

Darlington and Newcastle Methodist Districts

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY GUIDELINES

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The Darlington and Newcastle Methodist Districts gratefully acknowledge the Diocese of Newcastle upon Tyne for agreeing to allow the adaptation and adoption of their policy document.

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Foreword by

The Chairs of the Darlington and Newcastle upon Tyne Districts

We are very happy to commend to Circuits and churches of the Darlington and Newcastle Districts this fully revised and updated 'Child Protection Policy Guidelines'. Based on local and connexional knowledge and expertise, this material will enable all those working with children and young people to grow in confidence and good practice, and to respond appropriately to any concerns that arise. It is our responsibility to offer children and young people the best care and nurture we can provide. To offer our workers and volunteers the best structures within which to serve the church, the best of environments in which to work with children and young people, the calibre of the volunteers and staff we recruit, the procedures we have for dealing with allegations of abuse, are all vitally important aspects of our work.

We are grateful to all who have produced these guidelines and indeed to all who work with children and young people in our region. We again commend these guidelines to you, and strongly encourage their thoughtful and responsible use.

Graham Carter and Leo Osborn

CONTENTS AND INDEX

Foreword	Page i
Contents	Pages 1 & 2
Introduction and Definitions	Page 3
Principles	Page 4

GOOD PRACTICE

This section outlines The Darlington and Newcastle Districts' view of what constitutes Good Practice in working with children. It includes sections on Church Organisation, Health and Safety (including a checklist which can be copied), Good Practice, the Use of Computers, Recruitment and Support of Volunteers, safe use of a Minibus and Insurance and Data Protection statements. Sample Forms which can be copied are included at the end.

Responsible Caring - Outline	Page 5
Church Safeguarding Co-ordinator	Page 6
Independent Person & Children's Advocacy	Page 7
Health & Safety	Pages 8 & 9
Health & Safety Check List	Pages 10 & 11
Principles of Good Practice while working with children	Page 12
Organisational Good Practice in Leading Groups	Page 13
Staffing Ratios and Space needed	Page 13
Insurance Requirements	Page 14
Activities which include Under 8s - OFSTED	Page 15
Children and Performance	Page 17
Working with Black Children & children from Ethnic Minorities	Page 17
Guidelines on Information Communications Technology	Pages 18 - 20
Introducing Volunteers	Pages 21 & 22
Minibus Safety Checklist	Page 23
Statement from Methodist Insurance Group	Pages 24 & 25
Data Protection Act	Pages 26 & 27
SAMPLE FORMS - List	Page 28
Policy on the Recruitment of ex-Offenders	Pages 29 & 30

CHILD PROTECTION

This Section outlines the processes which should take place when someone has a concern in the Church over the safety of a child. It includes definitions of the different types of abuse, including a special section on Spiritual Abuse, simple 'Do's and Don'ts' when dealing with a suspected abusive situation, important guidance on Confidentiality and some initial guidance on Domestic Violence.

Responding to Allegations of Abuse	Pages 31 & 32
Definitions of Abuse	Pages 33 & 34
Do's & Don'ts when dealing with an Allegation of Abuse	Pages 35 & 36
Confidentiality	Pages 37 - 39
Spiritual Abuse	Page 40
Domestic Violence	Pages 41 & 42
Regional Child Protection Co-ordinator Information	Page 43
Useful References	Pages 44 - 46
USEFUL PHONE NUMBERS AND CONTACTS	Pages 47 - 49

APPENDICES

A01 Application for a Reference Form	Page 50
A02 Activity Authorisation Form	Page 51
A03 Session Register	Page 52
A04 Parent/Guardians General Consent Form	Page 53
A05 Parent/Guardians Consent & Information Form for particular event	Page 54
A06 Church Check List	Page 55
A07 Referral information/Incident Report Form	Pages 56 & 57

Introduction to Darlington & Newcastle Districts Child Protection Policy and Guidelines

This document is intended to provide 'hands on' advice and guidance to those dealing with Child Protection matters in churches

It is not intended to answer every possible question on Child Protection nor will anyone who has read and understood every word in this document immediately be an expert in Child Protection issues. Rather it provides principles of Good Practice and headline guidance which is intended to be of help where there is an immediate concern or where a check needs to be made on good practice.

It is anticipated that those leading Child Protection in churches will seek appropriate training in the areas which are their immediate concern and responsibility.

The Guidelines are divided into two main sections -

- Good Practice
- Dealing with a Child Protection Concern

The following definitions make clear who the Guidelines are intended particularly to protect.

Child

While a child is legally defined as anyone under the age of 18 we are also aware of the need to be sensitive to those moving from childhood to adulthood.

Duty of Care

'Duty of Care' is the obligation to exercise a level of care towards an individual, as is reasonable in all the circumstances, to avoid injury to that individual or his/her property. It is a responsibility which is exercised by church councils in all activities which are their responsibility and particularly in their work with children.

