

### 35. Calculating safeguarding time required for Districts

<b>Contact name and details</b>	Tim Carter Connexional Safeguarding Adviser cartert@methodistchurch.org.uk
<b>Action required</b>	Decision
<b>Resolutions</b>	35/1. The Conference receives the Report.  35/2. The Conference adopts the method for calculating District Safeguarding Officer hours for each District as set out in the Report.

#### Summary of content and impact

<b>Subject and aims</b>	To bring forward proposals to enable Districts to calculate how much District Safeguarding Officer (DSO) time is required to meet safeguarding requirements across the Connexion
<b>Main points</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principles adopted</li> <li>• Proposed formula</li> <li>• How to calculate</li> <li>• Examples</li> <li>• Proposed common DSO job description and person specification</li> </ul>
<b>Background context and relevant documents (with function)</b>	<p>The 2012 Conference recommended that Districts implement a minimum of 14 hours per week of DSO time to undertake safeguarding responsibilities in each District.</p> <p>Whilst two thirds of Districts have achieved this (some employing more than the minimum) this has not been consistent.</p> <p>During this period the demand on safeguarding responses has grown and it is now felt appropriate to ensure that there is greater consistency in the provision of support across the Districts, in a manner which can take account of differing needs and demands.</p> <p>A formula to aid this is proposed with a common model job description for DSOs.</p>
<b>Consultations</b>	The Safeguarding Committee, January meeting of the Methodist Council, District Chairs, DSOs and District Safeguarding Groups.
<b>Impact</b>	<p><b>Finance</b></p> <p>Increased district budgets for safeguarding, in some cases, which will provide better resourcing, consistency across the Connexion and ability to fulfil the Church's core mission in providing safe environments for all.</p>

## Introduction

1. The 2016 Conference Resolution 30/3 states:  
  
**“The Conference directs the Methodist Council to oversee work on the practical and financial implications of increasing the minimum required number of hours worked by District Safeguarding Officers and to bring clear recommendations to the 2017 Conference.”**  
**[DR 7/12/3]**
2. The majority of safeguarding work across the Connexion is carried out through District Safeguarding Officers (DSOs) working in collaboration, and with the support of, the connexional Safeguarding Team.
3. The role of DSOs is therefore crucial in promoting and ensuring safeguarding practice is understood and delivered in each District. This meets our Christian obligation to take care and safeguard the most vulnerable in our communities as well as ensuring that the Methodist Church’s reputation with statutory agencies and the wider general public is protected and enhanced as we demonstrate professional competence in making churches truly safe spaces for all.
4. The strengthening of the role of DSOs envisaged in the President’s Inquiry (Report 20 2012 Conference) continues. This established a recommended minimum commitment of 14 hours per week (paid in the majority of cases) of professional DSO time and two-thirds of Districts have now implemented this. That report envisaged that for some large Districts this would need to be increased. In some cases this need has been recognised with some Districts achieving 17.5 – 21 hours as a minimum and others planning to do this. In two cases the District has approved plans of introducing a full-time paid position in 2017/18. There are also examples where dedicated administrator time has also been allocated to support the role.
5. Given this experience, and the continued importance of robust safeguarding structures to support the mission of the Church, the Conference has instructed that proposals should be brought to address increasing the minimum number of hours. In order to achieve this, a formula has been developed that can enable each District to assess the level of support that should be provided to meet their safeguarding needs and responsibilities.
6. This paper is written as if there is a single DSO post that will fulfil safeguarding responsibilities. Current practice varies across the Connexion and safeguarding responsibilities can be shared across members of the District Safeguarding Group. The intent of this paper is that Districts make use of the formula to assess safeguarding needs across their District and then decide whether the DSO or the DSO and others will meet the presenting needs. This will also enable those Districts who currently share DSOs more flexibility in meeting district safeguarding needs. In such circumstances a clear record should be agreed that clarifies who is responsible for which duties and how this will be reviewed on an annual basis. Oversight of safeguarding work within the District will remain with the District Chair as DSO line manager (or whoever is delegated this responsibility) and report to the district policy committee.
7. It is also recognised that the island communities will need to adjust provision accordingly to take into account smaller populations and a degree of flexibility should be applied in conjunction with the Safeguarding Adviser in agreeing this.

## Principles

8. In order to produce a formula a number of principles have been established:
  - The trajectory of safeguarding work over the last 15 years has been upward with more expectations and legislative demands made on all organisations. There is no sign that this is going to stop in the near future, both in the area of protecting children and developing

understanding of adults with vulnerabilities. The Church should therefore be building capacity into our safeguarding structures in order to deal with problems in their infancy rather than when they have become more serious, complicated and expensive to resolve.

- Whilst Districts vary in many ways including size and safeguarding demands, in order for officers to be appointed in a manner that will enable a basic presence to be established, a minimum posting of 1 day (7 hours) a week has been written into this formula.
- The formula should be read in conjunction with the model DSO job description which has been produced from reviewing the job descriptions that Districts currently use.
- There is an expectation that the role is not just reactive but also proactive in being able to account for how safeguarding practice is being implemented in each District and providing the evidence to show this. This includes provision for DSOs to be active across district committees and events and make advice and support around safeguarding practice as accessible as possible. Such activities will be included in the agreed work plan for each DSO.
- It is not intended that this formula should be used to reduce the current level of resource that Districts have already committed to safeguarding and should recognise existing caseloads in calculations.
- In exceptional circumstances where a District is struggling to meet its needs the District Chair is invited to have a conversation with the Safeguarding Adviser so that interim measures to enable sufficient safeguarding support provision can be agreed.

### **The formula**

9. The formula for working through how many hours would be applicable for each District to employ a DSO is based on a 35-hour week.

#### Factor 1. Basic duties to fulfil DSO role

This includes supporting the District Safeguarding Group, Synod and district meetings, receiving professional supervision, updating on professional practice, learning and research, case work, training and auditing of church safeguarding procedures, emergencies and unforeseen events – total = 7 hours

#### Factor 2. Church population

Size of District in relation to numbers of churches/ members/activities, including areas of deprivation and greater need – up to 7 hours

#### Factor 3. District size

Geographical size of District (including ease of travel time or transport links) – up to 7 hours

#### Factor 4. Training commitments

Training – amount (now or anticipated) with training refresh every 4 years from September 2017 and revised Leadership Module due to be introduced during 2017/18 – up to 7 hours

#### Factor 5. External relationships/ covenants of care

External relationships with Local Authorities (LADOs), Police, Health, Education, Probation and other public agencies (including Covenants of Care work and liaison) – up to 7 hours

### **Calculating number of hours required**

10. The minimum requirement will be 7 hours (Factor 1) regardless of other factors.
11. In addition to the minimum 7 hours allocation factors 2, 3, 4 and 5 should then be considered.

Each of these factors offers a maximum of 7 hours to be allocated each week and there are three levels for each factor:

Minimum – up to 2.5 hours  
Medium – between 2.5 - 5 hours  
Maximum – 5 - 7 hours

12. Each District should assess the level of activity or demand under factors 2, 3, 4 and 5 and decide if this is minimum, medium or maximum in intensity and time demands. From this the number of required hours can be identified.
13. Time allocation for each factor is then totalled and an indicative number of DSO hours arrived at for each District.

#### **Examples of using the formula**

14. In a District where the safeguarding need is assessed as minimum the total would range from 7- 17 hours (ie basic 7 hours + up to 2.5 hours for each of factors 2, 3, 4, 5).

In a District where the safeguarding need is assessed as maximum the total would range from 27-35 hours (ie basic 7 hours + up to 7 hours for each of factors 2, 3, 4, 5).

15. In practice Districts will be able to take account of current and future demands, review and reassess demands as work varies or increases over time.
16. The calculation should be undertaken by the District Safeguarding Group and recommended to the District Policy Committee. The connexional Safeguarding Team are willing to advise in this process.
17. External scrutiny of this process will be provided by the connexional Safeguarding Adviser reviewing the district calculation with the District Chair annually.
18. The Methodist Council has agreed a model job description and person specification for the role of District Safeguarding Officer.

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

- 35/1. The Conference received the Report.**
- 35/2. The Conference adopted the method for calculating District Safeguarding Officer hours for each District as set out in the Report.**