

District recommended safeguarding policy for local churches 2021 (February)

Briefing note: Putting the policy into action

Every church must:

- Appoint a Church Safeguarding Officer (who is not the minister). This may be a shared role with another church where necessary.
- Ensure that all office holders have access to a copy of the policy (including online access);
- Promote and publicise this policy;
- display copies of the policy statement/ policy and guidance on noticeboards that are easily visible; (or new posters to be available from the Connexion soon)
- display local contacts for police, social care etc alongside this policy statement; (new posters from Connexion?)
- Communicate the Church's safeguarding message as reflected in the Connexional Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance;
- Assess how well the policy is being implemented;
- Undertake an annual review of the policy and report to the Circuit Safeguarding Officer;
- Refer all safeguarding concerns promptly to the District Safeguarding Officer on 07434 284633 or districtsafeguarding@methodist-nd.org.uk

For further or more detailed information please check the **Safeguarding Policies, Procedures and Guidance** for the Methodist Church which can be found at:

https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/18740/safeguarding_policy_procedures_and_guidance_for_the_methodist_church_sept_2020.pdf

Church Safeguarding Policy

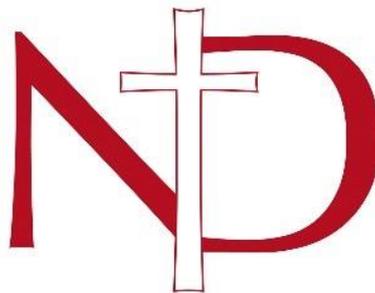
For use of Churches in the Nottingham and Derby District of
the Methodist Church

Reviewed on 9.2.2021

Based on the

Methodist Church Safeguarding Policies, Procedures and Guidance

v. September 2020



XXX Methodist Church
Safeguarding Policy

Date adopted – February 2021

Date to be reviewed – September 2021

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The Methodist Church values every human being as part of God's creation. Everyone has the right to fair treatment and protection from harm.

The **Methodist Church**

Safeguarding Policy Statement

The Methodist Church commits to:

- The creation of a **safe environment and culture** where all are welcome and everyone feels able to speak out about safeguarding concerns
- **Pastoral care for victims and survivors** of abuse, and other people who have been affected by safeguarding issues
- **A prompt and appropriate response** to every safeguarding concern or allegation regardless of status or circumstance
- Carry out **risk assessments** and put **safeguarding measures** in place where individuals may present a risk
- Pastoral care for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations
- **Safe recruitment** of all those who have responsibility for children and adults who may be vulnerable
- **The promotion of good safeguarding practice** through effective training, guidance, policy and procedures

Safeguarding is Everyone's Responsibility

Display the posters sent to the Superintendent Minister by the Connexion as your church policy statement

The District Safeguarding Officer (DSO) is
 Rev Susan McIvor districtsafeguarding@methodist-nd.org.uk
 Tel 07434 284633.

2. Responsibilities of the Local Church and Charity Trustees

The responsibility for implementation lies with the Church Council. It is the relevant trustee body and the minister in pastoral charge or superintendent, who are responsible for ensuring that

- i. The church appoints a Church Safeguarding Officer who is not the minister. A person may be appointed Church Safeguarding Officer for one or more churches.
- ii. All workers with children, young people and adults are safely recruited, appointed by the Church Council and supported in their roles
- iii. allegations are responded to immediately and according to the procedures of the Methodist Church including referral to the statutory authorities where necessary
- iv. Standing Orders and the Methodist Church Safer Recruitment Policy and Procedures are implemented by completing the required DBS checks
- v. Standing Orders and the Methodist *Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance (Oct 2019)* is implemented when somebody is being considered for an appointment to a role or responsibility to which Standing Order 010(3) applies or is already holding such a position and one of the following circumstances applies: the person has a conviction or caution for an offence under the Sexual Offences Act (2003) or mentioned in Schedule 15 of the Criminal Justice Act (2003) or the person has been subject to risk assessment under Standing Order 237 and as a result, the Safeguarding Committee deem that they present a significant risk of serious harm to children or vulnerable adults,
- vi. good practice is followed and pastoral care provided in all instances of child or adult abuse and trauma. This includes pastoral provision for the needs of survivors of abuse and careful ministry to those who pose a risk to children. See *Tracing Rainbows through the Rain*, Methodist Conference, 2006
www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/Conf06_Safeguarding_pcfull.doc
- vii. making a report to both the Charity Commission (in England and Wales) and the relevant insurance company in respect of serious safeguarding matters (this should always occur in those cases involving possible reputational or financial risks)
- viii. notifying the Conference Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice where a report has been made to the Charity Commission or the relevant insurance company

Churches should seek the advice of the District Safeguarding Officer for all safeguarding concerns

3 Responding well to safeguarding concerns

If you think a person has been harmed, may have been harmed or might be harmed by another person you need to

- speak to the District Safeguarding Officer on mobile number 07434 284633
- create a written record on the safeguarding concern form available from <https://www.methodist-nd.org.uk/safeguarding/>
- You do not need to speak with your minister or church or circuit safeguarding officer first. You should discuss with the District Safeguarding Officer who else should be informed.
- You may also make a report to children or adult social care before notifying the District Safeguarding Officer.

Remember abuse may be disclosed to you or you may see something happen. You may also be concerned that someone is not following safer working practices. All these are safeguarding concerns which should be reported.

Remember to

- Recognise that if someone discloses abuse or you suspect abuse you cannot ignore it or do nothing with the information;
- Respond warmly to the person and listen well to what your being told;
- Record what was said to you after the disclosure and sign and date it;
- Refer the concern to the District Safeguarding Officer, as soon as possible and within 24 hours (and the statutory agencies if necessary); if the concern is about an adult victim of abuse and they have not consented to the sharing of information you will be able to discuss the concern and receive advice without identifying the victim.

If someone wishes to disclose abuse to you

- Let them know from the start that you may need to tell someone else – DON'T PROMISE CONFIDENTIALITY.
- Accept what the person says (however unlikely the story may sound).
- Keep calm.
- Look at the person directly.
- Be honest.
- Be aware that the person may have been threatened.
- Never push for information or ask leading questions
- Never ask young people or vulnerable adults to lift up or remove clothing to show you any possible signs of abuse.
- Never photograph injuries
- If an adult discloses abuse of themselves, ask what they would like to happen now they have told you.

