

22. Report of the Past Cases Review Implementation Group

Contact name and details	The Revd Gwyneth Owen, Chair of the Group owengwyneth@btinternet.com
Resolutions	<p>22/1. The Conference receives the Report.</p> <p>22/2. The Conference directs that the guidance contained in paragraph 2.4.5 of this report on record keeping and pastoral ministry as amended from time to time in accordance with the statements made to the Conference should be placed on the Methodist Church website alongside the section on confidentiality contained in the 2008 Conference report <i>With Integrity and Skill</i>.</p> <p>22/3. The Conference directs the Methodist Council to review the terms of reference and membership of the Safeguarding Committee with the aim of ensuring that the Committee is best placed to support the on-going work of ensuring a safer Church for all.</p>

Summary of content

Subject and aims	To update the Conference regarding the implementation of the Past Cases Review Report
Background context and relevant documents (with function)	<i>With Integrity and Skill (2008)</i> <i>Courage, Cost and Hope (2015) the report of the Past Cases Review</i>
Consultations	The Safeguarding Committee, members of the Connexional Team, the Joint Safeguarding Working Group, the Supervision Working Group.

Report of the Past Cases Review Implementation Group

1.1 Introduction

The Past Cases Review Implementation Group offers this report to the Conference as its work of overseeing the implementation of the report is concluded. The group has worked for two years to oversee the implementation of the 23 recommendations of the Past Cases Review report *Courage, Cost and Hope*, which were received by the 2015 Conference.

1.2 The significance of the Past Cases Review

The PCRIG wishes to draw the attention of the Conference to the significance of the 2015 Conference report *Courage, Cost and Hope*. The report modelled best practice for others, including our ecumenical partners, in being open and honest regarding past failures in safeguarding the vulnerable in the life of the Church from those seeking to do harm and abuse power. The significance of the public apology was considerable, however, of greater significance is that we are, as a Church, learning to listen more to the perspectives of survivors. We are aware that there was no survivor who served as a member of the PCRIG in that capacity; however, the group was deeply aware that one sole survivor voice would not be enough and that a broad range of engagement with a variety of differing survivor perspectives was vital. This is the way we have sought to work.

1.3 Culture change

The central message of the Past Cases Review report was a call for a culture change in the life of the Methodist Church, which tended to see safeguarding as the domain of experts; and an invitation to the Church to move into a change of culture regarding the building of safe relationships for all. The report acknowledged how demanding and difficult changing underlying culture, ethos and attitudes can be and acknowledged that embedding such change would demand understanding, commitment and resources from the Church and each individual involved in the work of the Church. The hardest step in producing change is not declaring that such change is necessary but rather persuading and encouraging individuals to change their behaviours. The Implementation Group would suggest that we have made some progress in this area; but that there is still a long way to go and that a future audit of progress made could be a useful tool to employ, for example, in 5 years' time. This time period would permit a review of the changes brought about by the 3 years of interim policy on supervision, which is commended to the 2017 Conference and a further 2 years of embedding of supervision practice in the life of the Church.

1.4 The membership of the Past Cases Review Implementation Group was:

the Revd Gwyneth Owen (Chair)
the Revd Helen D Cameron (Assistant Secretary of the Conference, Convener)
Mr Doug Swanney (Connexional Secretary)
Ms Jane Stacey
the Revd Dr Stuart Jordan
the Revd Henry Lewis
Mr Tim Carter (Connexional Safeguarding Adviser, in attendance).

2. The PCRIG reports that progress made since the 2015 Conference in the implementation of the recommendations of *Courage, Cost and Hope* is as follows:

2.1 **R1 That an implementation Group be established to oversee the implementation of all the PCR's recommendations that are agreed by the Conference and that membership of this group be agreed by the Conference.**

The Implementation Group has worked effectively from August 2015 to June 2017 and its work of overseeing, steering and monitoring implementation has now been concluded. The continuing work is now embedded in the work of the Connexional Team and the Circuits and

Districts and the Implementation Group makes a clear recommendation of how the continuing task of creating a safer Church can be overseen most effectively from this point onwards in section 3.2 of this report.

