' is available from the Methodist website www.methodist.org.uk (type the title into 'Search') and plans are being developed to promote this and make resources available later this year. 'A community that has taken time to consider how to become safer for survivors is likely to be safer for everyone.' (Tracing Rainbows...)

The following text from the introduction to the report may inspire you to look this up and read further.

As we have journeyed in the *Time for Action* monitoring group we have listened to stories from survivors of sexual abuse, hearing of their pain and their struggle to find their voice in telling of what happened to them usually as children, and at times have, ourselves, felt devastated by what we have heard. Yet essentially the stories are of healing and hope. Indeed, we hope that this Report will be read in its entirety as offering pointers to survivors, to the Church, to us all on that journey towards healing and hope. The rain, the pain in the stories, was and often continues to be real. However, the hope of these stories is evident in the courage of the people whom we have met. We have seen numerous rainbows on our journey too.

Our work has not been concerned solely with personal stories but with the story of the Church's engagement with these issues. Sometimes, and this may be shocking to hear, it has been the Church's need for order and tradition, its songs and its liturgies which have re-opened old wounds or caused further pain for survivors of sexual abuse. So our journey towards hope is one in which the whole Church must recognise its need for the saving love of God. We believe our task is one that we do best together as Church and as survivors through careful listening to and learning from each other. This is often a long, slow process, but only if we do the tracing through the rain together will we find the rainbows together.

(Tracing Rainbows through the Rain'
– *The Methodist Conference report, 2006)*

Photographs

Photography and video recording are important ways of recording Methodist activity and providing an historic record – illustrating and validating important moments in people's lives and the life of our Church. It is, however, a powerful and personal process, and we must therefore respect the rights of everyone to make the choice whether or not to be photographed.

At large events make arrangements to provide video or photographic stills of the participants in action or set up photo opportunities at the end. This allows the performance to go ahead with limited interruption, and allows any child who is not to be photographed to take part. If there are children or young people at the event for whom you do not have a completed consent form put the Notice about

Photographs in prominent places or in the event programme and make sure official photographers are aware of the Guidelines for Photographers.

Sample forms and guidance on photography is now on the Methodist website, www.methodist.org.uk under Information, Safeguarding and Resources and also on 'methodistchildren' website www.methodistchildren.org.uk

The above also includes guidance on website photographs. The same permissions will be needed whatever you use the photographs for. There are a number of good websites which help children and adults become more aware of the dangers of the internet and issues of self-protection. Some of these are listed at the end of this Bulletin, others are on the 'methodistchildren' website.

Churches often have concerns about unofficial photographs as well. We cannot always stop these where an event is open to the public. If you are suspicious about the possible use of photographs or about someone taking them, including with mobile phones etc. you must always feel free to ask further questions and take personal details.

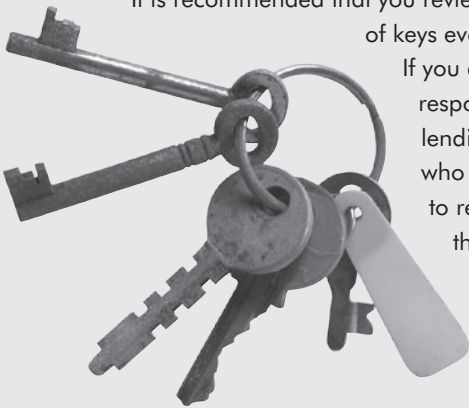
Lettings and key holders

There is a good deal of anxiety about lettings, particularly when letting to some independent churches. The guidance on this issued in March 2004 is still relevant.

The Form D and Form E are available to download, as are other forms from the Methodist website Safeguarding pages (the menu under Information).

Form D – this is for use by the person/committee that controls the use of keys for the church premises. Do you know who has a key? How are they accountable for its use? It is recommended that you review the use and distribution of keys every few years (a key audit).

If you cannot be sure about responsible use of keys (not lending and copying) by those who have them, you may need to recall the keys or change the locks. This is not simply a Safeguarding issue, but about the security and safety of the premises.