Vulnerable Adults

While Vulnerable Adults are not technically covered by Child Protection legislation or practice, all Policies and Good Practice should be applied to such persons within Churches in the same way as they are to children.

PLEASE NOTE: for the purposes of consistency the term 'child' is used throughout the document but remember it includes young people up to the age of 18.

PRINCIPLES OF THE DARLINGTON & NEWCASTLE DISTRICTS CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

- We are committed to the safeguarding, care and nurture of the children within our church community.
- We will carefully select and train volunteers and paid workers with children using the Criminal Records Bureau, amongst other tools, to check the background of each person.
- We will respond without delay to every complaint made, that a child for whom we are responsible may have been harmed or be at serious risk of harm
- We will fully cooperate with statutory agencies during any investigation they make into allegations concerning a member of the church community.
- We will seek to offer informed pastoral care to any child or adult who has suffered abuse.
- We will care for and supervise any member of our church community known to have offended against a child.

The Darlington & Newcastle Districts are committed to these principles and recognises their responsibilities towards all children with whom they have contact.

"Anyone who welcomes a little child on my behalf is welcoming me. But if anyone causes one of these little ones who trust in me to lose faith, it would be better for that person to be thrown into the sea with a large millstone tied around their neck."

(Matthew Chapter 18 vv 5 and 6)

"The Child's Welfare is paramount"

(1989 Children Act)

RESPONSIBLE CARING

Guidelines for Protecting Children in Churches and those who work with them.

These guidelines aim to:

- ❖ Safeguard the welfare and care of children when they are the responsibility of the Church
- ❖ Protect leaders and those who work with children
- ❖ Provide guidance to ensure safe, good practice in work with children

Recommended Elements of Good Practices include:

- ❖ The establishment of a **CHURCH SAFEGUARDING COORDINATOR**.
- ❖ The establishment of a **CIRCUIT SAFEGUARDING COORDINATOR**.
- ❖ Adopting approved appointments procedures for volunteers and paid workers.
- ❖ Ensuring that volunteers and paid workers are aware of the guidelines and properly trained and supported.
- ❖ Ensuring that those working with children include a combination of men and women appropriate to the group and the appropriate staffing ratios of adults to children.
- ❖ Ensuring that an adult never works alone with children or young people.
- ❖ Ensuring that parents/guardians know when and where the workers responsibilities begin and end.
- ❖ Obtaining signed parental consent forms for activities away from the Church centre.
- ❖ Ensuring that full names and addresses and emergency contact details of participants, including health needs, are recorded in advance of any activity with children.
- ❖ Ensuring that particular attention is paid to those with disabilities and issues of race and ethnicity.
- ❖ Ensuring the **CHURCH COUNCIL** authorise activities and workers.
- ❖ Maintaining detailed records of any accidents and injuries and actions taken including the time of reporting to the parent or guardian.
- ❖ Ensuring that health and safety issues are reviewed understood and complied with.
- ❖ Undertaking in advance a risk assessment of any venue, event and participants.
- ❖ Ensuring that Church Child Protection Procedures are implemented, regularly reviewed (at least annually) and made publicly available.

THE CHURCH SAFEGUARDING COORDINATOR

The Church Council holds responsibility for its Children's work. Where possible it should appoint a Safeguarding Coordinator. This should be done even if the Church does not run any activities specifically for children. As long as children attend events (services, fairs, and special events) the local Church needs to ensure proper care is taken of them. If a Safeguarding Coordinator is not appointed the Church Council itself **MUST** take on their tasks and responsibilities.

It is strongly recommended that Safeguarding should be a standard item on the Church Council Agenda to ensure issues are not missed.

The Tasks and Responsibilities of the Church Safeguarding Coordinator are:

- To ensure that arrangements for activities for children which are the responsibility of the Church are organised and run according to best practice
- To be alert to situations where there may be risk to children and also to individuals who may pose a threat to them and to initiate appropriate responses and remedy in such situations.
- To take a constructive and caring interest in the Church's work with children in the Church and to support those who carry out this work on the Church's behalf.
- To interview, induct and support those newly undertaking work with children
- To ensure arrangements are made for an Independent Person for the Church and that workers are aware of the responsibilities of being a Children's Advocate. (See page 7)
- To be a point of referral for anyone who has a concern over the way work with children is being carried out in the Church.
- Where the Church Council so delegates to coordinate the process to ensure CRB Disclosures are obtained for relevant persons.

It is suggested that notices be displayed giving the name and, where possible, a photograph of the Safeguarding Coordinator as an indication that Child Protection issues are addressed seriously in the Church.

Framework

1. The Safeguarding Coordinator should report to **Church Council** and to the Church **AGM**.
2. All those working with children should be aware of the existence and purpose of the Safeguarding Coordinator and should be encouraged to view the Safeguarding Coordinator as a support for their work on behalf of the Church.