Helpful things to say or show

- Show acceptance of what is being said
- I am glad you have told me.
- It's not your fault.
- I will help you.

Avoid Saying

- Why didn't you tell someone before?
- I can't believe it.
- Are you sure this is true?
- Why? How? When? Who? Where?
- Never make false promises.
- Never make such statements as "I am shocked, don't tell anyone else."

Concluding

Again, reassure the person that they were right to tell you.

Let the person know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens.

Contact the District Safeguarding Officer on 07434 284633

districtsafeguarding@methodist-nd.org.uk or your local Children's or Adult Social Care

Further guidance can be found in Section 4 of

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/policies-procedure-and-information/policies-and-guidance/>

In an emergency

The person receiving the information will need to assess whether the person is at risk of immediate harm and if so, take any action straight away to safeguard them including contacting statutory authorities such as police, child or adult services.

Caring for those who have suffered abuse

The Methodist Church recognises that abuse of an individual by someone within a church context can have a negative impact not only on the survivor, but on their family, the perpetrator's family and the church community. The impact will be different for different people and assumptions cannot be made about the severity of the impact and its perceived seriousness. The Methodist Church aims to respond to those affected by abuse in accordance with legislation and guidance but also with respect and compassion, providing pastoral support and **additional** support where appropriate.

People receiving or dealing with reports of abuse should also consider whether other forms of support may be appropriate, in addition to or instead of pastoral support within the church. Confidential advice should be sought from the District Safeguarding Officer.

Further guidance can be found at *Safeguarding Policies, Procedures and Guidance*, October 2019, Section 4.3

Responding well to those who pose a risk

Where a concern is passed to the District Safeguarding Officer which indicates a person may have harmed another person the District Safeguarding Officer will undertake an assessment of risk.

The following risks will be reviewed regularly in regard to any concern raised:

Risk to the victim/survivor

Risks to members of vulnerable groups within the church and involved with church activities

Risks to the person believed to be responsible for the issue and their family

Risks to the wider congregation or attendees at church activities

Risks to the loss of information/records

Risks to the reputation of the Methodist Church.

Care for those who are subject to concerns or allegations

The Methodist Church aims to provide pastoral care for all its members, including those who are suspected of causing harm or have caused harm to others. However, in this context, such care must be provided in a way that prioritises the safety of other church members, while enabling the person who may pose a risk, to worship and be a part of the church community. Advice must always be sought from the District Safeguarding Officer.

For those with a criminal conviction or caution for a sexual offence, or offences against children and young people, Standing Order 010 bars a person from holding any office, post or responsibility. On occasions this Standing Order may be suspended. Contact the District Safeguarding Officer for further advice

Specific procedures are laid down for safeguarding risk assessment (e.g. a safeguarding contract). Further information can be found at, *Safeguarding Policies Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist* [September 2020](#), para 4.5.8.

When the District Safeguarding Officer receives a safeguarding concern

s/he will:

- i. Consider the child's or adult's safety throughout.
- ii. Advise whether a referral to Children's Services or Adult Social Care and/or police and/or Local Authority Designated Officer is necessary and decide with the referrer who will make the referrals.
- iii. Assess the possible risks posed by the person who has allegedly harmed a child or adult;
- iv. Consider whether an interim safeguarding contract is necessary.
- v. Consider whether colleagues from other churches or community organisations need to be informed following advice from Children's Services/Adult Social Care/police (as appropriate).
- vi. Notify the Connexional Safeguarding Team if necessary.
- vii. Contact the media office to discuss communications within the local church and circuit.
- viii. Consider support needs of the victim/survivor, family/close friends
- ix. Consider support needs of the accused and their family.
- x. Ensure pastoral support and management of the case is not provided by someone supervising or overseeing the person whose behaviour is of concern.
- xi. Check whether privacy notices have been provided to relevant parties and/or advise when they should be given
- xii. Ensure the church notifies its insurance company (if necessary).
- xiii. Advise the Chair of the trustees in the local church about whether a Serious Incident

Referral to the Charity Commission is required. (The DSO may be requested to provide support or undertake the preparation of an initial reporting form).

- xiv. Notify the Conference Office of a Charity Commission referral (if necessary)
- xv. Notify District Chair and Superintendent (as necessary).

4. Procedures for the Management of Safeguarding Information

Careful attention should be paid to the storage, use and sharing of data held by the church relating to other people. This is critical to ensure that those who engage with safeguarding processes have confidence in the legitimacy and appropriateness of actions taken. The management of information is governed by law, statutory and government guidance.

Privacy Notices

Privacy notices are central to effective data protection practice within safeguarding and they are supplied using standard documents for specific activities such as reporting a safeguarding concern, ongoing safeguarding case management and before undertaking a risk assessment.

The relevant forms can be found here <https://www.methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/policies-procedure-and-information/forms/>

For safeguarding purposes

- i. Care and sensitivity will need to be shown in issuing Privacy Notices especially where it may be necessary to inform the police/social care of concerns. In these circumstances seek the advice of the District Safeguarding Officer before issuing the Privacy Notice.
- ii. If a person shares information about themselves or a third party the person should be issued with a privacy notice as soon as possible.
- iii. If information has been supplied to the church by a third party which relates to another individual, the person to whom the information relates should receive a privacy notice within a reasonable period of the data being received within one month.
- iv. It is the responsibility of the minister in pastoral charge/ Superintendent Minister to issue the privacy notice. The District Safeguarding Officer will advise when the privacy notice may be issued.

For further information see *Safeguarding Policies, Procedures and Guidance, Sept 2020 Section 5*.

Guidance for Data Storage can be found at section 5.1.8 and advice about what to do in the case of a Data Breach can be found at 5.1.9.

Information sharing requests

Any request for safeguarding information by another organization or person should be directed to the District Safeguarding Officer in the first instance. The District Safeguarding Officer will follow the procedure as outlined in *Safeguarding Policies, Procedures and Guidance, Sept 2020 Section 5.2*.

5 Procedures Promoting Safer Practice

Critical to good safeguarding is safer recruitment and safer working practices. The Church has developed procedures for both these areas, informed by legislation and government guidance. As such, we aim to:

- carefully select and train all those with responsibility within the Church in line with safer recruitment principles
- ensure that any church activities are organised in such a way to avoid the risk of harm to everyone participating
- promote safe spaces that are inclusive and welcoming.

A to Z list of practices that promote safer working and safer space is provided. Church Council members and leaders of groups with children, young people and vulnerable adults should be familiar with and implement safer working practices for all activities.

Accident book/ Incident Book

An accident/incident book/log should be available on all church premises and at all church activities

Any injury, however slight, suffered by an employee, office holder or volunteer in the course of their involvement in any church activity must be recorded in the accident book/log, together with the particulars that are a requirement of statutory regulations.

Additional needs

If a child or adult has **additional** needs try to make the premises, toilets and access suitable for their needs.

Ask the adult/child (or parent/carer as applicable) how best to meet their needs.

If premises are being redesigned or refurbished, take the opportunity to anticipate the possible additional needs of future children and adults. Disability legislation requires organisations to take reasonable steps to meet the needs of disabled people, and this includes children.

Advocacy /access to an independent person

Children need to know who they can talk to if they need help. Churches should display Childline posters and the contact number where they will be seen by children and young people. See <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/childline-posters-wallet-cards/>

Vulnerable adults should be allowed and encouraged to share any concerns they have with parents, carers or church staff/volunteers. The Methodist Church aims to create a culture of transparency and accountability, where secrecy will not be tolerated. For adults who lack capacity, appropriate support and advice can be obtained from IMCAs:

www.pohwer.net/independentmental-capacity-advocacy-imca

Anti-bullying

All concerns about bullying between children must be dealt with appropriately. You can find advice about bullying at <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/bullying-and-cyberbullying/>

For Adults the Methodist Church anti-bullying policy, Positive Working Together can be found at: www.methodist.org.uk/positiveworkingtogether

Appointment of workers with children, young people and vulnerable adults. See Safer Recruitment.

Character References

If you are asked to write a character reference check whether it may be linked to formal proceedings, attendance at a meeting or the submission of a written report. Confirm whether the person is seeking a factual account of circumstances e.g. someone's attendance at church or your personal judgement. Avoid agreeing your involvement before you have taken further advice.

Always contact your District Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible, regardless of who has made the request. They will be able to provide guidance about current policy and procedures and give support. They will also be able to help you explain the Methodist Church's policy on character references.

Further information about character references is provided at section 4.5.6 of the Connexional Safeguarding Policy Procedures and Guidance 2020 (July).

Church Safeguarding Officer Role description

Main tasks

- provision of support and advice to the minister and the stewards in fulfilling their roles with regard to safeguarding.
- ensuring that a suitable, signed church safeguarding policy is displayed at all times in the church on a safeguarding noticeboard, along with contact details for current safeguarding officers, national helplines and other suitable information. This must be renewed annually.
- recording of all safeguarding concerns that are reported to the church safeguarding officer, according to Methodist policy and practice and promotion of the requirement for others to do the same. All concerns to be reported to the District Safeguarding Officer.
- Identify those who are required to attend safeguarding training and maintain records of attendance. Work with the circuit safeguarding officer to arrange Foundation training, or signpost people to the District website to arrange Advanced Training.
- attend training and meetings relating to the role
- work in partnership with the lettings officer, stewards and user groups to promote good safeguarding practice on church premises. Check hirers or premises have appropriate safeguarding policies in place
- Check that safeguarding is included as an agenda item at all Church Council meetings and report to the Church Council annually.
- inform all those with responsibility for recruitment, whether paid or voluntary, of their obligation to follow safer recruitment procedures
- advise the circuit safeguarding officer and/or DSO of any issues with compliance with safeguarding training, policy or safer recruitment requirements and respond promptly to any request from them about audit of safeguarding activities.
- Ensure safeguarding arrangements are in place for all ecumenical activities; (this policy

applies when the activity takes place on this church's premises).

Code of safer working practice with Adults –

To be issued to all workers and volunteers with adults

You should:

- treat all adults with respect and dignity
- ensure that your own language, tone of voice, and body language are respectful
- record any incidents of concern and give the information to your group leader, sign and date the record
- share concerns about an adult or the behaviour of another worker with your group leader and/or the District Safeguarding Officer. Complete the safeguarding concern form and send to the District Safeguarding Officer.

You should not:

- invade the privacy of an adult who is washing and toileting
- use any form of physical punishment or restraint (except car seat belts)
- be sexually suggestive about or to an adult, or scapegoat, ridicule or reject an adult or group
- permit abusive peer activities (eg initiation ceremonies, ridiculing or bullying)
- show favouritism to any one adult or group
- allow an adult to involve you in behaviour that is overtly physical or sexual
- allow unknown adults access to adults deemed at risk of harm (visitors should always be accompanied by a known person)
- allow strangers to give lifts to adults in your group.

Visiting adults at home

- Most visits to adults in their own home will be straightforward as they will be well known to the church.
- However, when visiting someone new for the first time, visitors should let someone else know whom they are visiting (and when).
- Visiting in twos may be advisable, especially if the adult lacks mental capacity.
- Do not call unannounced. Call by appointment, telephoning the person just before visiting if appropriate.
- Be clear about what support can be offered to the adult if they ask for help with particular problems and refer back to the church if uncertain.
- Do not make referrals to any agency that could provide help without the adult's permission, and ideally encourage them to set up the contact.
- Never offer 'over the counter' remedies to people on visits or administer prescribed medicines, even if asked to do so
- Do not accept any gifts from adults other than token items, to avoid misunderstandings or subsequent accusations from the person or their family. If someone wants to make a donation to the church, put it in an envelope, mark it on the outside as a donation and obtain a receipt from the treasurer

- Pastoral visitors should note the date when they visit people, report their visit to the pastoral secretary and say what is concerning or going well. The pastoral secretary will report safeguarding concerns to the minister and District Safeguarding Officer as appropriate, and agree what action should take place and who should record the incident.
- It is advisable to take a mobile phone on all visits.

Code of Safer Working Practice with Children and Young People

To be issued to all who work or volunteer with children and young people.

