

November 2008

# Safeguarding

## Towards a Theology of Safeguarding by Pearl Luxon

My opening article in the last few *Safeguarding* link bulletins has highlighted how the beliefs and theology of the church lead to safeguarding being considered a core value of the church.

I have now finished a dissertation about this which began with a reflection on the churches work in this area.

A proper understanding of Safeguarding does not stem from injunctions, demands and legal requirements, nor from the insurance premiums. Instead it stems from God's love and desire for fullness of life for all. However a theology of safeguarding challenges power; it challenges our prevailing attitudes of ourselves and of society toward children and the vulnerable. There are six aspects to this:

- In the church we believe in and try to demonstrate our care of individuals and of the community. We have a regard for the vulnerable and in enabling and empowering those who are marginalized, especially children, victims and survivors of child sexual abuse. Our pastoral care needs to be informed by a sense of safety and boundaries but also by an openness which is for all.
- **God's mission is one of love and service as shown to us by Jesus. A child-like vulnerability is of the essence of the kingdom (Matthew**

**18:3-5, Mark10:13-16). The Mission of the Church, which grows from and is part of the mission of God recognises a priority to nurture children and care for vulnerable people. So this is a core value of the Church.**

- Abuse is an abuse of power. We may therefore understand significant vulnerability in those recovering from abuse, and that this is a recovery from that loss of childhood and of individual power. This is often very like a loss or bereavement. Healing, justice and restoration, therefore, need significant compassionate support and acceptance by those who listen and walk alongside them. Victims need choices and empowerment in a life-long process of survival, and recovery for a sense of thriving.
- **Safeguarding challenges those in positions of authority (including those within families) who deny the issue, collude with it or cover it up. The church needs to witness this prophetic challenge, which affects all parts of society and all societies, to give priority to those who are vulnerable and hurting.**
- We believe in the Light of God (John 1), which shines into the dark places of the world, including any past hurts,

abuses and also our present struggles.

Abuse thrives on secrecy, so we need to bring light to bear on all these things for healing to begin, for justice to prevail ('this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world', John 1:19) and for life to flourish (life abundant John 10:10).

- **For the church to become a safer place it needs to develop and nurture places of hospitable space or sanctuary. Church people need to develop a sense of hospitality which includes openness and careful listening. A sense of hospitable space, and careful welcome must also extend to the offender.**

Safety is far from a reality for many. It remains tenuous and undeveloped in society and the church. Some risks and challenges are necessary to enable growth. The hospitality we show and the sanctuary we have developed is largely a comfortable one for ourselves, while for those who are less welcome it is uncomfortable, unsafe and unfriendly. Hospitality and sanctuary appear to be fragile, tenuous and shifting, however obvious their importance.

As a quality of the Kingdom, safe hospitality is here now only in part; there is a good deal of work to do. We taste and see the possibility of safe places through the

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# Independent Safeguarding Authority

The Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) was established in January 2008 after being created by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.

Using expert caseworkers it will consider Vetting and Barring Scheme referrals. The scheme is one of 31 recommendations made by Sir Michael Bichard in his inquiry into the Soham Murders.

The overriding aim of the ISA will be to help avoid harm, or risk of harm, to children and vulnerable adults. It will aim to do this by preventing those who are deemed unsuitable to work with children and/or vulnerable adults from gaining access to them through their work:

- Working in partnership with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB), which will gather information on a person who wishes to work in regulated or controlled activity with vulnerable groups.

- Using this information to decide on a case-by-case basis if an individual poses a risk of harm to vulnerable groups.

- Securely storing information about people's ISA status for employers and voluntary organisations to use when they are recruiting.

The scheme will be self-financing. Individual applicants seeking to work with vulnerable groups engaging in regulated or controlled activities will have to pay a fee of £64. Volunteers will not have to pay a registration fee.

The ISA is a Non-Departmental Public Body sponsored by the Home Office. It will be based in Darlington and it will consist of a small board of public appointees and



around 250 ISA employees. Training of the case workers will include a corporate induction, development and decision making, submission writing, risk assessment, appropriate legislation and case work familiarisation. Among the tasks they will perform in the lead up to 'go-live' in October 2009 will be the combining of three existing lists of individuals barred from working with children and vulnerable adults into two.

## Roadshows

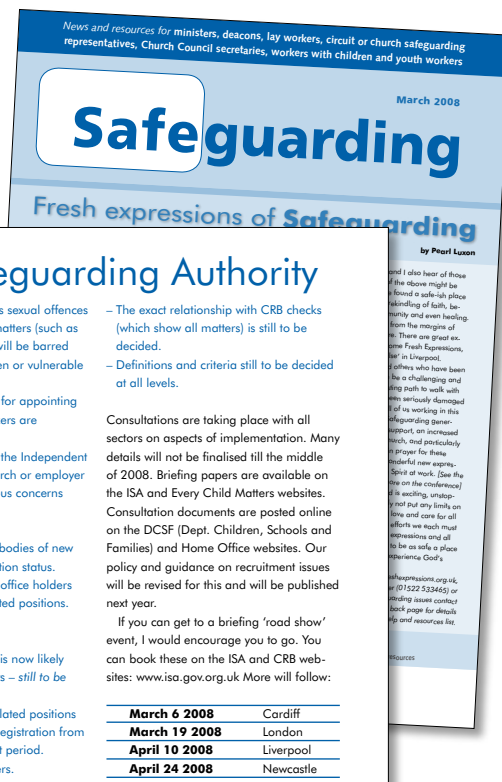
There are currently no confirmed future Information Roadshow dates. However, further events for later on this year. For the latest news on upcoming events as and when they are confirmed please register for scheme updates or check the following website regularly [www.isa.gov.org.uk](http://www.isa.gov.org.uk)