2.2 R2 That selection criteria for district chairs, the Warden of the Methodist Diaconal Order and members of the Senior Leadership Group of the Connexional Team include awareness of and ability to deal effectively with safeguarding issues.

This recommendation was implemented in full from 2016 onwards and is now fully embedded in recruitment and selection processes for senior leaders in the Church.

2.3 R3 That policy and guidance be provided to define what should be recorded by ministers or others undertaking pastoral work and that this be clear about requirements for each specific role as well as providing guidance for best practice.

2.4 R4 That policy and guidance be provided about storage and access to pastoral records, specifying particularly requirements on ministerial handover.

2.4.1 The learning from the PCR about recording of pastoral relationships in the Church was that too little had been recorded to be able to inform decisions about the level of risk. Only 57% of the responses to the PCR indicated that safeguarding records had been kept and there was no evidence that the standard of record keeping improved over the period of the review. It is crucial to understand that safeguarding concerns often develop over a period of time and are about patterns of behaviour, not just a single incident. Good recording supports a better-informed assessment of risk and when a situation meets the formal safeguarding threshold. At this point there are clear guidelines on recording under the new 2017 Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

2.4.2 The PCRIG progress report to the 2016 Conference on the implementation of these recommendations included headings recommended for a daily log of pastoral ministry. In the discussion of the report by the Conference further clarification on a number of issues, such as confidentiality and storage of records was requested. This further clarification follows below.

2.4.3 In line with recommendation 9 of the PCR report an audit was conducted in October 2016 to gain information about how the PCR recommendations were understood and being implemented across the Connexion in the Circuits and Districts. The issue of pastoral recording was specifically addressed within the audit. Only 22% of the ministers interviewed kept any records beyond an entry in their diary to say that a visit had occurred. Almost all those interviewed asked for more guidance for ministers but also for lay pastoral workers.¹

2.4.4 The 2016 progress report of the PCR Implementation Group to the Conference stated that the revised Charter for Outgoing and Incoming Ministers is helpful in that it explicitly states that some pastoral records should be part of the handover information. The Implementation Group also wish to draw the Conference's attention to para 11.7 of the report *With Integrity and Skill*:

¹ It is important to note that recording of pastoral visiting is not just an issue about assessing risk in relation to possible safeguarding situations but also about best practice in all pastoral ministry. In 2008 the Methodist Conference approved an excellent report "*With Integrity and Skill*" (WI&S) which addressed issues of confidentiality in pastoral relationships. In line with a recommendation from this report guidance on confidentiality in pastoral relationships was included in CPD. WI&S referred briefly to recording of pastoral visits, in para 3.4 it states:

"In the pastoral relationship it is important to clarify that we understand what is being shared and that the way any information is recorded is as accurate and unambiguous as possible"

Again in para 11.6 it states

"it is likely to be the case that in the interests of providing good pastoral care other records will be kept containing more detailed personal information about church members and others who are within the pastoral care of the local church. In maintaining such records the legal issues set out earlier in this report (eg, the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998) should be kept firmly in mind.

There was a recommendation in this 2008 report that more work should be done to produce guidance on recording.

When a minister moves from one Circuit to another, difficulties may arise concerning the information he or she ought to pass on to the new minister. On the basis that such records contain only recordings of matters of fact and not of opinion, from a pastoral perspective it is normally likely to be in the interests of the person to whom the record relates for that record to be passed on to the incoming minister.

- 2.4.5 In light of the above the PCIRIG has produced guidance on pastoral recording. It is recommended that this should be placed on the Methodist Church website and should be read alongside the existing guidelines for Good Practice in Confidentiality and Pastoral Work (Part 14 CPD).