Appropriate conduct (children)

You should:

- be aware of and understand the local safeguarding policy
- Treat all children and young people fairly and without prejudice, discrimination or favouritism
- respect differences in gender, sexual orientation, culture, race, ethnicity, disability and faith and challenge behaviour that demonstrates discrimination and/or prejudice
- ensure that your own language, tone of voice and body language is respectful
- always aim to work with or within sight and hearing of another adult (who is not a family member)
- ensure that another adult is informed if a child needs to be taken to the toilet (toilet breaks should be organised for young children)
- ensure that children and young people know who they can talk to or contact if they need to speak to someone about a personal concern and encourage them to speak out if they feel uncomfortable or concerned.
- respond warmly to a child who needs comforting but this should not involve physical comfort e.g. cuddles.
- advise children, young people and their parent/carers/guardians in advance if any activity requires physical contact and provide an opportunity to opt out or agree alternative activities.
- administer any necessary first aid with others around
- obtain consent for any photographs/videos to be taken, shown or displayed via any medium. This should be from the parent, carer or guardian and the young person if 12 years or over. Images should not be taken or stored on personal devices.
- record any incidents that concern you or make you feel uncomfortable and give the information to your group leader and/or the District Safeguarding Officer. You must complete the Safeguarding Concern form and send to the District Safeguarding Officer.
- You must contact the District safeguarding officer immediately if you believe you have acted in a way which others may have interpreted as inappropriate or if a child has acted inappropriately towards you. Records must be signed and dated.
- always share concerns about a child or the behaviour of another worker with your group leader and/or the District Safeguarding Officer on 07434 284633 and complete the safeguarding concern form

- dress appropriately when working with children and not wear anything revealing or that is not practical for carrying out the tasks as part of your role.
- Notify the group leader if you are given a gift. Do not accept gifts of over £15.
- You must report all concerns about bullying between children to your group leader who must ensure the group's anti-bullying procedure is followed.

You should not:

- initiate physical contact. If contact is initiated by the child pull away gently so physical contact is for the minimum amount of time.
- invade a child's privacy whilst they are washing or toileting
- play rough physical or sexually provocative games
- use any form of physical punishment
- make any relationship with a child (other than family members) through social networking or online
- be sexually suggestive in the presence of or to a child, even as a joke
- touch a child inappropriately or forcefully
- scapegoat, ridicule, reject or ignore a child, group or adult
- allow abusive peer activities (eg initiation ceremonies, ridiculing or bullying)
- show favouritism to any one child or group
- allow a child or young person to involve you in excessive attention seeking that is physical or sexual in nature
- give lifts to children or young people.
- smoke any substance, vape or consume alcohol in the presence of children or when responsible for them
- provide personal contact details to a child or young person such as mobile number, email or social media contact.
- share sleeping accommodation with children
- arrange social occasions with children or invite them to your home outside organised group occasions (other than with the consent of parent, carers or guardians and where at least one other unrelated adult is present)
- allow unknown adults access to children (visitors should always be accompanied by a known person)
- allow strangers and those who are not authorised to give children lifts

Accept gifts, without notifying the group leader

Consent to share information

The general principle around consent is that you should explain to children and adults at the outset, openly and honestly, what and how information will, or could be shared and why, and seek their agreement to share personal or sensitive information.

The exception would be where seeking consent would put that person at increased risk of significant harm, or would undermine the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime, including where it might lead to interference with any potential investigation.

You should, where possible, respect the wishes of children, families and adults who do not consent to share confidential information. However, this should not stop you reporting concerns or seeking advice from the District Safeguarding Officer, who will discuss the concerns in an anonymized way, wherever possible.

You may still share information if, in your judgement, there is sufficient public interest to override that lack of consent.

When in any doubt, you should seek advice from the District Safeguarding Officer.

This is particularly recommended in relation to adults as the issues around capacity and consent are more complex.

Consent Forms

Where the church is running a dedicated service for children or vulnerable adults best practice requires that all activities should have: a registration form including the following: name and address

- date of birth
- emergency contact details
- medical information
- any **additional** needs including activities person cannot take part in
- consent for emergency medical treatment
- consent for photographs/videos if relevant.

Consent forms should be available at every session of the relevant group for reference and use in case of emergency. Separate consent should be obtained for one-off events and activities (eg swimming) and also for outings, weekends away etc. Personal details must be stored securely.

Day trips – See Residential and Day Trips

DBS Checks – See Safer Recruitment

Definitions

Child

Anyone under the age of 18.

Vulnerable Adult

Any adult aged 18 or over who, due to disability, mental function, age or illness or traumatic circumstances, may not be able to take care or protect themselves against the risk of significant harm, abuse, bullying, harassment, mistreatment or exploitation.

For definitions of abuse and further guidance see *Safeguarding Policies, Procedures and Guidance*, **Sept 2020**, S 7.1 & 7.2 & 7.5

Disability and Accessibility

The Equality Act 2010) www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance provides disabled people with protection from discrimination and gives legal rights in the areas of:

- employment
- education
- access to goods and services

What does accessibility mean in practice? Some examples:

- accessible toilets
- installing ramps
- providing information in various mediums eg braille, clearer signage
- providing sign language interpreters
- installing T-loops
- ensuring that wheelchair access is possible
- providing disability awareness training.

Drivers – see Transport for Church Activities

Drug and Alcohol Use

Drugs and alcohol are strictly forbidden while participating in Methodist activities for young people. This applies to staff, volunteers, visitors, children and young people. If drug or alcohol use by children or young people is suspected, the group leader must be informed and a discussion should take place about informing parents/carers. The DSO should be informed. Consideration should be given to the need to inform the police and for a referral to appropriate support services.

E- Safety and Internet use with children

- Where WIFI is available on church premises, an acceptable use notice should be displayed with the access instructions. A template is available on the Methodist Church website safeguarding section which can be modified for local use. https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/21167/06042021_guest_wifi_acceptable_use-policy_february_2021.docx
- Create a social media policy and agreement. See <https://www.methodist-nd.org.uk/safeguarding/>
- Ensure *that* all electronic communications are appropriate and professional.
- If using e-technology as a group activity, ensure that an adult worker knows and understands what is happening within the group.
- Do not make any relationship with a child (other than family members) through a social networking site or online.
- Maintain a log of all electronic contact with individuals or groups including messaging and texting.
- Ensure that parents or carers are aware of what their children or young people are doing and have given their written permission in advance.
- When demonstrations are being given, plan beforehand to ensure that all websites visited have material that is appropriate for the age group taking part.
- Where children and young people are given access to undertake their own searches on the Internet, search engines are recommended by the Department for Education and Skills (see section 6.5.8.1).
- Children and young people should be regularly informed and reminded of safe Internet use and accessing social media. If they have any concerns or fears, they must be encouraged to access websites such as NSPCC or Childline or talk to an adult.

