

March 2008

Safe guarding

Fresh expressions of Safeguarding

by Pearl Luxon

You might be wondering what Safeguarding has got to do with 'Fresh Expressions' of church. Sometimes we get stuck in a rut with the same 'old' things being stated again and again and a new angle, a new expression, is needed. Equally there are some exciting projects being developed under the 'Fresh Expressions' banner – check out the website – and I have in the past wondered if anyone has considered how safe they are for children, young people and those who are vulnerable. The last thing I would want to do would be to stifle such creativity. We might, sadly, remember one of the first attempts at a fresh way of doing church was the '9 o'clock service' where its charismatic leader was found taking advantage of his position in the project and abusing young women. Happily, I can say that Fresh Expressions do take these issues very seriously and promote robust procedures based on the Safeguarding policies in both church denominations.

So what about fresh expressions of Safeguarding? I want us to explore how the Church can truly express its mission, its creativity in the power of the Spirit, in safe ways. It is part of God's mission to reach the vulnerable and the marginalised. Last November, a conference was held at Methodist Church House in Marylebone, on the pastoral and spiritual needs of adults who have survived abuse. It was attended by around 80 people from all around the



country. Of these, a portion were involved in caring for those who had suffered abuse. Some were those who had suffered abuse and wanted to hear about more help, or they simply wanted the Church to be taking this issue seriously. There was also a significant portion of people present who would have been both survivors and also caring for others, in the church or in other work.

It was a risky but successful conference! It was an occasion where the many self-help groups for Christian survivors came together for the first time. Most came to learn, listen and contribute. There were workshops by specialists in aspects of therapy and different forms of help.

I often hear from people who say that their survivor meetings are 'church' for those who cannot feel safe within church, either because of abuse they had suffered in a church context, or because of the language and practices of church that trigger abusive memories. Sometimes they find the people in church cannot tolerate crying, or they discourage talk about tough things such as abuse, divorce and childlessness, or there is no understanding of someone not 'going home for Christmas'.

On the other hand I also hear of those for whom some of the above might be true, yet they have found a safe-ish place and experienced rekindling of faith, belonging to a community and even healing. They have moved from the margins of church to the centre. There are great examples of this in some Fresh Expressions, like 'Somewhere Else' in Liverpool.

For ministers and others who have been approached, it can be a challenging and emotionally exhausting path to walk with people who have been seriously damaged in childhood. For all of us working in this kind of work or in Safeguarding generally, good levels of support, an increased awareness in the Church, and particularly a greater response in prayer for these issues would be a wonderful new expression of God's loving Spirit at work. [See the article overleaf for more on the conference]

The mission of God is exciting, unstoppable. We must surely not put any limits on expressions of God's love and care for all people. This includes efforts we each must make to enable fresh expressions and all expressions of church to be as safe a place as possible for *all* to experience God's love.

Email contact@freshexpressions.org.uk, Pete Pillinger (01522 533465) or regarding safeguarding issues contact Pearl Luxon – see back page for details and survivor self-help and resources list.

Inside

2 The Independent Safeguarding Authority
Creating safer space

3

Safe recruitment standards and working together
Church encouraged to listen and learn

4

Where to go for help:
Advice or assistance and resources

The Independent Safeguarding Authority



This is the new name for the body that will run the 'vetting and barring scheme' (see July Link Bulletin). All those who work in regulated positions with children or vulnerable adults will need to register over a 5 year period, starting with those who have never had a CRB check. The scheme will still be administered by the CRB and there will be no separate form.

As I write a date has not been set for the implementation of this scheme, though it is officially still thought to be late Autumn 2008, but this is likely to change.

• 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.

- 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 More will follow:

March 6 2008	Cardiff
March 19 2008	London
April 10 2008	Liverpool
April 24 2008	Newcastle

Creating Safer Space



There is preparation going on at connexional and district levels for the roll-out of the Safeguarding Training Framework that was approved at Conference last year. A newsletter on this, written by Pearl Luxon, is available every 2 months; please ask your district Safeguarding rep if you would like a copy.

A new short-term project officer, Deborah Miller, is being employed soon to help prepare for and promote this national policy during 2008 and work on other projects too.