The key features of the scheme were outlined in the previous Link mailing – March 2008

## Implications for the churches

We would love to be able to tell you more about how this will roll out. However, there is very little information at present, guidance is being developed by the DCSF at the moment. Nevertheless, what we do know is that as from October 12th 2009 it will be necessary for people in certain categories to register with ISA before they can work with children, young people and, in certain cases, with vulnerable adults. They will begin with registering those who have never had a CRB check and who work with the relevant groups in a registered activity. Then, over a five-year period the remainder of the workforce requiring ISA registration will need to be done.

The key features of the scheme were outlined in the previous Link mailing – March 2008 (this can be found on the Methodist web site or call us if you need a hard copy). This scheme is tied in with the CRB for the administration of applications and is compulsory for voluntary bodies.



### The Independent Safeguarding Authority



**Key features**

- Compulsory registration for all in regulated positions both with children and vulnerable adults – particular definitions are still to be decided.

- Those people with serious sexual offences or other known serious matters (such as listed in POCA/ List 99) will be barred from working with children or vulnerable adults.
- Mandatory requirements for appointing bodies to ensure all workers are registered.
- Compulsory reporting to the Independent Barring Board by the church or employer when allegations or serious concerns arise.
- No repeats necessary.
- Notification to recruiting bodies of new matters affecting registration status.
- Applies to all volunteers, office holders and employees in regulated positions.

**Outworking**

- Planned implementation is now likely to be phased over 5 years – still to be confirmed.
- All those working in regulated positions will be required to have registration from a certain date during that period.
- It will be free for volunteers.

**Relationship with CRB checks**

- The exact relationship with CRB checks (which show all matters) is still to be decided.
- Definitions and criteria still to be decided at all levels.

Consultations are taking place with all sectors on aspects of implementation. Many details will not be finalised till the middle of 2008. Briefing papers are available on the ISA and Every Child Matters websites. Consultation documents are posted online on the DCSF (Dept. Children, Schools and Families) and Home Office websites. Our policy and guidance on recruitment issues will be revised for this and will be published next year.

If you can get to a briefing 'road show' event, I would encourage you to go. You can book these on the ISA and CRB websites: [www.isa.gov.org.uk](http://www.isa.gov.org.uk) More will follow:

<b>March 6 2008</b>	Cardiff
<b>March 19 2008</b>	London
<b>April 10 2008</b>	Liverpool
<b>April 24 2008</b>	Newcastle

# Communications

## What is available on the web site?

Safeguarding can be found via 'Church Life'. There will be more to come on the Methodist website soon. Deborah Miller, Safeguarding Project Officer, is about to update the material. If you have any views about what you would like to see and how it is organised, then please contact her:

millerd@methodistchurch.org.uk

The following can be found on the website:

- Who should apply for a disclosure?
  - Safeguarding and the Internet
  - Safeguarding FAQ
  - Forms Documents and Resources
  - Training and News
  - Methodist Safeguarding Policy
- Currently we have Frequently Asked questions on Three topics:**
- Child Protection Issues
  - Disclosure Issues
  - Forms And Form Filling



[www.methodist.org.uk](http://www.methodist.org.uk) [www.methodist.org.uk](http://www.methodist.org.uk) [www.methodist.org.uk](http://www.methodist.org.uk)

## Changes and contact numbers at Methodist Church House

Contact details for Methodist Church House Safeguarding office have not changed. We are very glad to have Kim Medford-Vassell back from maternity leave working mornings only as Pearl's PA. She is on: 020 7467 5189. We try to cover the phones in the afternoons, but Deborah and Pearl are out a lot. So if you don't get an answer please leave a message or ring the central helpline on: 020 7486 5502. We are moving to the 4th Floor imminently.



## Communications and newsletters

This bulletin is part of the last Link Mailing. We will continue to communicate with District Safeguarding / Taking Care Representatives by way of a regular e-newsletter. Churches and circuits will need to make sure that these people have the details of all church and circuit safeguarding representatives. Newsletters can be sent on or districts can create their own safeguarding bulletins.

Copies of the e-newsletters will continue to be posted on the website. Past Safeguarding Link Mailings dating back to 2005 can be found on the website under Church Life / Safeguarding / Form Documents and Resources.



CAS is an independent company and charity. It continues to serve ten denominations and many other churches and charities. Its new Chief Executive is Kevin Jones. Ron Ludgate recently retired (again) to Cornwall. Kevin is an experienced lawyer and also has experience of running companies.