Independent Person

In order to demonstrate transparency and create confidence in child protection practice, every Church should **ATTEMPT TO** identify and publicise the name and contact details of an '**Independent Person**' outside the Church to whom concerns about Child Protection issues can be addressed. An alternative would be to appoint a Circuit Independent person.

The principles in identifying such persons are -

- That they should be easily available to members of the Church (i.e. live within a reasonable distance),
- That they should understand principles of listening, particularly to children ,
- That they understand - or **are prepared to be trained in** - the purpose of their role.

The name and contact details of the Church Independent Person should be publicised appropriately e.g. on Church and Church Hall Notice Boards.

Children's Advocacy

Advocacy for Children is also important. There is a tendency for children to be disbelieved in the face of adult power and control and it is essential that those working with children should be ready to hear, believe and where necessary act on their confidences. Children often find it difficult to speak of events which have upset them and it is most likely, therefore, that they will unburden themselves to those they already know well and trust.

All those working with children should be prepared to take on the Advocacy role. It is strongly recommended that all those working with children in a Church should be alerted to the possibility that a child may wish to share a confidence and that they should be prepared to act appropriately. **On receiving a confidence the worker should always discuss the implications with the Safeguarding Coordinator, the Regional Child Protection Coordinator, the Regional Training & Development Officer or another responsible person.** Advice, support and training should be available from within the church, local members of the congregation working in relevant professions (Health Visiting, Teaching, Social Work, etc) or from the Regional Child Protection Co-ordinator or the Regional Training & Development Officer.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Good Health and Safety Practice is an essential element in a Church's Child Protection work. Buildings which are old or in poor repair can pose a significant hazard to children who are in the Church's care. More children are harmed through poor Health and Safety practice than by the activities of abusers.

Points to be aware of:

- Children should meet in a safe location, which means that all reasonable precautions should be taken to minimise risk.
- Care should be taken where there are heating appliances, low level sockets, windows and doors.
- There should be no stacked furniture in a room where younger children meet (up to 12 years). However, if this is unavoidable, chairs should be no more than five high and with their backs to the wall. **On no account should children of any age be allowed to climb on stacks of chairs.** Table stacks should be stable.
- There should always be a first aid kit available (not locked away!), with a qualified first-aider designated by the Church Council to maintain it and familiarise workers with its use.
- There should be a qualified first-aider present. Training can be obtained at nil or low cost from the Red Cross or the St John's Ambulance Service. Suitable disposable gloves for dealing with cuts, broken skin and other bodily fluids should be provided.
- All workers should know the location of the nearest telephone.
- Names, addresses and particular health needs of all children at Church sponsored events whose parents are not also present must be kept.
- Accidents should be recorded in an Incident Book and parents/Guardians notified immediately.
- Cleaning materials and all poisonous substances (including rat and other rodent control substances) should be kept out of the reach of children and locked away. Cleaning staff must be made aware of children's use of the building and health and safety considerations.
- There should be an agreed procedure for a fire drill drawn up by a Church Council designated person, in consultation with the Fire Service.
- Young children should not leave the premises unsupervised.
- External entrances and pathways should be well lit.

N.B. Workers should not give medication to children themselves. They may remind children when it is time for them to take medication.

Children should be encouraged to be aware of Health and Safety issues and to take part in work on the issue when appropriate.

Other implications for Health and Safety are included in the following Health and Safety Check list.

It is suggested that this list be laminated and given to workers so they can use it as a reference point before EVERY session.

A Health & Safety Checklist for the Church's work with Children

Area	Issue	Remedy
Entrance and Exit	Are the doors to the outside world secure?	Ensure small children cannot wander off in the building or out of it. Consider whether the fitting of a child-proof barrier is necessary.
	Does the building exit on to a safe area or a road?	Ensure an adult is at the door when children leave and that children who need to be accompanied leave with an adult.
Stairs	Are stairs safe for small children? Wooden or stone? Can they fall down them?	Ensure small children are accompanied down stairs. Consider fitting a stair gate.
Heating	What type of heating? Could a child burn themselves if they fell against it?	Ensure heating has guard where necessary
Cooking and kettles	Is there child access to cooker, boiling kettle etc?	Ensure children do not have access to cooking unless in supervised activity. Never boil a kettle at child level. Ensure wires cannot be tripped or pulled over.
Electrics	Can children access electrical installations and sockets?	Ensure safety plugs are in sockets Ensure electrics are boxed and/or inaccessible.
Furniture	How child friendly is the furniture? - metal corners/edges; old wooden objects which could splinter? Have furniture and other objects been coated with lead based paint?	Remove or make inaccessible child unfriendly furniture. Fit corner cushions if necessary. Remove lead paint.
Stacked chairs	Are chairs the stacking variety?	Ensure stacks of chairs are safe and children have no access. Children should <u>never</u> be allowed to climb on stacked chairs.
Cleaning materials and poisons	Are cleaning materials, bleach etc accessible to an inquisitive child?	Ensure cleaning materials etc are in locked and inaccessible cupboard. Ensure cleaner(s) are aware of risks to small children of leaving materials out.
Craft materials	Glue, tippex, large markers are potentially noxious. Are writing materials fitted with child-proof caps?	Ensure craft materials are put/locked away when not in use. Get child-proof caps. Ensure poison is put down in places inaccessible to children. Ensure those who put down the poison are aware of children's use of building. Ensure leaders are also aware of poison.
Rat poison or pest control	Are poisonous pest controls used?	
Toilets	Are toilets sanitary?	Ensure toilets are clean 'Wet floor' warnings put out