Circuits need to consider how they will appoint and support locally appointed trainers or training co-ordinators to deliver the basic training and keep records of the training done by office holders, staff and volunteers. This could be done in circuit clusters. The district safeguarding groups

will also need strengthening with more volunteers who have suitable expertise and also resources. They have been aware of the need for such work for some time; however, often those with suitable expertise are only known at a local church level. These roles are not limited to church members, and sometimes relatives of church members are engaged in social work, probation, health visiting or child protection police work and are glad to assist churches and circuits.

The documents are available on the Methodist website under Safeguarding and Resources or Conference Reports. Remember to download the appendices as well as these have more detail. http://www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/conf07_33_Creating_Safer_space_pc.doc

Towards revision of the Safeguarding Book 2003

A group met in December to guide this process. It is planned to have a much more flexible resource, probably in the shape of a ring binder. There will be two main sections: 'the policy section' will describe core child protection policy and core best practice of the Methodist Church. In other words, this will contain all the essential material to get started. The remainder will be issued in leaflet form as downloadable material on particular topics.

Guidance information sheets are already downloadable on some topics – 'Camping and residential guidance', 'Information sharing' and also 'Photography guidance'. This range will be expanded to include

'Lettings and key holders', 'Creating a church policy', and many more. Some popular material currently in *Worth Doing Well* will be downloadable, such as ratios and information on Ofsted registration, plus a guide for new church/circuit Safeguarding reps. Most forms will only be available on the web so that they can be updated easily. CRB forms will continue to be supplied by mph. You will also be able to add material such as Safeguarding Link bulletins or local material from LSCBs or NSPCC. Let me know what additions you want, email safeguarding@methodistchurch.org.uk with your ideas for future online information sheets.

Churches' Agency for Safeguarding

CAS is now fully independent of the Methodist Church and is a charitable limited company. Another 'child' of Methodism! This means all cheques for CRB fees for paid staff need to be made payable to 'The Churches' Agency for Safeguarding' (CAS).

The performance standards are now as good as they can get with turnaround at minimal levels since the middle of last

year. No delays, no backlog at CAS. There has also been a reduction in the error rate, since charges came in for this, to 6% of forms returned to the verifier. This compares to 30% before the error charge was implemented in April 2007, including errors chased up by phone.

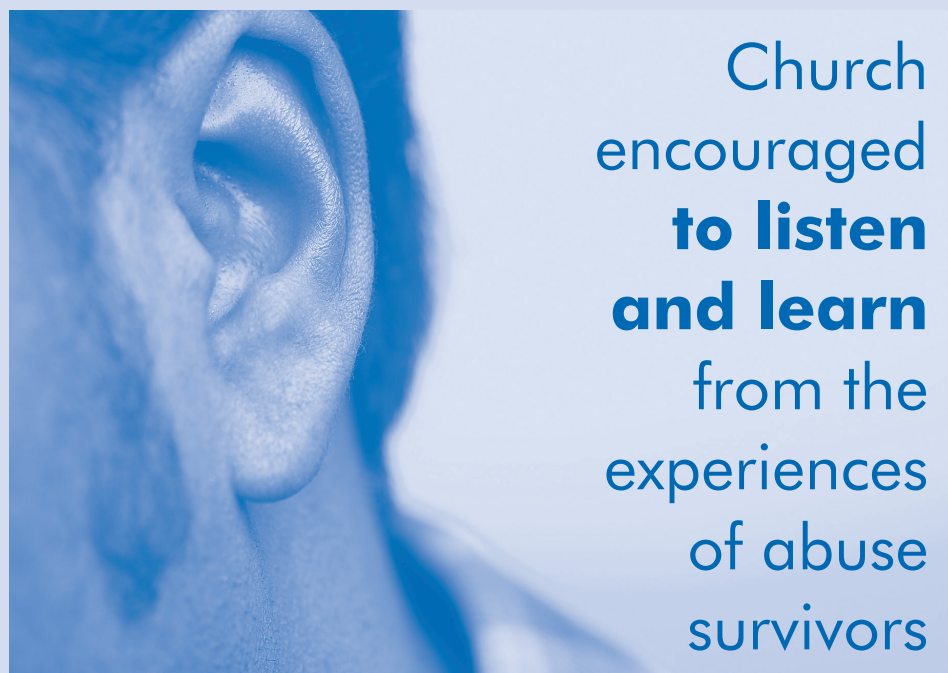
A quality assurance assessment of CAS has been found to be 100% by the CRB.

