

# THE SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE



The Methodist Council appoints a Safeguarding Committee each year. This committee consists of a chair and up to 18 people.<sup>1</sup> The Director of Safeguarding and others agreed by the committee are able to attend as advisers, but are not voting members.<sup>2</sup> The committee's terms of reference are:

- To address the strategic direction of safeguarding within the Church, with a focus on promoting effective safeguarding practice and upholding a commitment to continue to listen and learn as a Church
- To oversee effective safe recruitment and implementation of safer space training programmes
- To identify any further work that should be undertaken in relation to the recommendations from the Past Cases Review<sup>3</sup>
- To develop relationships with statutory agencies to further understanding and joint working in respect of safeguarding matters
- To continue to develop effective working relationships with sister churches in order to work together where practicable
- To make recommendations to the Methodist Council on any matters relevant to achieving the above.

Several relevant safeguarding definitions are listed in Standing Order (SO) 232(1A):

- (i) a 'blemished disclosure' is a disclosure document, received from any body with official responsibility for providing information about the criminal records of individuals, which contains convictions, cautions or any other adverse entry;
- (ii) 'the safeguarding officer' means the person or one of the persons in the Connexional Team responsible for issues relating to the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults;
- (iii) a 'relevant party' means any person who is the subject of a decision, determination or recommendation made by the committee in the exercise of its functions ... or in relation to whom a risk assessment has been

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1 The Methodist Conference is the governing body of the Methodist Church. As the Conference only meets once a year, the Methodist Council undertakes ongoing work on behalf of the Conference. The Council meets three times a year.

2 SO 232(1Ai).

3 The Past Cases Review, *Courage, Cost and Hope*, published in 2015, was the result of the Methodist Church's review of safeguarding within the Church since the 1950s.

carried out for purposes connected with the exercise of those functions, and references to “the Superintendent” and “the District Chair” or the “the District Safeguarding Officer” in relation to a relevant party are references to the Superintendent of the Circuit in which the relevant party is stationed or is a member and to the Chair or safeguarding officer of the District of which that Circuit forms part.

## Functions of the Safeguarding Committee

The Safeguarding Committee is responsible for giving instructions and guidance on safeguarding matters. Its key functions are summarised in the table.

<b>Functions of the Safeguarding Committee</b>
Give directions to and offer guidance on the steps to be taken if there is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• any blemished disclosure or any related matter</li><li>• an application following referral of that disclosure</li><li>• any matter or application and a risk assessment.<sup>4</sup></li></ul>
Make recommendations to the Secretary of the Conference <sup>5</sup> about the action to be taken in respect of any Minister, Local Preacher or member of the Church with a conviction or caution. <sup>6</sup>
Determine whether to permit a person to be appointed to a role if they have a relevant conviction or caution. <sup>7</sup>
Act on a referral from the Director of Safeguarding where there are safeguarding concerns about a candidate for the presbyterate or the diaconate. <sup>8</sup>
Recommend action to be taken in respect of any Minister, Local Preacher or member of the Church who has been the subject of a complaints and discipline process and where a safeguarding risk remains or where a reassessment of the risk is required.

4 See SO 232(2)(i), SO 236 and SO 237.

5 The Secretary of the Methodist Conference works closely with the President and the Vice-President, and plays a principal part in the care, oversight and leadership of the Methodist Church.

6 See SO 010(2)(i) and SO 010 (2)(ii).

7 See SO 010(5).

8 See SO 713(7A), SO 725(6), SO 761(15) and SO 1102(9).

Recommend to the Secretary of the Conference that a Minister, Local Preacher or member of the Church should be prohibited from exercising that role.<sup>9</sup>

Recommend the setting up and terms of a new or existing safeguarding agreement.<sup>10</sup>

Approve a list of risk assessors to conduct Connexional risk assessments.<sup>11</sup>

Support the Connexional Safeguarding Team.

Promote effective safeguarding practice and safe recruitment across the Connexion and make recommendations to the Methodist Council.<sup>12</sup>

Ensure information is shared with statutory authorities and other denominations.

For further information, see Standing Orders 010(2)(i), 010(2)(ii), 010(5), 013C, 232(1A), 232(2)(i), 236, 237, 237(7), 237(A), 690(2)(c), 690A, 713(7A), 725(6), 761(15) and 1102(9).

For up-to-date safeguarding information, see: **[methodist.org.uk/safeguarding](http://methodist.org.uk/safeguarding)**

<sup>9</sup> See SO 013C.

<sup>10</sup> See SO 690(2)(c), SO 690(2)(c) and SO 690A.

<sup>11</sup> See SO 237(7).

<sup>12</sup> The Methodist Council undertakes ongoing work on behalf of the Conference and meets quarterly.

This is part of a series of leaflets summarising the safeguarding provisions in Methodist Church Standing Orders and *The Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church*. They are not intended to replace the Standing Orders referenced. If you are unclear about their interpretation, please seek advice from the Connexional Safeguarding Team or the Conference Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice.

The other leaflets in the Safeguarding Standing Orders series are:

- A Simplified Guide
- Duty to Obtain Disclosures
- The Church and Public Protection
- Safeguarding and Suspensions
- Safeguarding and the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act

  
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