Electrical equipment

The use of electricity or electrical equipment in church buildings must comply with the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989. Church members can reduce or remove risks by, for example:

- reporting all faulty equipment
- switching off all equipment when not in use and disconnecting the equipment when leaving the room
- not undertaking electrical repairs unless qualified
- securing trailing leads and cables
- removing trip hazards
- Electric socket covers must never be used

Emergency Contact and Support Organisation Contacts for Display See Appendix 1

Financial integrity

Financial dealings can have an impact on the Church and the community and must always be handled with integrity. Those with authority for such matters should maintain proper systems and not delegate that responsibility to anyone else.

- Church workers should not seek personal financial gain from their position beyond their stipend, salary or recognised allowances.
- Church workers should not be influenced by offers of money.
- Church workers should ensure that church and personal finances are kept apart and should avoid any conflict of interest.
- Money received by a church should be handled by two unrelated lay people.
- Any gifts received should be disclosed to a supervisor or colleague where it should be decided whether they can be accepted.
- Do not canvass for church donations from those who may be vulnerable (eg the recently bereaved).
- **For Lasting Power of Attorney, wills, bequests and acting as executor** see *Safeguarding Policies, Procedures and Guidance, Sept 2020*, 6.14.1 & 6.14.

Fire procedures

- Children and adults should be aware of the fire procedures.
- Fire extinguishers should be regularly checked and smoke detectors fitted throughout the premises.
- A fire drill should be carried out regularly by all groups who use the premises regularly.
- Exits and fire exits should be clearly marked.
- Lights should flash for deaf people in event of a fire.
- Candles should be placed in safe places.
- Emergency lighting should be in place in case lights go off.

For further advice please see Fire Safety Law and Guidance documents for business - see <http://www.cfoa.org.uk/19512>

First aid provision

A first aid kit should be available on the premises where an activity is taking place. The contents should be stored in a watertight container and be clearly marked.

Each group should designate one worker to check the contents at prescribed intervals.

All staff and volunteers should be encouraged to have some first aid knowledge and the church or circuit should encourage access to first aid training.

A list of first aiders should be compiled and kept available.

A compliant first aid kit should be carried on all activities off-church premises and in all vehicles used by the church (both church-owned and private).

Forms

The following forms are available on the safeguarding webpage

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/recruitment-dbspvg-forms-etc/forms/>

- Confidential declarations: All office holders should complete a confidential declaration.
- Registration for volunteers working with children, young people or vulnerable adults – Form A part 1
- Volunteer agreement including role outline – Form A part 2
- Keyholder declaration – Form D: Before the keys can be issued the keyholder is asked to sign the declaration and acknowledge the conditions of issue. This includes a privacy notice and consent form.
- Safeguarding DBS verifier privacy notice

Health and medication

When organising any activity involving vulnerable groups, health issues should be identified before the activity takes place. These may include noting any mobility difficulties, and ensuring that the meeting place is accessible. They may also include matters relating to medication.

In such circumstances, the event leader should ensure that:

- the person required to administer any medication is identified
- parents/carers are consulted so that medication requirements are fully understood
- all medication is stored securely
- consent forms are signed
- a record is made of any medication given, and signed and dated

Health and safety

It is the responsibility of the Church Council to ensure that proper health and safety processes are in place. Health and safety should be managed as part of all activities and reference should be made to the following policies and guidance:

- Health and safety regulation HSE
- Methodist Insurance offer a self assessment for churches for Health and Safety
www.methodistinsurance.co.uk/riskmanagement/health-and-safety-advice/index.aspx

Hire or use of church premises

See Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes (TMCP) Lettings policy, flowchart and guidance: www.tmcp.org.uk/property/letting-property-and-third-party-use

- Many churches own buildings, which they hire out to community groups and others. Some of these undertake work with children. The observance of 'reasonable care' by both parties is a standard insurance condition.

- The hiring body is required to ensure that children and adults who may be vulnerable are protected at all times, by taking all reasonable steps to prevent injury, illness, loss or damage, and must carry full liability insurance for this.
- Lettings officers/ property stewards needs to be mindful of the need to ensure the safety of children and vulnerable adults when booking multiple groups for the premises at the same time. Group leaders must be made aware of any associated risks.
- For both one-off and regular hiring, it is recommended that a written hiring agreement be used. Please refer to the TMCP website for further information and hiring agreements, including the declaration: www.tmcp.org.uk/property/letting-property-and-third-party-use.
- If the hiring body is required to register with Ofsted, the church should ask to see the registration certificate and record that it has been seen.
- Church Councils are required to ensure that those who use their premises under licence or who hire the premises for regular or occasional use are given a copy of the local church safeguarding policy and declare their willingness to comply with the safeguarding policy of the Methodist Church or equivalent procedures (such as Scouting and Guiding national safeguarding policy). This information should be prominently displayed.
- A checklist for churches to the suitability of safeguarding policies of user groups for lettings can be found at <https://www.methodist-nd.org.uk/safeguarding/>

Insurance

Churches need to check that adequate insurance is in place to cover all activities as well as the church building. The policy details should be displayed in a public place.

A duty exists upon the insured to research and adopt best practice based upon current and ongoing guidelines. It is also a condition of a policy of insurance that any incident or allegation is notified to the insurer immediately. Failure to comply with this requirement may prejudice any cover provided by the policy. Public liability insurance indemnity limits should be kept under regular review.

Guidance is available from Methodist Insurance or your insurer.

NB It is advised that copies of insurance policies are retained for 50 years, given the potential for historic abuse claims.

Internet – (See E- Safety and Internet use with children)

Keyholders for church premises

The Methodist Church is not obliged to give anyone access to church premises unless it is required as part of their role for regular hire.

Before any keys are issued, a declaration (form D) must be signed acknowledging conditions of issue. The form can be found at <https://www.methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/users-and-hirers-of-methodist-premises/>

Mental Health: See Self Harm and Mental Health

Mixed-age activities (eg. Choirs and music and drama groups)

Care should be taken to ensure that children in mixed-age activities such as choirs, music and drama groups are supervised by DBS checked adults at all times.