General cleanliness	<p>Can a child lock themselves in the toilet?</p> <p>How is the floor? How dirty will a small child get if s/he crawls?</p> <p>Is the floor covering adequate for crawling?</p>	<p>Ensure toilet doors can be unlocked from the outside.</p> <p>Ensure floor covering is appropriate to age group and activity.</p> <p>Check for loose carpet tiles, frayed carpet etc.</p>
Fire	<p>Are Fire Exits known and unlocked?</p> <p>Are Fire Exits locked when building is not in use?</p>	<p>Ensure all adults know Fire Exit routes and that Fire Exit doors are unlocked.</p> <p>Ensure Fire Exits are unlocked and/or that keys are identified and accessible</p>
Access by strangers/others	<p>Can people from outside access the building?</p>	<p>Ensure entrances which are not Fire Exits are locked.</p> <p>Ensure that if children go to unsupervised parts of the building, they are accompanied</p>
Cupboards/Storage	<p>Could things fall out of a cupboard onto a child?</p>	<p>Ensure cupboards are filled safely.</p> <p>Should cupboard locks/ fasteners be fitted?</p>
Carbon Monoxide Fire & smoke	<p>If gas is used is there a Carbon Monoxide detector?</p>	<p>Fit Carbon Monoxide detectors</p> <p>Fit smoke detectors</p>
Registration/medical needs	<p>A register of children attending and the Leaders including their responsibility MUST be kept. Is it?</p>	<p>Keep Register which allows all children to be traced in the event of Fire or Accident. This will include parent/guardian Name and Address/Telephone for easy contact.</p>
Medical	<p>Are there children who have special needs by reason of health or disability?</p> <p>Medical needs must be covered. Is there a First Aid Box?</p> <p>Is there a First Aider?</p>	<p>Workers need to be aware of special needs</p> <p>The First Aid Box needs to be checked regularly for contents</p> <p>A First Aider needs to be present or easily accessible.</p>
Accidents	<p>Do you have accidents?</p> <p>Do you keep an Accident Book?</p>	<p>In the event of incidents or accidents the keeping of an Accident Book enables identification of causes and remedy if appropriate.</p> <p>Accident Book should be easily available and on show if possible.</p>
Plants	<p>If plants are in the building are they poisonous?</p>	<p>Some common and decorative plants are poisonous. Ensure they are not accessible to children. Preferably remove them.</p>

These guidelines are intended to assist workers to make decisions, not to take that responsibility away from them.

PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE FOR THOSE WORKING WITH CHILDREN

Churches are encouraged to copy this list for all workers. It may also be a useful discussion subject for a training session.

1. Familiarise yourself with your Church Child Protection Guidelines and the Good Practice guidance which follows.
2. Welcome each child and treat each individual with dignity and respect.
3. Be sure that each child has a completed health and consent form.
4. Where ever possible work in twos: you should never be more than a few seconds and an open door from another authorised worker.
5. Plan activities that are appropriate and inclusive.
6. Before you criticise a child's behaviour, consider what might be happening in other parts of their life which may be causing it.
7. Challenge unacceptable behaviour eg bullying, ridiculing, rejection and mockery. Never use abusive language or behaviour yourself.
8. Respect personal privacy.
9. Do not assume it is right to touch a child;
10. Do not assume it is wrong to touch a child.
11. Be aware and alert. Take seriously what you see, hear or feel. If you are concerned, talk to someone you trust; seek advice from an appropriate source.
12. Know where to find the telephone number of your Independent Person.
13. Remember that you are responsible for your actions, and that the child's welfare is paramount.
14. Remember your role as Children's Advocate and be ready to listen to a child sensitively.

