

Development of new Senior Leadership Safeguarding Training

MC/24/12

Date of meeting	29-30 January 2024
Contact name and details	Christine Kennedy, Safeguarding Training Lead kennedyc@methodistchurch.org.uk Tim Carter, Director of Safeguarding cartert@methodistchurch.org.uk
Action required	For approval
Resolutions	12/1. The Council receives the report. 12/2. The Council approves the proposals for senior leadership safeguarding training as set out in the report.

Summary of content

Subject of aims	Safeguarding of Children, Young People, Vulnerable Adults and Senior Leaders within the church
Main points	A proposal that the Methodist Church should provide specific safeguarding training to inform and support senior leaders in their handling of and responding to serious safeguarding concerns.
Background context and relevant documents (with function)	A number of high profile incidents resulting in reputational damage, Previous collaboration and reciprocal recognition of training modules with the Church of England (which has a course for Senior Leaders). An outline of the proposed course programme is attached
Consultations	Learning Network staff, District Safeguarding Officers and a member of the Survivors' Reference Group have worked with the Safeguarding Training Lead. The Church of England Training Lead has been most helpful and shared the resources from all three of their previous Senior Leadership Safeguarding Pathways.

Summary of impact

Wider connexional	Ongoing practice and wellbeing of Senior Church Leaders. The wellbeing of all members and users of the church. Protecting the reputation of the wider church.
External, including ecumenical	Links with the Church of England, which has shared their equivalent materials.

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Introduction

1. When formal safeguarding training was first developed, around 2008, the Methodist Church and the Church of England shared the same Safeguarding Adviser along with all their safeguarding training materials. In more recent years each denomination has developed its own training programmes, but has retained a reciprocal recognition of each other's training at Foundation and Advanced (Leadership) Module levels. The Church of England also has a course for Senior Leaders, which a number of District Chairs attended online during the pandemic restrictions. It was agreed that this level of training was very helpful but would benefit from being delivered from a Methodist context.
2. In the last year there have been several high profile safeguarding concerns relating to senior leaders within the Methodist Church, which have been reported by the media. This has clearly resulted in some reputational damage to the wider church.
3. It is therefore proposed that the Methodist Church should provide specific safeguarding training for Senior Leaders to inform and support them in their handling of and responding to serious safeguarding concerns. Thanks to the continuing links between the denominations' training leads, the Church of England has shared the materials from their current and previous courses, which have formed a basis for this new programme.

Format of the training

4. The format of the new Senior Leadership training has not yet been finalised, but the outline of the course programme highlights the areas to be covered and the key themes of each section.
5. It is intended that the training will be delivered, face to face, to groups of no more than 20 people, to enable confidential conversations, where appropriate. A pair of specialist trainers, one from the Connexional Safeguarding Team and the other from the Learning Network, will deliver this. Senior leaders will be able to attend with neighbouring Districts or elsewhere in the Connexion if that is their choice.
6. It is anticipated that the training will take most of the day, with appropriate comfort breaks. It is not proposed to offer an online version of this training.

Attendance at the training

7. It is recommended that District Chairs, deputies and assistants attend this training as they all play a significant part in shaping the safeguarding culture of their Districts as well as working closely with, and line managing, Safeguarding Officers (paid and volunteer), to respond to significant safeguarding concerns.
8. It is also proposed that key connexional leaders, lay and ordained, should attend the training, in recognition of their impact on the wider Church's safeguarding response. District Safeguarding officers will also be required to attend the training.
9. Attendance at the Senior Leadership training will be every four years, in line with the other modules. Those attending the Advanced Module are no longer expected to refresh their Foundation Module training. However, it is recommended that those attending Senior Leadership training should also continue to attend Advanced Module training, as elements of the Advanced Module will not be included in the Senior Leadership materials. The combined commitment of Senior Leaders to safeguarding training will be two days in four years, or one day every two years.

10. The aims of the training

- a) To inform Senior Leaders of their specific roles and responsibilities in their involvement, handling and responding to serious safeguarding concerns
- b) To consider the leadership behaviours that are needed to promote healthier cultures (including how to involve and empower others) and feel confident and determined to demonstrate them.
- c) To enable them to appreciate the impact that their response to a safeguarding issue can have on the wider situation

- d) To reflect on the kind of healthy culture that is protective, preventative, healing, and restorative.
- e) To protect them from the adverse consequences of safeguarding issues and to provide a safe place to ask difficult questions which cannot be asked elsewhere.
- f) To translate these learning aims into new and observable leadership behaviours which deliver concrete safeguarding outcomes and demonstrate that safeguarding is increasingly intuitive and at the heart of everything they do.

Conclusion

- 11. A range of training resources is being developed so that the new Senior Leadership training can be rolled out after Easter 2024.

Proposals

- 12. That the Methodist Church adopts a new level of Senior Leadership Safeguarding Training, which is refreshed every four years.
- 13. That the training is a requirement for District Chairs, deputies, assistants and other senior leaders (lay and ordained) in the Connexional Team and wider church.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

- 12/1. The Council receives the report.**
- 12/2. The Council approves the proposals for senior leadership safeguarding training as set out in the report.**