

## 47. Safeguarding Report

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<b>Status of Paper</b>	Final
<b>Action Required</b>	Decision
<b>Resolutions</b>	<p>47/1. The Conference receives the Report.</p> <p>47/2. The Conference directs the Methodist Council to ensure that an additional training element of the Foundation Module is developed as set out in paragraph 3.1 of the report and to ensure that it be available from September 2016.</p> <p>47/3. The Conference directs those for whom the Foundation Module is mandatory to undertake the additional training element of the Module (as set out in para 3.1 of the report) five years after having undertaken the Foundation Module.</p>

### Summary of Content

<b>Subject and Aims</b>	To update the Conference on safeguarding developments since the 2014 Conference.
<b>Main Points</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Oversight</li> <li>2. Safeguarding casework</li> <li>3. Creating safer space: the safeguarding training programme</li> <li>4. District Safeguarding Officers</li> <li>5. President's Inquiry (2011) Safeguarding Audit</li> <li>6. Wider societal developments with an impact on the Methodist Church</li> </ol>
<b>Background Context and Relevant Documents</b>	The 2014 Conference received one report relating to the safeguarding work of the Church.

### Summary of Impact

<b>Standing Orders</b>	Cross reference to the work of the Law and Polity Committee.
<b>External</b>	Recognition of the ongoing partnership with the Church of England.

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### **1. Oversight**

- 1.1 The safeguarding work of the Methodist Church is carried out under a Covenant agreement with the Church of England.
- 1.2 Over the past year the name and the terms of reference of the body which oversees this joint activity have been amended. These changes were approved by the Methodist Council in January 2015. The new body is the Joint Safeguarding Working Group (JSWG). The intention, reflected in the change of name, is that its activity should be more focused and productive whilst retaining regional links and representing specialisms in the field of safeguarding. The Revd Dr Elizabeth Smith is the Methodist co-chair alongside the Right Revd Paul Butler, Bishop of Durham who is the Church of England co-chair. The appointment of a new national adviser for the Church of England, Graham Tilbey, represents an opportunity for the enhancement of a constructive working relationship between our churches.
- 1.3 The Safeguarding Advisory Panel is a Methodist body whose role is set out in Standing Order 232. It meets twice each year as a full body for review of the work done through risk assessments. At other times members meet in small teams for review of individual cases. The Revd Alison Tomlin has taken over as chair of the panel. The panel discussions are lively and thoughtful with a strong emphasis on improving practice and promoting consistency between individual panels. Particular themes over the past year have been promoting diversity and equality; best practice in risk assessment and the conduct of panels; responding to resistance to safeguarding measures.
- 1.4 The 2014 Conference instructed the Safeguarding Advisory Panel to review its own terms of reference with specific attention to its membership, decision making powers and the process for appeals in order to recommend changes to the 2015 Methodist Conference. A sub group was established which made proposals to the full Safeguarding Advisory Panel. These were further discussed with the Committee on Methodist Law and Polity and proposed Standing Order amendments are contained in the Report of the Committee on Methodist Law and Polity. It was agreed by the sub group that a more detailed review was required in respect of appeals, and the sub group will therefore be working with the Committee on Methodist Law and Polity with a view to bringing any proposed Standing Order amendments to the 2016 Conference.

### **2. Safeguarding Casework**

- 2.1 The growth in casework, in addition to that arising from the Past Cases Review, continues. The factors identified in previous years, which appear to contribute to this, remain significant: greater awareness as a result of the implementation of safeguarding training; the increasing success of the Church in reaching out to people from troubled backgrounds, some of whom raise safeguarding concerns; and a wider societal focus on past abuse. The initial problems following the introduction of the single Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate in June 2013, issued only to the applicant, have diminished - although there is still not wholesale appreciation of the need to send copies of blemished certificates to the connexional safeguarding team. It is hoped that the finalisation of shorter and clearer Practice Guidance on carrying out DBS checks as part of Safer Recruitment will act as a further reminder.
- 2.2 The Past Cases Review (PCR) is reported on separately. Here it should be noted that casework from the Past Cases Review has placed considerable demands on the safeguarding team. Awareness generated by the PCR appears to have contributed to increases in other referrals

and enquiries. However, it has also led to learning about the types and nature of harm and abuse in the Church; its impact; the experience of survivors and how good practice might be developed.