GOOD PRACTICE IN LEADING GROUPS

- Always keep a register of who is present at any event or regular activity.
- Ensure that Parents'/Guardians' contact details and the children's health and consent forms are kept up to date.
- Explicit permission from parents/guardians must be obtained for all outdoor activities.
- Some 'adventure' activities need to be licensed. Advice is available from 'Adventure Activities Licensing Authority', 17 Lambourne Crescent, Llanishen, Cardiff, CF4 566. Tel No. 01222 755715
- Any physical contact, which should only take place in public, should reflect the child's needs, not the adult's and should be appropriate to the age and understanding of the child and generally be initiated by the child rather than the adult.
- A child should never be hit or shaken or in any way physically disciplined. **It is recommended that workers have an agreed policy on standards of behaviour and an agreed code of discipline in advance.**
- It is recommended that groups including, or wholly for, young people, agree codes of appropriate behaviour and conduct, and these are regularly reviewed.
- Casual visitors i.e. those who have not been authorised by the Church, should not have access to children without the presence of an adult who is deemed to be responsible for the group.

Staffing Ratios

There should always be a minimum of 2 adults with any group of children

If the group includes girls, there should be one woman present.

It is recommended that at least the following numbers of authorised workers are present at each session. This is only a minimum and should be adjusted according to the activity, the building and the ability of the children.

Taking into account that there will be a minimum of 2 workers, there should be one leader for every:

- three 0-2year olds;
- four 2-3year olds;
- six 3-5 year olds;
- eight 5-8 year olds.

Older Children

In deciding on the number of workers, consideration should be given to the nature of the activity, where it is taking place, the children themselves - how well they are known, etc. and our Duty of Care (see page 3). There should always be not less than two adults and an appropriate gender balance.

We recommend that the wider the age range, the greater the number of workers.

N.B. Anyone under 18 years old cannot be included in staff ratios and should not be solely in charge of a group.

- **Room Space** [recommended]

0-2 years	40 sq feet per child	eg 10ft x 4ft
2-3 years	30 sq feet per child	eg 6ft x 5ft
3-8 years	25 sq feet per child	eg 5ft x 5ft

- **Hygiene** [recommended]

There should be at least one toilet and wash basin per ten children. Only leaders of the same sex should accompany small children to the toilet. Casual visitors should never accompany children to the toilet.

- **Insurance**

It is vital that insurance cover for all activities is checked annually.

Be aware that some insurance is not valid if activities have not been officially approved by the Church Council.

ALWAYS check your insurance covers you for any special event.

Those who let part of a church building or church room need to complete a lettings agreement or room booking form and Safeguarding Form E. If this is not done the church may be liable for the activities of that group in relation to allegations and incidents. A key holder form will also be required for a regular let or licence agreement.

SEE detailed statement by the Methodist Insurance Company on page 24.

ACTIVITIES WHICH INCLUDE UNDER EIGHTS

You must inform OFSTED if events arranged by the church involve all of the following -

- include under eights;
- do not have parents present;
- last for more than two hours in any one day or for more than 6 days per year.

OFSTED needs to know the location, the number and age range of children expected, the number of 'staff', the hours of opening and the reason for this 'occasional' or 'day care facility'. They may not insist on registration, as long as they are kept informed, and they do have the 'right to inspect'.

Ofsted Website address: www.ofsted.gov.uk

SEE SAMPLE LETTER ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE

Sample Letter:

OFSTED
1st and 4th Floors
Stockdale House
Headingley Office Park
Victoria Road
Leeds LS6 1WA

Dear Sir/Madam

As advised by our District Child Protection Guidelines I am writing to inform you that we are planning an event which will include children under the age of eight years for more than two hours.

Below are the details of this event, which I understand might be classed as an 'occasional facility',

Date, Location and Hours of Opening

The event is called [*name of event*] and will be held on [*day, month, year*] at [*location*]. It will begin at [*start time*] and finish by [*finishing time*].

The Reason for this 'day care facility'

Our aim is to [*state aim of day*]. The programme will include a variety of workshops and activities, for [*state age group*].

The Number and Age Range of Children

We expect [*number of participants and age group*]. We are providing a crèche for very young children.

Number of 'Staff' [*Say what ratio of adults to children you expect*]

We abide by our District child protection guidelines: leaders work according to appropriate staffing ratios and all are 'authorised' through CRB and church child protection procedures.

Thank you for your attention

Yours faithfully

Name:

Position:

CHILDREN AND PERFORMANCE

Children, who are performing in shows e.g. pantomimes, may need to be 'licensed'.

The need for licensing depends on the number of performances and the times of the performances. The Local Education Authority has the discretion to exempt groups from the need to obtain licences.

For further information contact your local Education Welfare Service well in advance of the performance to get their advice. This will ensure that, if you do need to obtain licences, any procedure can be carried out with the minimum of stress!

WORKING WITH BLACK CHILDREN AND CHILDREN FROM ETHNIC MINORITIES

Research has shown that when working with children from other cultures, workers need to be:

- especially aware of the impact of racism upon children from black families and those from other minority cultures.
- conscious that deep-rooted personal prejudices or stereotypical attitudes may impact on how the child is perceived.
- aware that sometimes black children and adults, and those from other minority cultures, may be reluctant to talk about abuse, in case it stigmatises or draws unsavoury attention to their particular community.
- aware that children from other races and cultures may use different language or use language differently.
- conscious that because of discrimination experienced in the wider community, sometimes black children and those from other minority cultures, will have their identities reinforced only in their homes. If abuse is taking place in the child's home, then it is possible for the abuse to be seen as mirroring the negative societal images of their minority ethnic status. In responding, children from minority cultures who have been abused, sometimes begin to deny their skin colour.