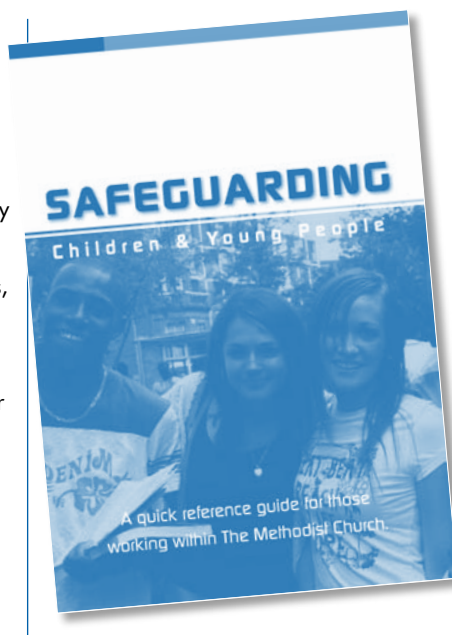
The CAS offices will be in Methodist Church House on the first Floor and they will be happy to help anyone with their applications for criminal record disclosures: Telephone 020 7467 5216

**This bulletin should be kept by your Safeguarding book for reference**

## Towards a theology of safeguarding

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celebration of Holy communion (the heavenly banquet) – ‘Peace be with you’. We see it in meaningful and genuine human interactions, through listening and accompanying. We discover the possibility of greater safety for others in discovering and in appreciating our own vulnerability. Only then will we too be less likely to abuse the power we have. We need to recognise Christ in the other and in ourselves. In this way we will enable children and all those who are vulnerable to be truly welcome and safe.



## Leaflets and cards

These two publications sponsored by Methodist Insurance have been very popular. We recently had a reprint also sponsored by Methodist Insurance to ensure these continue to be made available cheaply from Methodist Publishing House [www.mph.org.uk](http://www.mph.org.uk).

The small cards are pocket guides for those working with children and young people. These are available Order Code: **PE857**

The larger leaflets are a more detailed guide for ministers and paid youth workers or pastoral lay workers. These are available Order Code: **PE357**

## Creating Safer Space

More news to follow on this soon, via District Safeguarding/Taking Care Reps.

# Resources Resources Resources Resources Resources

## When you need safeguarding advice or assistance: -

- Every circuit and/or church in Scotland should have a designated person who advises and provides information on Methodist policy.
- Your district will have safeguarding / taking care coordinators or reps who can be contacted directly, via the district office.
- The connexional person who advises in these matters is Revd Pearl Luxon – Tel: 020 7467 5189. Child protection and safeguarding queries can also be sent to [safeguarding@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@methodistchurch.org.uk) We aim to address these queries and reply to them as soon as possible.
- In an emergency, or if you are unsure about inappropriate behaviour or whether a crime has been committed, you should call Children’s Services duty number or the Police

Child Protection Team. Also discuss this with someone in responsibility in the church.

## Other resources

- Every church, children’s or youth worker, and minister should obtain the latest (2003) Safeguarding book from mph (£2.50 each). [www.mph.org.uk](http://www.mph.org.uk)
- Methodist Criminal Record Bureau (CRB)/ Criminal Record Bureau Scotland (CRBS) packs are also available from mph.
- CRB (England and Wales) and CRBS (Scotland) procedures are explained on [www.churchsafe.org.uk](http://www.churchsafe.org.uk)  
This process is run by Churches’ Agency for Safeguarding (CAS) on behalf of the Methodist Church and ten other denominations.
- Methodist policy on recruitment for both lay people and ministers is outlined on the Methodist website: [www.methodist.org.uk](http://www.methodist.org.uk)

in ‘Recruitment in the Methodist Church’ and ‘Frequently Asked Questions’ (FAQ’s).

## Useful websites

[www.everychildmatters.gov.uk](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk)

- Under ‘Safeguarding children’ and ‘Allegations management’ - a new document, ‘Safer working practices for adults working with children and young people’. Lots of useful material in this including guidance on ‘touching’.

## Also:

[www.stopitnow.org.uk](http://www.stopitnow.org.uk)

[www.lucyfaithfull.org](http://www.lucyfaithfull.org)

[www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

[www.kidsmart.org.uk](http://www.kidsmart.org.uk)

[www.actionforchildren.org.uk](http://www.actionforchildren.org.uk)

[www.barnardos.org.uk](http://www.barnardos.org.uk)

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

[www.ceop.gov.uk](http://www.ceop.gov.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 5226

This insert is free. Methodist Churches and others in linked ecumenical projects may freely copy this resource for their own use. Also downloadable from [www.methodist.org.uk](http://www.methodist.org.uk) under ‘Safeguarding’.

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                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | ..... |
| Deacons                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | ..... |
| Lay workers                | <input type="checkbox"/> | ..... |
| Church Council secretaries | <input type="checkbox"/> | ..... |
| Children and youth workers | <input type="checkbox"/> | ..... |

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

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