DBS checks are not required for adults in those groups who do not have specific responsibility for children. Separate changing facilities should be provided when needed for adults and children and different genders.

Children should be supervised only by those authorised to do so.

OFSTED registration

Churches which provide groups for children under the age of 6 who attend regularly for more than 2 hours at a time or more than 14 days in any period of 12 months will need registration with Ofsted unless an exemption applies. See,

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/childminders-and-childcare-providers-register-with-ofsted>

Many children's groups provided by churches will be exempt but will still be required to inform Ofsted of the activity. For further details, contact Ofsted via their website or information line on 0300 123 1231.

Pastoral Conversations

Relevant safeguarding information may be disclosed in the particular context of a pastoral conversation. The Methodist Church does not have authorised liturgies for the sacraments of individual confession and the Service of Reconciliation. A minister is therefore not prevented from disclosing details of any crime or offence which is revealed in the course of a pastoral conversation or a confession within that context. The requirements about information sharing apply. Wherever possible, ministers and others engaged in pastoral conversations on behalf of the Church should explain the limits of confidentiality in pastoral relationships. This should ideally occur at the beginning of a pastoral relationship or meeting. Ministers should be aware that convicted offenders can sometimes come forward with new information. There is no bar in law to prevent ministers passing on such information to the authorities.

Peer on peer abuse

All concerns about peer on peer abuse (abuse perpetrated by children/ young people on other children/young people) should be reported to your group leader and the District Safeguarding Officer.

Photography and video recordings

The rights of everyone to choose whether or not to be photographed should be respected. The following measures are taken to safeguard children and young people at Methodist Church activities:

- Display prominently a notice/notices advising people that that the event will be photographed/recorded; example available <https://www.methodist-nd.org.uk/> under safeguarding.
- Any captions for photographs will not contain the names of individual young people.
- Group photos will be used rather than images of individuals where possible.
- **Consent for any photographs/videos to be taken, shown or displayed via any medium. This should be from the parent, carer or guardian and the young person if 12 years or over. Images should not be taken or stored on personal devices.** Consent

forms for parents, carers and young people 12 and over are available on the District Church website, under safeguarding <https://www.methodist-nd.org.uk/>

- Images will only be taken or used of young people in appropriate clothing for the activity, undertaking activities that will portray them and the Church in a positive light.
- Where external media or photographers are present, they will be notified of safeguarding policies and procedures. They will not be left in unsupervised, sole contact with a child or young person and will wear an I.D. badge.
- **Do not photograph any child who has asked not to be photographed or any child who is known to be under a court order.**
- No external party will be allowed unsupervised access to young people while taking images or speaking to children and young people.
- Photographs and video recordings will be stored securely in a password-protected folder on an encrypted system which is only accessible to appropriate and necessary parties. Images will not be retained on any personal, mobile storage devices do not use children's names in photograph captions. If a child is named, avoid using the photograph.
- At large events arrange video or photographic stills of the participants in action or set up photo opportunities at the end. This allows the performance to go ahead with limited interruption, and allows any child who is not to be photographed to take part. If there are children or young people at the event for whom you do not have a completed consent form, put the notice about photographs in prominent places or in the event programme. Make sure that official photographers are aware of the guidelines for photography.
- Guidelines for photographers are available at <https://www.methodist-nd.org.uk/> (See safeguarding)
- Where a person becomes aware that images of a child or young person in a Methodist context are being used inappropriately should be reported immediately to the District Safeguarding Officer on 07434 284633.

Record-keeping (church activities/events)

As a guide, records of the following should be kept by the local church:

- safeguarding incidents (Recorded on a safeguarding concern form available from <https://www.methodist-nd.org.uk/safeguarding/>)
- church workers employed or working as volunteers with vulnerable groups (this should include start and finish dates, DBS check details, references, application forms, all posts held, training completed)
- risk assessments of church events and activities
- hiring arrangements.

IMPORTANT NOTE There is currently a legal requirement to retain and not destroy all documents relating to the care of children.

Registers

A register should be taken of those attending church activities and should include:

- the date of the activity
- the type of activity

- a list of adults present
- a list of children/young people present.

Registers should be retained until all children and young people contained in the document reach the age of 21. If this is unknown there is a standard retention period of 20 years from the creation of the document.

Residential and Day Trips

The Circuit and District Safeguarding Officers must be informed of the dates, times and location, and leader contact details for all overnight/residential trips involving children and young people/vulnerable adults.

For resources see Methodist Church website the Well for Workers for guidance:

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/children-youth-family-ministry/the-well-learning-hub-equipping-and-supporting-workers/resources-from-the-well-to-download/policy-and-practical-help/organising-events/>

There is a sample consent form for off-site activities at <https://www.methodist-nd.org.uk/safeguarding/>

Risk Assessments for Activities

Activity risk assessments should be undertaken and a written record made before any activity takes place. These should be approved by the event leader/minister and retained securely in case they need to be seen at a later date (e.g. as a result of an accident taking place).

Activity risk assessments should include:

- the nature of the activity
- the location
- transport needed and associated issues (eg insurance)
- staffing levels/gender
- experience of staff
- ages of the group attending, abilities, **additional** needs
- medical and health needs of the group
- emergency planning
- identification of risks
- action needed to address the risk
- a named person for resolving risk issues

Risk of Children Running Away

If there is a risk of a child running away if you contact parents/ carers or social care/ police on behalf of a child, do not share with the child who you have contacted. Contact the child's parents if appropriate; or police/ children's social care.

Make a note of the child's physical appearance including what they are wearing.

Consider moving to a place in the building that is less open so they cannot easily abscond. Find something to occupy them.

If a child leaves the premises

Do not try to stop them physically

Do not follow the child as this can make their behaviour more unpredictable and may put them at risk of greater harm. Contact parent/carer and police as appropriate.

Safer Recruitment

Safer recruitment should be undertaken for all roles and responsibilities in the church. Safer recruitment begins with a role description. For sample role outlines (which you can edit to suit local circumstances) check out

<https://www.lincolnshiremethodist.org.uk/safeguarding-documents/>

You can find the Safer Recruitment and DBS guidance here:

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/recruitment-dbspvg-forms-etc/safer-recruitment-policy-and-practice-guidance/>

The Church Safeguarding Officer and the Minister in pastoral charge are responsible on behalf of the Church Council for ensuring all parts of the safer recruitment policy are followed for all appointments.

