

# Confidentiality Guidelines in CPD

MC/24/20

Date of meeting	29-30 January 2024
Contact name and details	Joanne Anderton, Conference Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice <a href="mailto:lcp@methodistchurch.org.uk">lcp@methodistchurch.org.uk</a>
Action required	For decision
Resolutions	20/1. The Council receives the report. 20/2. The Council agrees that the Guidelines for Good Practice in Confidentiality and Pastoral Care should be reviewed and directs the Secretary of the Conference to appoint a task group (corresponding to the list in paragraph 6) to undertake this work and to report to the Conference no later than 2026 with recommended updates.

## Summary of content

Subject of aims	The Guidelines for Good Practice in Confidentiality and Pastoral Care in Part 14 of Book VII of CPD are out of date and need reviewing.
Main points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Guidelines for Good Practice in Confidentiality and Pastoral Care in Part 14 of Book VII of CPD were introduced in 2008 and have not been reviewed since.</li> <li>The Law and Polity Committee advises that the Guidelines are out of date and need reviewing.</li> <li>The Council is asked to authorise the Secretary of the Conference to appoint a task group to undertake the review.</li> </ul>
Background context and relevant documents (with function)	Report to the 2008 Conference: <i>With Integrity and Skill</i> <a href="https://www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/Conf08_18_With_Integrity_and_Skill.pdf">https://www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/Conf08_18_With_Integrity_and_Skill.pdf</a>
Consultations	The Law and Polity Committee.

## Summary of impact

Standing Orders	The Guidelines in Part 14 of Book VII of <i>The Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church</i> will need amending as a result of the proposed review.
Faith and Order	The Faith and Order Committee should be consulted as part of the proposed review.
Wider connexional	The Confidentiality Guidelines are of interest to all ministers, pastoral committees, circuit staff and leadership teams and Synods.
Risk	Risk of data breaches and complaints caused as a result of following out-of-date guidance.

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- 1 In 2008, the Conference received a report entitled [\*With Integrity and Skill\*](#), and adopted the recommendations within it, including the Guidelines for Good Practice in Confidentiality and Pastoral Care (**the Guidelines**) in Section 12 of the Report.
- 2 The Guidelines are now set out in Part 14 of Book VII of *The Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church*. The Guidelines are also published on the Methodist Church website: <https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/guidance-for-churches/pastoral-care/confidentiality-guidelines>
- 3 The world of regulation and data privacy has changed significantly since 2008 and the Law and Polity Committee has advised that the Guidelines need reviewing and amending in line with current law and practice.
- 4 *With Integrity and Skill* was produced by a Council-appointed Confidentiality and Pastoral Care Task Group in response to two memorials to the Conference in 2003.
- 5 The Council is asked to authorise the Secretary of the Conference to appoint a new Confidentiality and Pastoral Care task group to review the Guidelines and to report to the Conference with recommended updates.
- 6 It is proposed that the Confidentiality and Pastoral Care task group comprises:
  - The Connexional Team Data Protection Officer
  - A representative of the Law and Polity Committee
  - A representative of the JDS Committee
  - A representative of the Faith and Order Committee
  - A representative of the Safeguarding Committee
  - A representative of the Ministries Committee
  - Two circuit ministers
  - Two lay people with a background in pastoral care and/or supervision

## \*\*\*RESOLUTIONS

**20/1. The Council receives the report.**

**20/2. The Council agrees that the Guidelines for Good Practice in Confidentiality and Pastoral Care should be reviewed and directs the Secretary of the Conference to appoint a task group (corresponding to the list in paragraph 6) to undertake this work and to report to the Conference no later than 2026 with recommended updates.**