Guidance on Recording of Pastoral Work

The importance of following the Data Protection Act (DPA) is relevant to all sections of the guidance below. The Act does not necessarily prohibit the collection or disclosure of data. There is an explanation of the relevant sections of the DPA in the report *With Integrity and Skill* section 10. (www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/Conf08_18_With_Integrity_and_Skill.pdf)

a) Who does the guidance apply to

In line with the Conference report *With Integrity and Skill*, this guidance is for all pastoral workers - a term used to refer to lay, ordained, paid and voluntary people with a recognised role of care in the Church. It should be followed alongside the guidance on confidentiality.

b) Why record pastoral visits

- i) Many pastoral visits are to those who are vulnerable, whether because of ill-health, bereavement, or other stresses in their lives. These conditions can affect whether a person becomes a risk either to themselves or to others. Accurately recording observed behaviour and statements that have relevance to assessing risk over time is an important part of being able to ensure the right level of protection and/or help is secured for the person concerned or others.
- ii) Maintaining appropriate boundaries in pastoral work is extremely important. Recording the information outlined below is part of a framework to protect both the person being visited and the pastoral worker. It helps inform the discussions that would need to take place in supervision or in another setting if this area raises any concerns for either party.
- iii) The person being visited may disclose information that is relevant to a safeguarding situation or the commission of a criminal act. Timely and accurate recording of what has been said is of the utmost importance. Recording procedures under the Safeguarding Policy will apply in the first case.
- iv) The person being visited may share information about their family or circumstances that it is important to remember in light of an ongoing pastoral relationship.

c) What information should be recorded

i) With all pastoral visits the following basic information should be recorded by all pastoral workers:

- name of person visited
- date of visit
- venue
- reason for the visit
- necessary action, if any, who it involves
- date of next visit.

Bearing in mind the points above on why record, an additional section of the record could include observations on behaviour, statements made or information shared.

d) Where to record

- i) Information can be recorded either electronically or as a paper record. If it is recorded on a manual system it should not be in a notebook as it will be difficult to separate recording

about a particular individual from other recording. An index card or similar would be suitable. Such records should be kept in a locked container.

ii) records kept electronically should be filed with appropriate password and security access. The section of the guidance on confidentiality headed "Confidentiality and Technology" should be followed.

2.5 R5 That all people who deliver safeguarding training at Foundation or Leadership Module level be required to attend training on the findings of the PCR.

This recommendation was implemented during 2015-16.

2.6 R6 That the findings from the PCR be incorporated into the training of ministers irrespective of the pathway they are following.

This recommendation was implemented in full in 2015/16. The audit of safeguarding awareness carried out in 2016-17 in three pilot districts revealed that the random sample of probationer ministers interviewed demonstrated clear engagement with the findings of the PCR and that they had read the full report several times. This is a clear indication that the learning on these issues within their Initial Ministerial Formation has been effective and thorough.

2.7 R7 That a system of structured supervision for ministers be instituted to address the identified weakness in relation to accountability and support in terms of safe practice. The urgency of this requirement is recognised but also the capacity/skills/resource issues that are raised. Ideally the timescales would be as follows:

- **A draft supervision policy is produced by a working party that has the skills/knowledge to reflect the relevant dimensions of accountability and important theological underpinning. The draft policy to be considered by the Methodist Council in October 2015.**
- **A training course for supervisors to be developed by the end of December 2015.**
- **A pilot roll-out of supervision across 2 Districts is undertaken for 12 months (January-December 2016) starting with the training of supervisors in January/February and supervision sessions starting in March 2016.**
- **A report on the pilot to be presented to Methodist Council in October 2016 with recommendations for a roll-out across the Connexion to start in January 2017.**

It is however recognised that as such timescales have resource implications, the Implementation Group should meet as soon as possible following the Conference, to agree a timetable and secure the required resources.

The significant work undertaken in response to this recommendation was undertaken by the Supervision Working Group at the direction of the Implementation Group. This work is, for the PCRIG, a matter of conviction. The PCRIG is convinced that in the creation of significant culture change in the life of our Church this recommendation regarding supervision of all ministers is key and critical to the implementation of change. The PCRIG strongly believes that adequate resources must be given to the continued roll-out of the supervision training and development of best supervision practice which they believe is at a critical point. The PCRIG believes the work delivered so far in the training of the District Chairs in supervision has been outstanding, requires positive further development for the training of superintendent ministers without a reduction in the quality of the training, and thus adequate resources must be identified for the work. The consequences for the Church are significant at such a vital stage in the change of culture. The PCRIG wishes to thank the following members of the Supervision Working Group for their work:

The Revd Diane Clutterbuck (Chair), the Revd Helen D Cameron (Convener), the Revd Dr Jonathan Hustler (Convener), the Revd Dr Jane Leach, the Revd Michaela Youngson, the Revd Dr Sheryl Anderson, the Revd Canon Dr David Hewlett, Deacon Eunice Attwood, the Revd John Hellyer, the Revd Richard Andrew, the Revd Gwyneth Owen and Ms Alison Ransome.

2.8 R8 That serious consideration be given to producing a Code of Conduct for ministers along the lines of that produced by the Church of England.

A small working group convened by the Revd Dr Jonathan Hustler has explored the value and purpose of a Code of Conduct for ministers and drafted a Code for consideration, which the PCRIG approved as an initial draft. The Methodist Council in January gave careful consideration to the work at this initial stage. The Council requested that the value and purpose of a Code should be given careful consideration by the Law and Polity Committee; particularly as to how the Code can relate to existing Standing Orders. Further consultation on the code with the Methodist Diaconal Order, the Presbyteral Sessions of the Synods and the Conference was also agreed. This recommendation is therefore being considered carefully; as are the implications for our existing polity of the creation of a Code. The PCRIG is convinced of the value of such a code and is supportive of the work undertaken so far in the production of the draft.

2.9 R9 That until the Methodist Church has robust accountability processes in place and fully operational, an annual independent audit of progress on these culture change recommendations and in particular on the mainstreaming of safeguarding awareness be carried out: and that a framework for the audits and proposals on who should carry them out be agreed by the Methodist Council in October 2015.

The implementation group is glad to report that an independent audit was carried out in 2016 and the findings reported to the Methodist Council in January 2017. The Council welcomed the report and agreed that while it was not necessary to conduct such an audit annually it might be helpful at significant moments of progress (for example, if a programme of regular supervision for all ministers is established then an audit two years after that might prove beneficial).

2.10 R10 Training: that the pattern of training for members of the Connexional Complaints Panel continue to be developed so as to ensure: an annual training event; that all members of the Panel undertake both the Foundation and the Leadership module; that additional sections of the Leadership Module be prepared to cover the impact of abuse on victims, pattern/models of abuse and risk management in the church; and that, when developed, these sections be required training for those hearing complaints relating to a safeguarding concern.

An annual training event takes place. The additional sections of the Leadership Module have been drafted and will now be incorporated within a new project to revise the whole Leadership Module during 2017 in order to update it fully as it reaches its five year anniversary.

2.11 R11 That the Past Cases Review definition of a 'safeguarding concern' be used by Local Complaints Officers, Complaints Teams and Discipline Committees.

This definition is now in place and being used in the manner recommended.

2.12 R12 That work be undertaken to ensure that a rigorous system of liaison and consultation between all parts of the complaints process, the resignation (of ministers) process, suspensions, and the Connexional Safeguarding Officer to ensure that appropriate advice is obtained on cases that contain a safeguarding concern or sexual harassment.

The connexional safeguarding team moved from the Support Services Cluster to the Conference Office in September 2016 thus allowing for even closer co-operation and communication between staff teams in the areas of safeguarding and complaints and discipline, resignations and suspensions. Communication is now more effective.

2.13 R13 That work be undertaken to develop further best practice guidance including, but not limited to, guidance on appropriate communication with complainants and respondents; guidance on the choice of venues for meetings and hearings; and guidance on questioning of complainants and respondents.

This work has been undertaken and is reviewed regularly by the Complaints and Discipline Liaison Group and the annual training of all members of the Complaints and Discipline Panel. Regular updates through newsletters are provided for members of complaint teams.

2.14 R14 Recording and monitoring: that a system be established to monitor the implementation of decisions of Discipline Committees (and where appropriate Complaints Teams) and that their implementation be recorded.