Safe Recruitment Standards and 'Working Together'

One of the initiatives linked with the development of new best practice in child protection in *Working Together* (2006) is concerned with safer recruitment. This is not just about CRB or the vetting and barring. All those who work with children or those who are vulnerable need to be interviewed, fill in a form and provide references, attend training and so on. All this is detailed in our own good practice, *Safeguarding* (2003). Do we really follow this, or are steps missed, hoping for the best? Look out for courses run by the local authority or Local Children's Safeguarding Board (LSCB). The Government is putting money into this so take advantage of the courses on offer.

Working Together is available via the DCSF website and Every Child Matters website.

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/socialcare/safeguarding/>



Church encouraged to listen and learn from the experiences of abuse survivors

The one-day conference 'Extending our Comfort Zone', held in November and organised by the Methodist Church and the Church of England, drew together clergy and lay workers alongside survivors and survivor support groups, including representatives from the Trauma and Abuse Group (TAG), S:Vox (Survivors' Voice), Minister and Clergy Sexual Abuse Survivors (MACSAS), and Christian Survivors of Sexual Abuse (CSSA). The event offered a forum for sharing experiences of working alongside survivors of abuse and promoting greater understanding of how churches can help respond to the challenges faced by those who have suffered abuse, whether as children or adults.

One of the keynote speakers at the event was the Revd David Gamble, Moderator of
(continued over page)

(from previous page)

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland's 2002 *Time for Action* report. In his address, Mr Gamble encouraged Christians to understand more readily that abuse can take place within churches and other Christian contexts. He called for even more investment in training and education on these issues for all those involved in the Church and for more consideration of the stereotypes and labels that can be used when relating or referring to those who have been abused, and urged participants to respect the diversity of experience of those affected by such crimes. Mr Gamble encouraged churches to fully engage survivors in the full life of their worshipping and serving community.

Col Lercsak, representing Christian Survivors of Sexual Abuse, asked church members not to respond with panic or fear if survivors approach them to discuss their experiences, and to remember that it may have taken them a significant time to gain the courage to talk. The impact on a victim's self-esteem cannot be underestimated, she stressed, and explained that many survivors struggle to appreciate themselves or restrain the sense of shame they feel following their experiences. Elements of Christian worship that many take for granted - such as sharing the grace publicly with the rest of the congregation, or shaking hands or hugging during the sharing of the peace - can be challenging for survivors, she said. Ms Lercsak suggested that creative

outlets - such as creative writing or poetry sessions - have proved helpful for some survivors in providing an opportunity to express their feelings.

Workshops allowed participants to explore a number of issues in smaller group sessions.

The event was devised by a Church of England consultation group that meets regularly to discuss how the Church can better respond to the pastoral and spiritual needs of survivors. It followed the publication of *Promoting a Safe Church*, a House of Bishops document which built on the themes of *Time for Action*.

As one of the outcomes of the event, the consultation group, together with colleagues in the Methodist Church, is producing a prayer card (to be published in March) to provide churches with a resource to reflect on the experience of survivors, encourage prayer for these issues and raise awareness concerning the pastoral and spiritual needs of those affected by abuse.

In her concluding remarks at the conference, Alison Webster, social responsibility adviser for the Diocese of Oxford, suggested that those involved in the life of the Church should 'try and see the world from perspectives that are not limited by personal experience. Asking big questions of the Church takes courage, and all of us need to try and reflect on the experience of those who have suffered at the hands of abusers, whether or not that occurred within a church context.'

Ben Wilson, Communications Office, Church of England NCIs

Where to go for help Resources for Survivors' support

www.svox.org.uk

www.macsas.org.uk

www.napac.org.uk

www.victimsnolonger.org.uk

www.survivors.org.uk

www.holyroodhouse.freeuk.com

CSSA c/o 38 Sydenham Villas Road,
Cheltenham, Glos., GL52 6DZ

When you need Safeguarding 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 co-ordinators or reps who can be contacted directly, via the TDO or 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. 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
- ⊙ Methodist CRB/CRBS packs are also available from mph.
- ⊙ CRB (England and Wales) and CRBS (Scotland) procedures are explained on www.churchsafe.org.uk. This process is run by Churches' Agency for Safeguarding (CAS) on behalf of the Methodist Church and 9 other denominations.
- ⊙ Methodist policy on recruitment for both lay people and ministers is outlined on the Methodist web site www.methodist.org.uk in Recruitment in the Methodist Church and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's).

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 5201

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 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
- 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.

© Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes