



# **SAFEGUARDING RISK ASSESSMENT GUIDE**

## **Contributors**



The **Methodist** Church 

## Introduction

The Methodist Church is committed to providing a safe environment in which all may flourish and develop through their engagement with the church. Risk assessment plays a key role in that process in ensuring that fair, informed and proportionate decisions are made for the safety of all.

This leaflet may be a useful resource if you have been invited to contribute to a risk assessment in the following circumstances:

- You have reported information to the Methodist Church, statutory agencies or another organisation that indicates a party connected to the Church may be a safeguarding risk.
- Another party has reported information to the Methodist Church, which relates to a safeguarding issue which may have had an impact on you.
- You may have been aware of the circumstances or the party to which the risk assessment relates and your contribution is needed to verify other information.
- You may have personal experience of the issues that have been raised by the safeguarding concern.

A comprehensive guide to the process is available via the Safeguarding Risk Assessment Policy and Procedures, which can be found on the Methodist Church website. There are additional information resources available online for other parties involved in the process.

## What is a risk assessment?

A risk assessment is a review of information available about a situation where a safeguarding concern is identified. The risk assessor will consider whether the person's engagement in church life presents a current safeguarding risk with regard to their past and present circumstances and behaviour. The Connexional Risk Assessment process does not seek to make findings of fact or punish those who have caused harm. Its role is to identify potential risks and recommend appropriate measures that may be put in place to protect the safety of all those engaging with the Church. This process is separate to the formal complaint and discipline processes of the Church but information may be shared with those processes.

The risk assessor may wish to invite parties who have been impacted by the situation or who may be aware of what happened to contribute. It is recognised that some of those affected may not wish to explore the circumstances or may not feel able to do so. Participation is voluntary and anyone offering to contribute may decide at any point to end their involvement in the process.

## How can I contribute to the risk assessment?

You can choose to speak to the assessor in person or by phone. You can also provide written information. If you wish to contribute, please discuss any concerns and needs you may have

with the risk assessor or caseworker. You will be provided with a privacy notice if you have chosen to contribute to the risk assessment. This will provide details of how your personal data will be used, stored and shared.

## What support is available to me?

In any meeting or telephone conference with the risk assessor, you are welcome to have a supporter present with you. If you would like assistance in identifying a suitable person to support you, please contact the risk assessor or Connexional Safeguarding Team. There is further guidance about pastoral supporters in a separate guide available on the Methodist Church website.

In addition, if you feel that as a result of your prior experience of the situation that you would like ongoing support, please contact the District Safeguarding Officer or the Connexional Safeguarding Team. They can discuss your needs and preferences for further support and make arrangements to assist with this.

## What will happen after I have provided information?

Having, reviewed the collected information, the assessor will write a report, which will be considered by a Safeguarding Panel of members of the Methodist Church Safeguarding Committee. They will make recommendations and directions about the situation. These may relate to safeguarding arrangements. This may be one or more months after you have provided your contribution, as there may be others who need to be seen or further issues that need to be followed up as a result of the information you have provided.

## What will I be told about the outcome of the risk assessment?

If you have been directly affected by the circumstances explored by the risk assessment, the Panel may provide an update about the outcome to you. It is helpful if you can let the risk assessor know in advance of the Panel if you would like further information on conclusion of the process.

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## For further information about the risk assessment process

Please contact the Connexional Safeguarding Team:

[safeguarding@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@methodistchurch.org.uk)

020 7467 5189