Progress has been made in this area. Provision is already made in Standing Orders concerning the implementation and monitoring of Discipline Committee decisions. Where a Discipline Committee finds a charge established and directs that any action be taken in terms of the respondent's continuing involvement in the life of the Church, the Committee has to appoint someone who will be responsible for ensuring that the directions are followed, reporting back within a specified time. If the report back is unsatisfactory, the Committee can be re-convened to reconsider the penalty imposed or make fresh directions; with the object of achieving its original intentions. Members of the Connexional Team will be considering what further steps might be possible to give effect to Recommendation 14, both by way of improving the follow-up to a Discipline Committee decision and in relation to the decisions of Connexional Complaints Teams.

2.15 R15 That, in the light of the learning points highlighted in section H.3 of the full report, all current safeguarding training materials be reviewed and that, specifically, further sections be added to the Leadership Module, using anonymised case material from the PCR.

The Foundation Module has been fully updated with a refreshed version for those who are repeating the training five years on from their original course and a revised version for those doing this for the first time. See above for update on the new Leadership Module sections. The PCRIIG suggests that in the future these modules should be renamed as Parts 1 and 2 of a safeguarding module; and seen as sequential.

2.16 R16 That the roles that are required to attend training at which level be reviewed.

The roles were reviewed and agreed by the Methodist Council in April 2016. The key change was the proposal that all worship leaders and local preachers, and all worship leaders and local preachers in training should include the leadership module in their ongoing learning and development programme. The 2016 Conference received the recommendation from the Council but requested the Methodist Council to re-examine this decision. The Methodist Council in January 2017 reviewed this point but re-affirmed its original decision. The PCRIIG acknowledges the practical implications of this for those who deliver safeguarding training and for those who undertake it, but are convinced it is necessary.

2.17 R17 That the appropriate bodies consider developing materials to promote wider awareness of safe relationships within church communities.

The connexional safeguarding team is producing material for small groups in collaboration with the Discipleship and Ministries Learning Network; this should become available in the next connexional year.

2.18 R18 That, in the light of the learning from section H.3 and H.1 of the full report, the Safeguarding Policy and other relevant policies be reviewed and amended.

The Safeguarding Policy has been completely reviewed and rewritten and approved by the Methodist Council in January 2017.

2.19 R19 That a connexional register of Covenants of Care be established and held by the Safeguarding Team in order to promote effective and consistent monitoring of those who might pose a risk; and that this register include those who might pose a risk; and that this register include those who have requested to worship under such arrangements but not followed the request through; and that policies be developed to ensure that all sharing of information is justified and safe.

A Covenants of Care Working Group was established which reports separately to the Conference of 2017 on this and other matters relating to Covenants of Care.

2.20 R20 That all reviews and amendments to policies and training material involve consultation with victims/survivors.

Since the publication of the Past Cases Review in 2015 all policies and training materials have been reviewed in a development phase with a number of different survivors of abuse and in the future consultation with the Methodist Survivor Reference Group will be encouraged.

2.21 R21 That the Connexional Safeguarding Team identify any further learning points emerging from their follow-up work and report them initially to the Implementation Group when the PCR-related activity is completed, or by March 2016, whichever is the sooner.

A short training package 'Ten lessons from the PCR' was produced and rolled out to all trainers involved in Foundation and Leadership Module training in order to make sure that the delivery of all standard safeguarding training is fully informed by the findings from the PCR work. We note that after the PCR was completed survivors were able to come forward and 60-70 new cases emerged after the public apology was made.

2.22 R22 That the resources required for the Safeguarding Team to complete the PCR work as outlined in section 1 of the full report be agreed.

The safeguarding team has continued to respond to all the referrals that were made during the PCR and undertake necessary casework to assess appropriate action plans and identify presenting risks. 75% of the cases have now been closed and the last 400 cases are systematically being allocated for assessment and completion. Efforts are being made to complete this work by the end of the connexional year although it is recognised that the nature of such work means exact closure cannot be easily predicted.

2.23 R23 That a connexional resource be identified to support survivors/victims if district support is not appropriate/possible; and that resources be identified to support working with established survivor/victim groups.

