

The Theology of Safeguarding study materials:

God Welcomes All – How faith informs safeguarding

MC/23/56

Date of meeting	25-27 March 2023
Contact name and details	Karen Allen, Safeguarding Casework Supervisor, Connexional Safeguarding Team allenk@methodistchurch.org.uk
Action required	To note
Resolutions	56/1. The Council receives the report.

Summary of content

Subject of aims	Provide study resources to enable the Theology of Safeguarding Report to be accessible, clear and easier to understand.
Main points	The study resources will consist of four sessions titled as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Are Welcome – Hearing and Responding to the Word • Language, Listening and Hearing • An Understanding of Power • The Impact of Abuse – Symbols and Liturgy in Worship
Background context and relevant documents (with function)	The Study Guide is the main document. There is also a Readers' Guide. In addition, there is a Facilitators' Guide to help guide and support study groups. There will be an introductory film for each session and some additional film which will help to stimulate discussion and reflection (currently in production). Films will be subtitled and transcripts made available.
Consultations	The following committees, groups and individuals have been consulted: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The Safeguarding Committee 2) Secretary of the Faith and Order Committee 3) Acting Chair, Justice, Dignity and Solidarity Committee 4) The Survivors' Advisory Group and two individual male survivors 6) The Assistant Secretary of the Conference 7) An advisory group who oversaw production of the resources including the Safeguarding Director, a District Chair, a presbyter, a deacon and a District Safeguarding Officer with a working group comprising the Director of Communications, Director of Learning and Development, Local Preachers' officer and a Survivor Representative <p>Discussions took place with the Children, Youth and Family Team in relation to consulting with children and young people. However, it was agreed that a bespoke resource was needed specifically for children, young people, and that it would not be appropriate, due to the content needed for each group to have the same study guide for both adults and children.</p>

	The study guide will be piloted in order to ensure feedback can be addressed and any amendments needed can be made prior to final publication.
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Summary of impact

Faith and Order	Faith and Order have been consulted throughout the production of the study guide.
Wider connexional	It is intended that victims/survivors and others with protected characteristics may feel that their voices are being heard, their experiences are validated and that they are valued and welcome in the Church. The study guide will help to break down some of the barriers (and myths) that victims/survivors and those with protected characteristics face. This should help in the enhancement of confidence in the Church as truly welcoming and inclusive.
External, including ecumenical	Other denominations have expressed an interest in the study guide and a desire that this is shared.
Risk	If the church cannot respond appropriately to understanding its own theology and values, it will not be fully undertaking its mission.

The 2021 Conference adopted a report concerning the Theology of Safeguarding, commending it for study and reflection throughout the Church. The report can be found at <https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/21753/conf-2021-27-the-theology-of-safeguarding.pdf>

In adopting the report, the Conference noted (paragraph 9.3) that:

It is not possible, in a report such as this, to cover all the topics which might have been explored, but it is hoped that all members of the Methodist Church will engage with its contents and continue to explore the issues and questions it raises. To help with this it is intended that some resources are produced and made available on the Methodist website, including: a Reader's Guide and video presentation; discussion guides for particular contexts (such as church councils, circuit leadership meetings, and local preachers' meetings for example); and a short resource to enable further reflection on forgiveness including some bible study amongst other things.

The Conference adopted resolution 27/3: *The Conference directs the Methodist Council in consultation with the Faith and Order Committee to produce the resources described in paragraph 9.3, consider what other resources might be needed, and develop the theological content of the Advanced safeguarding training in the light of this report.*

These resources have been produced, entitled *God Welcomes All – How faith informs safeguarding* following the consultations described on the coversheet above. If any member of the Council wishes to see these, please request them from Jane Bates at batesj@methodistchurch.org.uk

*****RESOLUTION**

56/1. The Council receives the report.