The Methodist Church uses Due Diligence Checking (DDC) for all DBS checks.

<https://www.ddc.uk.net/>

DBS checks need to be renewed every 5 years in the Methodist Church. Ministers are normally verifiers, though this task may be delegated to a lay person.

Self-harm and mental health needs - Adults

If anyone expresses thoughts of suicide and another person believes there is immediate risk to life help must be sought immediately from the police/ambulance service by calling 999. Many adults live with mental health needs at some point in their lives. Where the behaviour of an adult with mental health needs is posing a risk of harm to themselves or other people advice should be sought from the District Safeguarding Officer.

Self-harm and mental health needs – Children and Young People

If any child or young person expresses thoughts of suicide and a person believes there is an immediate risk to life immediate help should be sought from the police/ambulance service on 999.

Parents/carers should normally be informed whenever a young person expresses suicidal thoughts or self-harms or talks about self-harming or is concerned about their mental health. If you think this may put the child/young person at risk you should consult the District Safeguarding Officer and your local children's social care for advice first.

All concerns about self-harm and children/young people's mental health should be referred to the District Safeguarding Officer on the safeguarding concern referral form

<https://www.methodist-nd.org.uk/safeguarding/>

Staffing levels required for children's/ young people's activities (staff/child ratios)

It is the responsibility of the group leader to arrange sufficient supervision to ensure the safe and effective management of all activities. The following issues must be considered when determining appropriate numbers of helpers:

- the gender of the group – if mixed, then staff members should also be mixed, where possible
- Only those aged 18 or over can be counted as part of the staff to child ratio
- Any leader/helper should be more than 3 years older than the upper age limit of the group
- the duration of the activity
- the competence and experience of the staff providing oversight and support
- the age of the group – staff should have the appropriate skills for the age they are working with
- children with **additional** support needs, such as physical disabilities, behavioural or mental health problems – extra staff may be necessary
- the size and layout of the room or outdoor area and any particular issues that may be relevant to that location.
- the nature of the activity, what this involves and what tasks there will be for children
- There should be a minimum of two unrelated
- adults present at any activity (it is recommended that there be at least one male and one female) in line with the ratios below. Staff ratios should also be based on a risk assessment e.g. increased ratios for outdoor or activities.

Required Adult to Child Ratios (as recommended by the NSPCC)

0 – 2 years 1 adult to 3 children 1:3

2 – 3 years 1 adult to 4 children 1:4

4 – 8 years 1 adult to 6 children 1:6

9 – 12 years 1 adult to 8 children 1:8

13 – 18 years 1 adult to 10 children 1:10

Specialised activities

Where the group is participating in a specialised activity such as adventure activities, advice should be sought from the relevant licensing authority/organisation. Advice is also available from the Well for Workers: www.methodist.org.uk/mission/children-and-youth/the-well-forworkers/downloadableresources/organising-events

Training

- The Methodist Church offers two levels of Safeguarding Training; Foundation 2020 and Advanced.
- Training is refreshed every 4 years.
- A person refreshes their training at the highest level of training.

The responsibility for the provision and record-keeping for Foundation 2020 Training is with the Circuit. A list of all who need to undertake Foundation training, and those who are warmly invited can be found here <https://www.methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/training/foundation-module-2020-edition/training-materials-foundation-module-2020/>

The responsibility for the provision of Advanced Module training is with the District. A list of those who need to undertake the Advanced Module and those who are warmly invited is available here <https://www.methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/training/advanced-module-2019-edition/>

All places must be booked via the District website <https://www.methodist-nd.org.uk/events-category/safeguarding/>

For all queries relating to Advanced Module training please contact the safeguarding training administrator on padistrictsafeguarding@methodist-nd.org.uk

The Methodist Church now recognises the Church of England Safeguarding training. The Foundation Module, C1, is equivalent to Foundation Module. The Leadership Module, C2, is equivalent to the Methodist Church Advanced Module.

Transport for church activities

The safety of people being transported to and from church activities is the responsibility of whoever makes the transport arrangements. If parents make those arrangements themselves, then they are responsible for ensuring the safety of those being transported. If the church makes the arrangements, safety becomes the responsibility of the church. Transport or travel between church activities will usually be the responsibility of the church.

Drivers

- All those who drive children/adults on church-organised activities/rotas should have held a full and clean driving licence for more than two years.
- Drivers who are not children's/adults' workers should be recruited for the task through the normal recruitment process. (For children and young people this role requires an enhanced DBS with Barred list Check. For driving adults who may be vulnerable this will normally require an enhanced DBS check)
- Any driver for church organized activities who has an endorsement of six points or more on their licence should inform the group leader and the District Safeguarding Officer.
- Any driver who has an unspent conviction for any serious road traffic offence should not transport children/adults for the church.
- Drivers must always be in a fit state (ie not overtired, not under the influence of alcohol, not taking illegal substances and not under the influence of medicines that may induce drowsiness).
- An annual licence check should be undertaken for all drivers using the website <https://www.gov.uk/view-driving-licence>.
- Insurance and MOT details must be provided to the church
- Cars that carry children/adults on behalf of the church should be comprehensively insured for both private and business use.
- The insured person should make sure that their insurance covers the giving of lifts relating to church-sponsored activities.
- Cars should be in a roadworthy condition. They should have up-to-date road tax and MOT (where applicable)

Transporting Children

- All children/passengers, including the driver, must wear suitable seat belts and use appropriate booster seats. If there are insufficient seat belts, additional passengers should not be carried.
- Children should not be transported in a private car without the prior consent of their parents or carers.

- At no time should the number of children in a car exceed the usual passenger number.
- There should be a nondriving adult escort as well as the driver.
- If, in an emergency, a driver has to transport one child on his or her own, the child must sit in the back of the car another leader notified and a signed record must be kept of the reason for this.

Transporting adults

- Care should be taken in assisting adults to board or leave vehicles and put on seat belts.
- Drivers need to be aware of moving and handling issues when assisting adults and transferring their mobility aids.
- Lifts to GP or hospital appointments or adult social care facilities are regulated activity and require an enhanced DBS check with barred list check.