A resource of £10k was identified for this work from the Epworth Fund and it has been used to support the work of the Methodist Survivor Reference Group. In addition, some individuals have been financially supported to access counselling and a contract has been established along with three charities (including Action for Children) for the commissioning of counselling services for survivors that can be offered across the Connexion. For 2017/2018, £10k has been added into the Safeguarding Team's budget to enable this support to continue.

3 Conclusion

3.1 The work of the Past Cases Review Implementation Group is now concluded but the task of implementing the learning and the transformed practice, attitude and attentiveness to safeguarding in the life of the Church continues. The monitoring and revision of our safeguarding practice will never end or cease. We will continue as the Methodist people to work for a safer Church, to support and uphold survivors and listen to them and learn from them; and we commit ourselves to change and transformation in the Church so that all can flourish.

3.2 The Implementation Group suggests that the Safeguarding Committee should now be the body charged with monitoring the progress made by the senior leadership of the Church in enabling the contribution of the whole Church to making us a safer space. The Implementation Group suggests that at this point of transition and development in the task of safeguarding, it would be helpful to review the terms of reference and the current membership of the Safeguarding Committee; to ensure it is best placed to take up this role of thinking strategically and proactively about our safeguarding practice and upholding our commitment to continue to listen and learn as a Church.

- 3.3 The Implementation Group wishes to record its deep sense of gratitude to those who laid the foundations, and those who continue to contribute to the work of ensuring that we are, as the Methodist Church, a safer place for all. The group has sought to ensure that we are an accountable, open and a listening Church that is committed in the whole of our common life to change and transformation, so that we might fulfil our purpose as a Church; which is truly to be salt and light.

This must be our commitment because apology can never be enough – what we owe as a Church to those who reported, survived, yet continue to live with the memory and pain of abuse, is a deep, permanent and faithful commitment to prevent any further abuse.

We will only succeed in our task of creating a culture change in our Church, and be able to implement the culture change required, if we accept that those who have power must listen to those who were and are powerless. We must exercise humility, not arrogance or superiority and acknowledge our need as a Church to be different. If we are willing to learn from those who can teach us best how to prevent abuse and create safer spaces through their courage, and at great personal cost, then there can indeed be hope. Our ministerial and pastoral practices need to give glory to God and not hurt to others. In our ministry, in our practice, in every aspect of our life as a Church others must glimpse the divine, see and hear the word made flesh, and know the work or mission of God.

Anything less than that is not worth doing.

- 3.4 The Implementation Group is unapologetic that the changes in practice, attitude and outlook we have sought to implement as part of a change of culture in the Methodist Church in relation to safeguarding is demanding, costly in terms of resources and is asking new things of us. Many are familiar with staff meetings and attending Synods and Convocations as places of accountability but some of us are not used to 1:1 supervision of our work. The Implementation Group want to suggest that the imperative laid upon us is not just that we must do no more harm, or that we should be able to demonstrate compliance with safeguarding policies and procedures. We suggest that much more than that is at stake, and much more is demanded of us; because we are the body of Christ and revealing God's glory in the world is our only calling. We are called to nothing less than to proclaim life for all – life that is full, life that is abundant, life that is holy and life that is just for all.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

22/1. The Conference received the Report.

22/2. The Conference directed that the guidance contained in paragraph 2.4.5 of this report on record keeping and pastoral ministry as amended from time to time in accordance with the statements made to the Conference should be placed on the Methodist Church website alongside the section on confidentiality contained in the 2008 Conference report *With Integrity and Skill*.

22/3. The Conference directed the Methodist Council to review the terms of reference and membership of the Safeguarding Committee with the aim of ensuring that the Committee is best placed to support the on-going work of ensuring a safer Church for all.

Prayer

For those who are abused and those who abuse;
for those who are careless about others and those who are careful;
for those who offer guidance through the dark and those who endeavour to safeguard the
vulnerable:

good Lord, we pray.

Good Lord, give hope to the hurt and a sense of your love and rightness. May we all be led into safe
and sound living. Give us your strength for today, your hope for tomorrow and the light of your love
to guide us in all things.

Amen.