### **3. Creating Safer Space (CSS) the safeguarding training programme**

- 3.1 The Creating Safer Space safeguarding training programme continues to be rolled out thanks to the commitment and dedication of the Districts. The updating of the Foundation Module has been delayed. This overdue work could now be usefully combined with the development of the Foundation Module 'top up' training required in 2016. This additional training should be undertaken by those for whom the Methodist Conferences in 2011 and 2012 agreed Foundation Module attendance to be mandatory and for whom five years have elapsed since they undertook it.
- 3.2 Minor revisions to update the Leadership Module have been made. Additional sections of the Leadership Module are proposed, covering social media and protecting ourselves in safeguarding/maintaining appropriate boundaries. Work continues with colleagues in the Discipleship and Ministries Learning Network to ensure that safeguarding is embedded within learning programmes across the Connexion as well as for student ministers.

### **4. District Safeguarding Officers**

- 4.1 The work of the connexional safeguarding team is carried out in collaboration with that of District Safeguarding Officers (DSOs). The strengthening of the role of DSOs envisaged in the President's Inquiry (2011) continues. The District Safeguarding Officers play a vital role keeping all aspects of safeguarding on the agenda including the successful roll out of the Past Cases Review and the implementation of Creating Safer Space Training. They play a vital role in ensuring the implementation of new policies and the development of effective links with local statutory agencies which improves the standing of the Methodist Church.
- 4.2 The Connexional Team organises twice-yearly days for District Safeguarding Officers and this year the topics have included sharing good safeguarding practice; domestic abuse; changes in Standing Orders related to safeguarding; developing training in safeguarding recording and working together with the Communications Team. We have also offered an additional day's training on Good Practice in Risk Assessments and a feedback/consultation day on the Past Cases Review. The annual Joint Safeguarding Conference, organised together with the Church of England, provides an opportunity for District Safeguarding Officers to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding – through both the formal programme and networking. The topic in 2015 was 'Resilience in Safeguarding' and it considered both how District Safeguarding Officers can develop their own resilience in a stressful role – and the importance of working to promote resilience in those with whom we work.

### **5. President's Safeguarding Inquiry 2011**

The 2014 Conference directed that all District Safeguarding Officers undertake a review in 2014/15, of what progress has been made against the President's Inquiry recommendations relating to the role of District Safeguarding Officer within their own district. The outcomes from these reviews were to be reported both to District Synods in spring 2015, and to the Connexional Safeguarding Adviser. The findings are summarised below.

## PRESIDENT'S INQUIRY IMPLEMENTATION AUDIT

### Resolution 34/4 A) (2014)

Each Synod ensures that District Safeguarding Officers undertake a review of the implementation of recommendations of the 2011 President's Inquiry, assessing the progress which has been made within the District.

The outcomes of the review should be reported to Synods and the Connexional Safeguarding Adviser no later than April 2015.

#### General points

- i. Replies were received from 23 out of 31 Districts.
- ii. The process of completing the audit appears to have been helpful in prompting thought among District Safeguarding Officers (DSOs) and District Safeguarding Groups (DSGs) about these matters and they are making action plans for improvement where needed.
- iii. The responses highlight a few areas where connexional support locally might be useful for a limited period in order to assist in ensuring appropriate provision and structures are in place.
- iv. Two DSOs peer reviewed each other's audit. This seems to be a helpful model which could be further encouraged.

Requirement	Progress	Comment from Connexional Adviser
<i>Compliance with standardised recording of safeguarding information (eg incident reports, referrals, contract monitoring) at every level of the church.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DSOs reported that standard documentation had been made available.</li> <li>• There was less confidence that it was consistently used in churches and circuits and a recognition that practice probably varies.</li> <li>• There was a commitment to engaging with this issue through workshops and training.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connexional practice guidance has only relatively recently been approved by Methodist Council.</li> <li>• This can provide an impetus to work on improving consistency.</li> <li>• There is good awareness of the need to improve practice.</li> <li>• A connexional training package is being piloted for use across Districts, Circuits and Churches.</li> </ul>
<i>A District Safeguarding Officer whose role meets the job description working a minimum of 14 hours per week.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DSO role meeting the job description is in place in all Districts.</li> <li>• A few DSO posts are not yet paid roles but this appears to be the wish of those particular DSOs.</li> <li>• Many noted that the DSO resource is supplemented by administrative support and by the District Safeguarding Group.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 14 hours seems to be seen as a maximum not a minimum.</li> <li>• The variation in size of district is not always reflected in the hours allocated.</li> <li>• Where a DSO covers more than one District there does not always appear to be 14 hours allocated to each District.</li> <li>• The hours allocated to the post should be kept under review in relation to the demands of the role.</li> </ul>
<i>Effective working between the District Executive Officer for Safeguarding, District Chair and Training</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DSOs now seem to have regular meetings with the District Chair and to be seen as part of the District's structures.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some of the difficulties reported seem to arise from delays in making DMNL appointments.</li> </ul>

