

Review of the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

MC/23/43

Date of meeting	25-27 March 2023
Contact name and details	Nicola Sylvester, Safeguarding Policy Manager. sylvestern@methodistchurch.org.uk
Action required	To note
Resolutions	43/1. The Council receives the report.

Summary of content

Subject of aims	To present changes to the safeguarding policy and procedure for the Methodist Church.
Main points	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The case outlining the need for the amendments▪ A summary of the key changes
Background context and relevant documents (with function)	The need to rationalise the volume of the Church's safeguarding documentation so that it supports rather than hinders the aim to be a safe place for all.
Consultations	This review takes place following consultation with key stakeholders including Casework Supervisors, District Safeguarding Officers and members of the Survivor Advisory Group.

Summary of impact

External, including ecumenical	Local Ecumenical Partnerships
Risk	None identified

1. Introduction

This paper indicates the changes required to the policy for the Methodist's Church procedures to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults.

2. Background

Upon taking up the post of safeguarding policy manager for the Methodist Church in March 2021, the Safeguarding Policy Manager was inundated with views expressed by District Safeguarding Officers about the density and volume of information contained within the safeguarding policy document. The Policy Manager's own evaluation of the document was that it was not user-friendly and that this was the reason so many policy queries come into the safeguarding inbox as it is easier to seek the answer from Connexional Safeguarding Team (CST) members than to attempt to navigate the document itself. Subsequent reviews of the document only served to add to its length rather than make it more accessible for the audience for which it was designed.

3. The Review Process

3.1 The document was sent to District Safeguarding Officers (DSOs) for discussion in their quadrants' meetings. Overall responses indicated that practitioners welcomed the slimmed down version of the policy and the removal of intricate procedural details to the appendices.

3.2 The Survivors' Advisory Group offered extensive feedback. The points raised are summarised below:

- a) Survivors and perpetrators should be addressed separately in the context of support.
- b) The policy should make it clear that support will be offered to those who have experienced abuse whether that took place within Church premises or in some way associate with church activities.
- c) Survivors welcomed the introduction of an understanding of 'low-level concerns' (this is now part of DfE requirements for school safeguarding policies).
- d) The views of survivors should be reflected when reviewing a safeguarding contract.
- e) The terminology to describe people who have experienced abuse in the policy will include both the words victim and survivor with a policy position to ask individuals what they would prefer so that they are empowered to determine the labels applied to them.

4. Summary of the changes

The current policy document covers seven sections over almost 200 pages. The revised policy has reduced this by almost one third in length. The comprehensive review puts the user of the document at its heart with a starting position of the Church's understanding of safeguarding and the many forms harm can take. The previous detail in respect of health and safety and data protection are removed from the document and, in the case of the later, placed in an appendix. Table 4.1 below presents a compare and contrast table to highlight the changes in brief.

Table 4.1

Content	Current Policy	Content	Updated Policy
SECTION 1	Introduction	SECTION 1	Introduction
SECTION 2	Safeguarding Policy Statement	SECTION 2	Safeguarding Policy Statement
SECTION 3	Safeguarding organisational structure and responsibilities	SECTION 3	Safe Working Practices with Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults.
SECTION 4	Procedures for responding well to safeguarding incidents	SECTION 4	Responding well to Safeguarding Incidents
SECTION 5	Procedures for the management of safeguarding information	SECTION 5	Safeguarding Organisational Structure and Responsibilities
SECTION 6	Procedures Promoting Safer Practice	SECTION 6	Practice Guidance
SECTION 7	Practice Guidance	SECTION 7	Information Sharing

The substantial changes are available to view in detail by requesting a copy from Jane Bates at batesj@methodistchurch.org.uk

***RESOLUTION

43/1. The Council receives the report.