You need to ensure that all those who hold keys permanently sign a declaration and all those who borrow them for specific purposes (24 hours or less) are accountable for them by way of a register (with similar conditions for the use of the key), or as part of the relevant letting agreement or licence. Contractors should be supervised on the premises, especially when other groups are meeting there.

Form E – this is for use when arranging to let your church premises to another group, charity, church or party. It can be incorporated into the lettings agreement or licence document or the completion of it can be made a condition of the licence or agreement. It is not intended that everyone signing it read the whole of the national policy 'Safeguarding', but they should read the local church policy and see or have a copy of the summary of the Home Office guidance 'Safe from Harm' 1993. This one page summary is available at the back of the 'Safeguarding' 2003 Methodist guidance. You should also ensure that any *regular* user of the church premises has their own public liability insurance.

Insurance – the good news! Cards and leaflet

The Safeguarding office has a good relationship with Methodist Insurance and they are always available to discuss concerns about liability issues and Safeguarding. Methodist Insurance has sponsored the production and distribution to all presbyters and deacons of a new safeguarding leaflet during November 2006.

- The card for all those who work with children and young people – pocket size – gives a brief guide to responding appropriately to situations where concerns or allegations are raised. Order Ref: PE857
- The leaflet for all those with greater responsibility to react or give advice, when concerns or allegations are raised or who have pastoral responsibilities and oversight. Order Ref: PE357

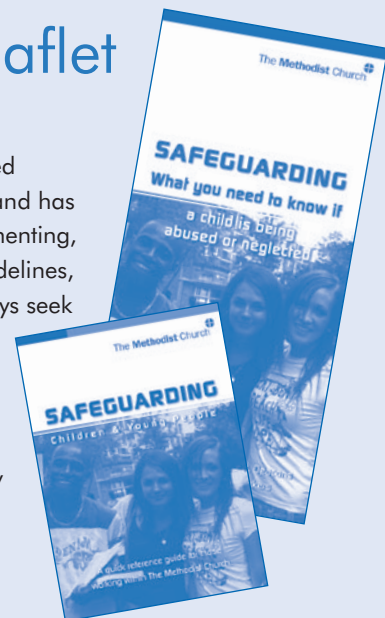
These are available free (except P&P) from MPH,
Tel: 01733 325002 E-mail: sales@mph.org.uk

We need to respond better and more swiftly to incidents and allegations of abuse. These cards emphasise the need to respond to allegations or concerns and to check out your responses with others in responsibility, where children or young people (those under 18) may be harmed.

Liability

Where the church has followed Safeguarding good practice and has its own policy that it is implementing, according to the national guidelines, Methodist Insurance will always seek to assist and will be likely to meet liability issues. This includes the good practice on the letting of premises as outlined above. Public liability remains the responsibility of the Church in relation to its own premises and activities.

Notwithstanding the above, if a church appointee becomes aware that those letting the building are not following good practice with children and young people or vulnerable adults, or they are misusing the keys, then the church has a right to challenge this and, if good practice is resisted, no longer to continue with the letting or licence agreement. If anyone is being harmed in that group the police should be involved.



Churches' Agency for Safeguarding

News and Requests

⊙ **New staff and Independence**

In September Ron Ludgate took over the Management of Churches' Agency from Pearl Luxon, in a full-time capacity. Ron will be steering CAS into full independence from the Methodist Church, serving 10 denominations during this year.

⊙ **Turn around**

The turn around time has reduced dramatically to only 5 weeks with CAS before application forms are sent to the CRB. The CRB turnaround is usually 3 to 4 weeks. If you have not received your Disclosure within 3 months of applying you should therefore telephone CAS 02074675216

⊙ **Reduction in errors**

We are pleased that the reduction in errors on applications has made significant progress, from around 80% 2 years ago to 30% in recent months. However, there is no timeline as yet for the introduction of new, user friendly forms, by the CRB so we are looking for even more care in filling out and checking the forms by verifiers and applicants.