Whenever workers have concerns which are related to black children or those from minority cultures, they should seek additional guidance from black workers or workers from the child's culture, with expertise in caring for children.

In all situations of concern the Regional Child Protection Co-ordinator also needs to be informed.

GUIDELINES ON USE OF INFORMATION COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY. (ICT)

The advance of ICT in recent years presents us all with previously unparalleled access to information. The information that is available through ICT encompasses all of human experience including many websites that we may regard as inappropriate for children and young people. Therefore to care responsibly for children in our charge, our policy needs to include responsible guidelines regarding;

1. The access of children to ICT.
2. The use we make of ICT in our work with children.

There are potential dangers if;

- A. Your church or home computer can be accessed by children
- B. You run your own web-site
- C. You use ICT in contacting children

Churches where internet use is to be part of a programme of work should engage all parties involved in debate to agree policy on use and seek to establish group rules. The OfCom booklet 'Safety Net' provides useful information that can be used as a basis for discussion. It is available free on the web-link on page 20.

All churches should consider the potential for unsupervised access on their premises.

Net Safety Rules

The creative use of ICT should be part of the educational experience of children and they should be encouraged to develop a responsible attitude in its use.

Groups for whom ICT access is a regular part of their programme should discuss the following rules, and adapt and adopt them into their own agreement for use.

- A. Always tell a parent or worker if something appears on the screen which is confusing or seems threatening or scary.
- B. Never give out your name, address or any other identifying information whilst on line.
- C. Never agree to a face to face meeting with someone you have met on-line, without parental/guardian permission and then make sure that you meet in a public place accompanied by a parent or guardian.
- D. Never respond on-line to messages or e-mails that use words which are threatening, confusing or scary. Inform an adult if that kind of message is received and if you are in a live chat room, leave immediately.

- E. Never go into a new online area that is going to charge additional money to the telephone bill.
- F. Never send a picture over the internet without permission and supervision from parents/workers.
- G. Never give out credit/debit card details without a parent/guardian/worker present.

The following guidelines are key points for consideration in your development of policy in your church /group.

➤ **If your church or home computer can be accessed by children**

Consider fitting a locking device or using passwords to prevent unauthorised use of internet and e-mail software.

- a. Consider using, filtering software to govern which web-sites may be accessed. Web addresses below for Netnanny and Cyberpatrol.
- b. Encourage users of your computer to discuss and agree what is appropriate use. Use the Net Safety Rules as a basis for discussion.
- c. If you wish to allow access as a specific activity for your group, then this should be included as a specific activity for parental consent.
- d. Children should be supervised whilst using the internet; no filtering software is 100% preventative.

➤ **If you run your own web-site;**

- a. Whilst there is no legal requirement for you to obtain permission for the use of photo's of children on your web-site, it is good practice as far as is possible to secure the permission of the parent/guardian to do so,
- b. Do not attach to photographs specific or identifying details such as names,
- c. Never publish the contact details of anyone under 18 and only with permission those of persons over 18,
- d. Consider having your web-site registered with the Internet Content Rating Association. This will rate your web-site content for access by other users of the internet. (The web address for ICRA is on page 20.)

➤ **If you, staff or volunteers use ICT, in contacting children:**

- a. Establish within the organisation that this is an acceptable way for workers and volunteers to communicate with children.
- b. **E-mail** should as far as possible be public, directed to groups rather than to individuals and a copy kept electronically.
- c. **Chat Rooms and Instant Messaging Services (IMS)** should only be used by prior agreement. Preferably use rooms with limitations on access and

password verifications. Never use private conversation facilities in chat rooms, remain in the public space.

- d. **Message Boards** which are moderated, with password verification and access should always be public.
- e. **Short Messaging Service - (SMS)** 'Texting' on a mobile phone is essentially private by its very nature and therefore care should be taken in using this to contact children.

Further information and guidance for workers/parents:

<http://www.nch.org.uk/itok/>

<http://www.getnetwise.org>

http://www.ofcom.org.uk/codes_guidelines/broadcasting/tv/safety_net

For Web-site managers:

<http://www.icra.org>

Filtering Software:

<http://store.netnanny.com>

<http://www.cyberpatrol.com>

INTRODUCING VOLUNTEERS

Darlington & Newcastle Districts follow the Home Office guidance 'Safe from Harm' (as set out in the Methodist Safeguarding booklet) in recommending that a careful process is followed before a new worker starts to take responsibility for any work with children. While this process should be kept as informal as possible with Volunteers it is not dissimilar from that of making a paid appointment. Churches will adapt what follows to their own needs but it is recommended that all the following steps should be covered.