<p><i>Officer (DMLN); good sharing of information and concerns. Regular meetings and a clear place within the District's structures ensured by the District Chair.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was variation between Districts in relation to effective working with the DMLN.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving working relationships with the DMLN was noted as being part of work plans.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Notification of all Safeguarding concerns or possible safeguarding concerns to the District Safeguarding Officer.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DSOs have made it clear that this is the expectation and many reported confidence that they would be contacted in the event of a concern.</li> <li>• Many noted an increase in the level of reporting which may be the result of raised awareness of the need to report.</li> <li>• However DSOs also realistically noted that they cannot know if everything has been reported. Some DSOs expressed concern that they believe that 100% compliance has not been achieved.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many DSOs proactively seek out opportunities to remind ministers and others of the expectation that concerns should be reported – this includes attending induction events and relevant meetings.</li> <li>• The profile of the DSO as someone who is well known and approachable is clearly evident in many Districts.</li> <li>• This requires ongoing outreach work within Districts.</li> </ul>
<p><i>All Districts to have active Safeguarding Groups which meet regularly to discuss training, implementation of policy and local safeguarding concerns.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Districts have District Safeguarding Groups, bar one; some are more active and live than others.</li> <li>• In one District an ecumenical approach is planned.</li> <li>• From their responses it is apparent that DSOs are clear when development work is needed, eg finding an Independent Chair; ensuring all areas of safeguarding expertise are represented.</li> <li>• One District has developed a network of advisers external to the group but with professional experience which can be drawn on.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have had some discussions about how to build a DSG at DSO days and will continue to share learning about what works well.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Members of the District Safeguarding Groups should be encouraged to take up further training opportunities (eg attendance at the Connexional Safeguarding</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many DSOs reported that Members of District Safeguarding Groups tend to have access to training in their own profession.</li> <li>• Many Districts are now prepared to support the Chair or a member of the DSG to attend the annual safeguarding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having practising professionals in the field of safeguarding on the DSG is very helpful and assists in developing currency of understanding.</li> <li>• At connexional level we have opened up training events to members of DSGs and are monitoring this development</li> </ul>

<p><i>Conference) and should have current working knowledge of an area of Safeguarding.</i></p>	<p>conference and/or DSO days.</p>	<p>to ensure it does not become too unwieldy.</p>
<p><i>The District Safeguarding Officer should ensure that Safeguarding training takes place regularly and systematically and is of a high standard. While the training officer (DMLN) is responsible for good quality delivery the best results will be achieved by close working with the DSO ensuring appropriate content.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nearly all Districts have programmes in place for the regular delivery of both Foundation and Leadership Modules.</li> <li>• Where more work is needed DSOs are aware of this.</li> <li>• There is an uneven experience of the DMLN being involved in the CSS training.</li> <li>• Feedback forms are completed by participants and reviewed by the training teams.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The roll out of the Creating Safer Space training is going well in most Districts.</li> <li>• This audit has highlighted where some additional input may be needed to ensure full coverage.</li> <li>• We will take the learning from the positive experiences of the delivery of CSS training to inform our practice throughout the Connexion.</li> <li>• While we have a good deal of direct feedback from the evaluation forms, a formal Quality Assurance process would be helpful in gauging the relevance of the content and the standard of delivery.</li> </ul>

## **6. Wider societal developments with an impact on the Methodist Church**

Safeguarding and related matters continue to be in the forefront of public consciousness. Attention has been focused on the, now, statutory Independent Inquiry in to Child Sexual Abuse to be chaired by Justice Lowell Goddard. As churches are included in this review, we anticipate being required to give evidence. Other developments include updated statutory guidance on Working Together to Safeguard Children, the implementation of the Care Act 2014, greater awareness of different forms of harm and abuse, such as the sexual exploitation of teenage girls, trafficking and the financial abuse of vulnerable adults. There is work ahead to consider and develop the role of the church in responding well to these.

### **\*\*\*RESOLUTIONS**

**47/1. The Conference received the Report.**

**47/2. The Conference directed the Methodist Council to ensure that an additional training element of the Foundation Module is developed as set out in paragraph 3.1 of the report and to ensure that it be available from September 2016.**

**47/3. The Conference directed those for whom the Foundation Module is mandatory to undertake the additional training element of the Module (as set out in para 3.1 of the report) five years after having undertaken the Foundation Module.**