

## NORTHAMPTON DISTRICT SAFEGUARDING POLICY

This policy was agreed at the District Executive Meeting held on 22 / 10 / 2025 (agreed Electronically)

Date for next review: *October 2026*

### 1. Safeguarding Statement

The Northampton Methodist District is committed to safeguarding and protecting all children, young people and vulnerable adults and firmly believes that the needs of children or of people when they are vulnerable are paramount.

The Northampton Methodist District fully agrees with the Connexional Team statement reiterated in the *Creating Safer Space Conference Report of 2007*: As the people of the Methodist Church we are concerned with the wholeness of each individual within God's purpose for everyone. We seek to safeguard all members of the church community of all ages.

The Northampton Methodist District recognises that none of us is invulnerable but that there is a particular care for those whose vulnerability is increased by situations, by disabilities or by reduction in capacities. It is recognised that this increased vulnerability may be temporary or permanent and may be visible or invisible, but that it does not diminish our humanity and seeks to affirm the gifts and graces of all God's people.

The Northampton Methodist District recognises the serious issue of the abuse of children and vulnerable adults and recognises that this may take the form of physical, emotional, sexual, financial, spiritual, discriminatory, domestic or institutional abuse or neglect, abuse using social media or human trafficking (slavery). It acknowledges the effects these may have on people and their development, including spiritual and religious development. It accepts its responsibility for ensuring that all people are safe in its care and that their dignity and right to be heard is maintained. It accepts its responsibility to support, listen to and work for healing with survivors, offenders, communities and those who care about them. It takes seriously the issues of promotion of welfare so that each of us can reach our full potential in God's grace.

The Northampton Methodist District commits itself to:

1. **RESPOND** without delay to any allegation or cause for concern that a child or vulnerable adult may have been harmed, whether in the Church or in another context. It commits itself to challenge the abuse of power of anyone in a position of trust.
2. Ensure the **IMPLEMENTATION** of Connexional Safeguarding Policy, government legislation and guidance, and safer practice in circuits and churches.
3. The **PROVISION** of support, advice and training for lay and ordained people that will ensure people are clear and confident about their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults who may be vulnerable.

## 2. Purpose

The purpose of this safeguarding policy is to ensure procedures are in place and people are clear about roles and responsibilities for children and vulnerable adults in our care and using our premises. It is to be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church (July 2023) which sets out the procedures of the Methodist Church. The district roles and responsibilities for safeguarding are set out below.

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### District Chair

The District Chair should in conjunction with the district safeguarding committee:

- Manage and support the work of the Regional Officer for Safeguarding (ROS).
- Through the ROS, ensure that superintendent ministers are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and enable skills training opportunities to be made available.
- Use the expertise and advice of the ROS and, as appropriate, Connexional Team personnel.
- Through the ROS and District Safeguarding Committee, ensure that all circuits and churches create and implement their own policies.
- Support the ROS and the district Safeguarding committee in their work by ensuring that reports of incidents and allegations are acted upon promptly and in accordance with good practice.
- Ensure that, where there are district meetings and events, the district policy is implemented.
- Ensure that each superintendent completes an audit/monitoring form after the first Circuit Meeting of each Connexional year confirming that policies are in place in each circuit and church and that these have been annually reviewed. Each superintendent shall send a copy of their circuit's policy to the ROS for scrutiny by the district safeguarding committee. The monitoring of this will be a subject of the district safeguarding committee's report to the District Executive.

### District Safeguarding Group

As part of the implementation of the recommendations from the President's Inquiry (Safeguarding) 2011, the Methodist Conference affirmed in 2012 that every district must have a group to focus on safeguarding work with children and vulnerable adults and should have an independent Chair, as set out in the Safeguarding Framework (2010), who:

- should be strongly committed to supporting the ROS
- should be well-respected
- should be able robustly to challenge the district where necessary
- should not be the ROS, the District Chair, or a close relative of those fulfilling these roles.

The District Safeguarding Committee will undertake this role for the Northampton District and will include at least one independent safeguarding professional

### District Safeguarding Committee

The district safeguarding committee will promote the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults across the district.

This responsibility includes ensuring that:

- The committee manages its business in an effective manner and it has a representative membership of ordained and lay people across the district, including people with experience and/or professional background in safeguarding including at least one independent safeguarding professional.
- The group provides support and guidance to the ROS, including confidential advice and discussion on complex cases.
- Any incidents and allegations are followed up or referred on as necessary with the support of the District Chair (NB the responsibility lies with the Chair or the relevant person in pastoral charge).
- A response is provided to requests for help, advice, information and training.
- Programmes of awareness, training and good practice are initiated.
- Publicity is given to its contact numbers.
- District and Connexional policies are effectively implemented.
- The Chair, superintendents and District Executive are updated on any changes to safeguarding policy, practice and guidance.
- Two meetings are organised annually to provide support and information on safeguarding issues to superintendents, circuit and church safeguarding officers.
- A report is delivered to the first District Executive meeting of each Connexional year by a member of the district safeguarding committee, which will include a note on the monitoring of district events.
- Collaborative work is undertaken with other relevant groups (e.g. Connexional, regional and ecumenical partners and professional colleagues) on safeguarding issues.

**Regional Officer for Safeguarding (ROS)** The ROS has a key role within the Methodist District and is required to:

- Oversee church, circuit and district compliance with the Methodist Church's safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Be accessible to churches in relation to all safeguarding issues, be fully involved and oversee all situations of concern including the establishment and review of all safeguarding contracts.
- Ensure a timely response is provided to requests for help, advice, information and training.
- Promote the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults across the district and ensure programmes of awareness, training and good practice are initiated.
- Work to provide Creating Safer Space Advanced Module training opportunities and support for Foundation trainers in the district.
- Liaise regularly with designated officers of the local authority and the police as necessary.

- Undertake safeguarding risk assessments for the implementation of safeguarding contracts and relating to specific cases.
- Take a lead on working with individual cases in the district, including representing the Church in meetings with external organisations.
- Ensure District and Connexional policies are effectively implemented.
- Ensure the Chair, superintendents and District Executive are updated on any changes to safeguarding policy, practice and guidance.
- Provide support and information on safeguarding issues to superintendents, circuit and church safeguarding officers.
- Report regularly to the District Executive on safeguarding matters across the district.
- Have a clear understanding of the issues facing faith communities as they seek to make their places of worship a safe place for children and vulnerable adults.
- Be committed to continuing personal development and to the provision of safeguarding training opportunities within the district.

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sonia Hills', written in a cursive style.

District Chair