1. Volunteer is identified either by volunteering themselves or by an invitation from Church staff.
2. Volunteer agrees to request; is told that there is a careful application and induction process.
3. Volunteer fills in Personal Details and Declaration Forms [Safeguarding New Form A Part 1 - for church records and Part 2 - for both parties]
4. Volunteer meets with small panel representing Church Council and existing leaders of the work to be undertaken, e.g. teaching children, youth work, etc.

The purpose of this meeting is to clarify mutual understandings of what work the Church would like undertaken and what the Volunteer feels able to offer. It should cover the following issues -

- Clarification of Personal Details and Declaration Forms (Note should particularly be taken of any 'gaps' in the Volunteer's stated life history).
- Clarification of Volunteer's skills and gifts. This should be affirming and supportive.
- Outline of work to be undertaken including location, times, frequency, team meetings etc. Clarification (and where necessary negotiation) to ensure that this broadly fits with the Volunteer's expectations.
- Identification of worker responsible for this work and other staff and volunteers engaged in it, First Aider and other relevant personnel.
- Clear statement of support available.
- Identification of Volunteer's training needs
- Description of induction needs and process. **The Volunteer should never be expected to start the task without Induction and as far as possible this should be in line with the Volunteer's stated needs.**

- Discussion of Child Protection issues and Church policies in this area. Identification of Child Protection training needs.
 - Identification of the **PROBATIONARY PERIOD** and review date.
 - Useful telephone numbers and contacts.
5. If proposals are satisfactory to Volunteer and panel, Volunteer is asked to apply for CRB disclosure in accordance with Church practice. **N.B. No volunteer should work with children on his/her own. The volunteer should be informed of this.**
 6. A new worker needs to experience identifiable ongoing personal support as they begin their volunteering. The Church should identify who will provide this.
 7. Review of work should be undertaken as arranged under item 4.

MINIBUS SAFETY CHECKLIST

The Church Council should make sure the Minibus Safety Checklist is consulted and implemented before any journeys take place.

Do not drive a minibus anywhere unless:

- Your Driving Licence entitles you to do so. (Please note that a European directive that came into force on July 1st 1996 requires new drivers to take a test before they can drive a minibus with more than eight passengers, other than one used purely for social or voluntary purposes). Details of types of licences you require are available from the Community Transport Association, Highbank, Holton Street, Hyde, Cheshire, SK14 2NY. Send an sae A4 envelope.
- You are satisfied that adequate insurance cover has been arranged for driver, passengers and the vehicle.
- You are sure that the minibus you will be driving is completely safe and checked with all of its documentation up to date. If in doubt, refuse to drive.
- The minibus has forward facing passenger seats, and is fitted with three point diagonal seat belts throughout. **Please note that all road safety experts and organisations advise that buses with sideways facing crew seats should not be used.** They are only intended as utility vehicles designed for small scale ferrying of people around, for example, building sites. They are not intended for motorway and long distance driving. In addition, lap only seatbelts are not recommended.
- You have a list of the names and addresses of all those you are transporting on your person during the trip and also left behind with another responsible person. Such details should normally include parental consent forms, etc.
- The minibus is appropriate for the user group. Do not wrestle wheelchairs into a vehicle with no proper lift or spacing. There should be one seat for every passenger.
- You have a route plan and have informed someone at home of this and the likely times of your arrival at points on route and your destination.
- All luggage is firmly secured preferably on a roof rack if not in a trailer. There needs to be ample space between the rear of the bus and the passengers.
- Driving times and hours are reasonable and there is a qualified co-driver for journeys of six hours or more.
- You have checked that the minibus complies with the statutory requirement to have an approved fire extinguisher and a first aid kit on board at all times.

- The bus is covered by AA, RAC, Green Flag or some other comprehensive recovery service.
- You have access to a mobile phone on the journey.
- You are accompanied on the journey by another adult colleague who ideally is licensed to drive a minibus. Attention should also be paid to appropriate gender mix.

INSURANCE

It is vital that insurance cover for all activities is checked annually.

Be aware that some insurance is not valid if the Church Council has not officially approved activities. This will include all activities off church premises unless a regular activity and part of an annual report to the Church Council or Annual Church Meeting.

ALWAYS check your insurance covers you for any special event or unusual activities such as Activity weekends

'Contracts of insurance require the insured to take all reasonable steps to prevent injury, loss, damage or accidents occurring including taking reasonable care in choosing and supervising employees and volunteers.