Minibuses/coaches

- Workers/helpers should sit amongst the group and not together.
- If noise or behaviour appears to be getting out of control, stop the vehicle until calm is restored.
- Before using a minibus, ensure you know the most up-to-date regulations for its use and have a trial drive.
- The driver must check that their licence covers the class of vehicle they intend to drive.

Unaccompanied children

The Methodist Church advises that children under 11 years of age should be taken to and collected from church or a church activity. If a child is over 11 years of age it remains the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure the child is cared for and arrives and leaves the church safely.

If an unknown child arrives at a church or church activity you should take the following actions:

Welcome the child

Confirm their name and request parent/carer contact details

Contact the parent/carer to confirm where the child is, what the activity is, who is looking after the child and get permission for the child to remain and inform the parent/carer of the end time of the activity.

Ask the parent/carer for any essential medical information eg details of allergies or health conditions

Request that a consent form (sent with the child) is completed for future attendance.

If the child refuses to give information about parent/carer or something they say, or how they present, causes you to believe they may be at risk of harm contact Children's Social Care, using the Out of Hours service if necessary. You may also contact the DSO for advice and support.

Uncollected Children

When a child is not collected from an activity the following steps should be followed: The parent or carer should be contacted to confirm whether it is safe for the child to go home unescorted.

If both the parent/carers and activity leader deem it is safe for them to go alone, the child should be given instructions to go home safely. The parents/carers should be invited to discuss future arrangements.

In the event the parent/carers cannot be contacted, the police should be called and the child reported as missing from home. If there are safeguarding concerns explain these to the police. Keep trying to contact the parent/carers unless the police advise you otherwise. Two leaders should always remain with a child in these circumstances.

Venues for church groups with children and adults

- A health and safety check of the premises should be undertaken regularly by the church. The group leader is responsible for notifying the church property secretary of any health and safety concerns relating to the premises. Similar principles apply if the group meets away from church premises.
- The meeting place should be warm, well-lit and well ventilated. It should be kept clean and free of clutter.
- Fire exits should be checked regularly and clearly marked. The fire exits should not be blocked or obstructed.
- Electric socket covers must never be used as they present a safety hazard.
- Toilets and hand basins with hygienic drying facilities should be easily available.
- Appropriate space and equipment should be available for any intended activity.
- If food is regularly prepared for the group the facilities will need to be checked by the Environmental Health Office. Leaders will need Food Handling and Hygiene training and will need to provide up to date certificates.
- A first aid kit should be available
- The Childline telephone number (0800 1111) should be on display for children's groups
- The safeguarding policy statement should be displayed including local contact numbers for social care
- The certificate of insurance should be displayed
- There should be access to a telephone

Vulnerable Children, Young People and Adults

Some children, young people and adults are more vulnerable than others to being victims of sexual exploitation, human trafficking and modern day slavery.

If it is suspected that a child, young person or adult is affected by any of these issues, the group leader or minister should be informed and further advice sought from the District Safeguarding Officer who will support you in contacting the statutory authorities.

Websites for Churches

Methodist churches and organisations creating their own websites should adhere to these safeguarding policies and procedures and regularly review the pages of their sites so that they remain up to date, effective and safe. The Internet is constantly evolving and changing, and the Methodist Church guidelines change accordingly. You are strongly advised to review

the guidelines regularly to ensure your compliance. See Methodist Church Social Media Guidelines: www.methodist.org.uk/socialmediaguidelines

Anyone designing a website for a Methodist church, must ensure the safety of children and young people and vulnerable adults.

Website builders should follow these guidelines:

- Photographs are personal data as far as data protection legislation is concerned, and must be used responsibly. Where a person requests their photograph is not included this decision should be respected.
- Obtain written and specific consent from parents or carers before using photographs of anyone under 18 on a website. This should include providing a privacy notice. Where the person in the picture is 12 or over, their consent should also be sought, in addition to that of parents, carers or guardians.
- Children and young people under the age of 18 should not be identified by name or other personal details, including email or postal addresses and telephone numbers.
- When using photographs of children and young people, it is preferable to use group pictures. When a photograph of an individual child or young person is used, names or other personal details should not be used in any captions.
- Care must be taken when advertising special events for children and young people.
- Ensure that the image files are appropriately named – do not use names in image filenames or alt tags.
- Only use images of children in suitable attire to reduce the risk of inappropriate use.
- Consider advertising events simply by giving contact details of the adults responsible.
- When posting activity ideas for children or young people, ensure they comply with good safeguarding practice.

Whistleblowing

Concerns about safer practice and behaviour should always be raised as soon as possible. If any member, volunteer or employee feels that any adult is or has behaved inappropriately towards a child or vulnerable adult, they should speak to the District Safeguarding Officer or statutory services. See link to the Methodist Whistleblowing Policy:

https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/10268/counc_mc19-27_whistleblowing-policy-review_jan_2019.pdf

WIFI Acceptable Internet usage policy

Where WIFI is available on church premises, an acceptable use notice should be displayed with the access instructions. A template is available on the Methodist Church website safeguarding section which can be modified for local use. <https://www.methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/policies-procedure-and-information/forms/>

http://www.peasedownmethodist.org/images/policies/internet_usage_policy_v1.1.pdf

Young people as leaders/helpers

- If young people (under 18) are being encouraged to develop their leadership skills through helping with younger children they should always be supervised by an appointed worker
- Young people aged 16&17 should be safely recruited to their roles and suitability assessed

- The worker will be responsible for ensuring that good practice and safeguarding procedures are followed and the work they are doing is appropriate to both their age and understanding.
- The worker will also be responsible for ensuring that the safeguarding needs of the young leaders/helper are met.
- Young people should be at least 3 years older than the upper age limit of the group.

Appendix 1: Emergency Contact Numbers for Display

Police (all non-emergency enquiries)	101
Local police Child/Family Protection Unit	
Local council Children's Services/Social Care	
Local Emergency Social Work Team	
Local general hospital	

Support and Advice Organisations

Childline	0800 1111
Family Lives (helpline for parents)	0808 800 2222
YoungMinds (parents helpline, mental health)	0808 802 5544
Hopeline (suicide support for young people)	0800 068 4141
FRANK (drug and alcohol support)	0300 123 6600

Local Contacts

DSO	07434 284633
LN Regional Coordinator (Training)	