⊙ **Fee for Applications sent to CAS with Errors from 1st April 2007**

The errors on CRB applications do still result in significant administration costs and time. Further reduction in efficiency on the turnaround. As a result of this a charge will be introduced from 1st April of £5 per application containing errors. This will be charged when the forms are returned with a letter to the verifier. New guidance for verifiers will be made available during February on the CAS website www.churchsafe.org.uk

The significant areas for attention by those completing forms are that:

- ⊙ All relevant sections are completed (A, B, C, D & H) carefully in BLACK PEN
- ⊙ Section X is completed by the Verifier with careful attention to seeing sufficient ID including at least one showing the applicants current address and one showing date of birth documents
- ⊙ Section Y should not be completed at all
- ⊙ Ensuring all forms, including the CAS form and the Documentary Evidence sheet, are sent with the CRB application
- ⊙ The application is sent to CAS at Methodist Church House – not CRB

- ⊙ For paid staff (except Methodist Presbyters and Deacons), that the correct cheque is enclosed
- ⊙ CAS are still receiving applications from sources that are not covered by the Methodist Church or one of the other Member denominations. If it is a separate charity or church premises user, CAS cannot process the application.

What happens to your Disclosure?

If you have applied for a criminal record Disclosure and you do not have a Disclosure certificate sent to you within 3 months for a volunteer, 6 weeks for a paid staff member please enquire with CAS. If you have moved house tell CAS as soon as possible.

When you receive the Certificate, check if it is accurate.

What happens if my disclosure is unclear?

1. First of all you should check whether the information is correct. If it is not you should write to the CRB with a copy to CAS asking for the information to be corrected.
2. In cases where there is anything shown under Disclosure information the Lead Countersignatory at the CAS office will also write to you to confirm the content of your disclosure You will be asked to respond within 2 weeks.
3. At this point there may be a discussion on an anonymous basis with the lead person in the denomination that you are seeking to work in, in order to decide whether a panel conference is necessary to consider the matter.
4. If there are minor matters, not relevant to the role, a letter will be sent to the verifier and to yourself at this point recommending that there is nothing in your disclosure to prevent you working in that role. Occasionally, conditions are attached to that clearance.
5. Once you have confirmed the content of your disclosure, or having challenged it and both you and CAS have received the new one, we may confirm that the disclosure shows nothing that prevents you working with children or vulnerable adults. If the arrangement of a panel is necessary, the matter will be considered by an independent panel including some experts in the denomination where you want to work, not by the CAS. In most cases they will not have a copy of the disclosure, they will

continued overleaf ...

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have all the relevant information anonymously, in order to make an informed decision.

6. On occasions before a panel confers it may be necessary to obtain additional information either from you, your employer or the police, social services or a former employer in order to find out about the matter on the Disclosure. This investigation will be conducted by the CAS or the Methodist Representative on their behalf or a combination of the two. Your written or verbal submissions will be considered alongside other evidence.
7. If you want to find out about the kinds of offences for which you may be barred from working with children this document on the Methodist Website www.methodist.org.uk may assist. **Paraphrase of Schedule 4 of the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000** (it is a downloadable pdf)

What are the Data Protection rules on the storage of Disclosure information?

- ⊙ The denominations or local church will hold a copy of the letter (from CAS) recording the recommendation on suitability. All Disclosure information has to be destroyed within 6 months according to the CRB Code of Practice.
- ⊙ If they have recorded basic information from an applicant's disclosure, for portability reasons only, this will include the applicants full name, address, date of birth, date of Disclosure, the Disclosure number and the Registered Body name. A Disclosure must not be photocopied or kept beyond 6 months from the date of issue, by anyone other than the applicant, who receives their own copy.
- ⊙ A local church should be open and transparent about the type of information held on the volunteers it recruits.

Guidance available on the Methodist website

There are an increasing number of resources being made available on the website. These include:

- Camping and Residential guidance and couples running groups
- Information Sharing
- A reporting form for all concerns
- Tracing Rainbows Through the Rain
- The Domestic Abuse report – Conference 2005
- Previous Link Mailings
- Forms and information about criminal record checks
- The new Photography Guidance (in WORD format)

If you think there is something there that you cannot access because you don't have the use of a computer please phone your District Safeguarding team or telephone this office and request it.

www.methodist.org.uk

Methodist Resources

Previously covered topics/ issues – where to find them

- ⊙ **Safeguarding and Pastoral Care – considering good practice with adults who are or may be vulnerable – September 2005**

Written jointly by Michaela Youngson and Pearl Luxon, this has been a popular Link bulletin and is still available on www.methodist.org.uk under Information, Safeguarding and Resources

- ⊙ **CAS Verifiers new guidance – May 2006**

Although soon to be updated, this is a very comprehensive guide – also to be found on www.methodist.org.uk – same route. The updated guidance for CAS verifiers will be found on www.churchsafe.org.uk

5th anniversary of the first CRB checks

In view of the introduction of slightly different scheme for criminal record checks to be implemented later in 2008 (known as the 'Vetting and Barring Scheme'), the Methodist Church and many other denominations took the decision not to recommend renewal of CRB or Disclosure Scotland certificates unless your Disclosure is 5 years old.

Therefore if you have had a check done in 2002 you **will** need to renew it this year, during 2007.

Essential Resources

Churches' Agency for Safeguarding

Processes Disclosures for Methodist Church and 10 other denominations

- CRB (England and Wales) and CRBS (Scotland) procedures are explained on www.churchsafe.org.uk This process is run by the Churches' Agency for Safeguarding (CAS) on behalf of the Methodist Church and 10 other denominations.
- **CRB/CRBS Forms packs** are available from MPH @ £1 each per form pack ref: PE240 England and Wales, PE242 Scotland.
- Methodist policy with these recruitment vetting procedures for lay people and ministers are outlined on the Methodist Website www.methodist.org.uk in **Recruitment in the Methodist Church** and **Frequently Asked Questions** (FAQ's)

The Church and Sex Offenders Report 2000

Adopted by the Methodist Conference in June 2000 (MPH Reference: PA 146 @£1.75)

'Safeguarding'

A Policy for good practice in the care of children and young people – Methodist Church 2003 (MPH reference: PE235 @£2.50)

'Worth Doing Well' revised 2002

A handbook for children and youth work (MPH reference: PE603 @£12.50)

'Playing to Learn'

This handbook is aimed at churches taking responsibility for the provision of childcare on their premises but will also be of interest to those letting their premises to outside organisations for this purpose. (MPH Reference: PE161 @£2.50)

Safeguarding Link Mailing Earlier editions

Bulletins March 2004 and November 2004, September 2005 and March 2006 – also on the MC website www.methodist.org.uk

'Time for Action'

Sexual abuse, the Churches and a new dawn for survivors (CTBI reference: CT140 from MPH @ £7.95)

Where to go for help

When you need advice or assistance

- ⊙ Every circuit (or church in Scotland) should have a designated person who advises and provides information on Methodist policy
- ⊙ Your District will have Safeguarding/ Taking Care reps who may be contacted directly, via the Training and Development Officer or in some cases the District Office.

The Revd Pearl Luxon

Safeguarding Adviser (Children and Vulnerable Adults), The Methodist Church of GB and the Church of England
Tel: 020 7467 5189

Kim Medford-Vassell

PA to Safeguarding Adviser (Children and Vulnerable Adults)
Tel: 020 7467 5189

Methodist Church Safeguarding e-mail enquires safeguarding@methodistchurch.org.uk

Methodist Church of Great Britain website www.methodist.org.uk

Useful websites

www.stopitnow.org.uk
www.lucyfaithfull.org
www.nspcc.org.uk
www.kidsmart.org.uk
www.nchaf.org.uk
www.barnardos.org.uk
www.childline.org.uk

This Bulletin should be kept by your Safeguarding book for reference

Further Information



Please contact Pearl Luxon, Safeguarding Adviser (children and adult protection), Methodist Church House, 25 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5JR
Tel: 020 7467 5189 Fax: 020 7467 3763

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This is part of *Methodist Connexions*, the Connexional Link pack provided for the Methodist Church in Britain. Methodist Churches and others in linked ecumenical projects may freely copy this resource for their own use.

Who else in your church might find this useful?

Ministers
Deacons
Lay Workers
Church Council Secretaries
Children and Youth Workers

Please write their names and get them to tick the box when they have seen or received a copy.

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