Failure to take such precautions may prejudice the insurance arrangements in force.'
Methodist Insurance Company (MIC)

The groups concerned with this document will be insured through a number of different companies whose policies will be subject to various terms, conditions and exceptions. However, the majority of Methodist Circuits and Churches will be insured with Methodist insurance who have made the following statement in respect of those policies they have issued for -

Churches with Youth Groups that are run under the auspices of the Church Council

Under such policies Public Liability (Third Party) insurance, where in force, will operate to protect the interests of the insured where they are found to be legally liable for accidental death of or bodily injury to a third party or accidental loss of or damage to third party property, subject to the policy terms, conditions and exceptions.

The policy will provide an indemnity to the insured if they are held legally liable for an incident leading to accidental bodily injury or illness as a result of abuse.

It is not the intention of Methodist Insurance to provide an indemnity to the perpetrator of an incident of abuse.

This statement clearly only applies to policies issued by Methodist Insurance. Where churches are insured with another company the position of that company should be clarified.

Policies of insurance require the insured to take all reasonable steps to prevent injury, loss or damage occurring. Failure to take such precautions may prejudice the insurance arrangements in force. A duty therefore exists upon the insured to research and adopt best practice based on 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 The Methodist Insurance Company. MIC website address is on page 46. MIC telephone number is on page 49.

DATA PROTECTION ACT

(in force from 01.03.2000)

Definitions

Personal Data : Information relating to a living individual, including expressions of opinion about that person.

Structured Filing System : A set of information about individuals which is structured either by direct reference to those individuals (e.g. by name) or by criteria which makes material relating to any individual readily available.

Processing : This is widely defined to include almost anything you might do with data, including simply holding it on file.

Data subject : An individual who is the subject of personal data.

Data controller : A person who (alone or jointly) decides the purpose for which and the manner in which personal data is processed.

Main implications of the Data Protection Act

- Protection is extended beyond computer-based records to cover personal data held in paper based structured filing systems.
- A framework (known as 'notification') has been laid down for data controllers to register with the Data Protection Commissioner's office.
- A new category of 'sensitive personal data' has been introduced. This includes material relating to religious affiliation (i.e. most of what is likely to be held by church workers) and it requires particularly careful handling.
- Data subjects have the right to know what is held about them by the Data Controller.
- The Act sets out principles for the handling of data. It must be
 1. Processed fairly and lawfully
 2. Processed only for a specific purpose
 3. Adequate, relevant and not excessive for the purpose for which it is held
 4. Accurate and up to date
 5. Kept for not longer than is necessary
 6. Processed in accordance with the extended subject rights given by the Act
 7. Kept securely
 8. Not transferred to any country which does not offer adequate data protection.

Action required

- Churches and ministers who hold information about identifiable living persons which can be processed automatically or in paper based form are required by

law to register with the Data Protection Register. (While there are some clearly defined exemptions, this should not be taken to mean that such exemptions are likely to apply to church users).

Further information can be obtained from The Regional Training & Development Officer and the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes (TMCP), Central Buildings, Oldham Street, Manchester M1 1JQ. Tel: 0161 236 5194.

SAMPLE FORMS

There are a range of forms which the Church Council will need to complete and keep safe in order to meet the requirements of Safeguarding, Health and Safety and Insurance. These forms can either be found in the Methodist Church's Safeguarding Book (SGB) or in the Appendices at the end of this policy handbook. The forms in the appendices can be photocopied to meet your requirements.

These are -

❖ Church Policy example	SGB book page 31
❖ Worker registration form	SGB book New Form A part 1
❖ Worker agreement form	SGB book New Form A part 2
❖ Key holder forms	SGB book Form D
❖ Safeguarding Users forms,	SGB book Form E
❖ Model reference form	Appendix 01
❖ Activity Authorisation Form	Appendix 02
❖ Session Register	Appendix 03
❖ Parent/guardian consent form - General	Appendix 04
❖ Parent/guardian consent form - Specific Activity	Appendix 05
❖ General Check List	Appendix 06
❖ Referral information/Incident Report Form	Appendix 07

Assistance with licences and booking forms can be given by Manchester Property Office. (Tel No: 0161 236 5194 or email: secretaries@property.methodist.org.uk)

Another book which is a useful support is called '*Worth Doing Well*' revised edition 2002. Published by Methodist Publishing House. This book as well as containing useful information on a whole range of issues from food hygiene to illegal substances also contains some useful forms for those who work with children.

The Darlington and Newcastle upon Tyne Districts

RECRUITMENT OF EX-OFFENDERS POLICY

1. The Darlington and Newcastle upon Tyne Districts uses the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Disclosure service via the Churches Agency for Safeguarding (CAS) to assess the suitability of both volunteers and applicants for employment in positions of trust. We comply fully with the CRB Code of Practice and undertake to treat all volunteers/applicants fairly. We undertake not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a Disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar a volunteer/applicant from working within the Districts. This will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of the offences.

2. For those posts deemed necessary, volunteers, and applicants who are offered employment, will be subject to a criminal record check from the Criminal Records Bureau via CAS before the appointment is confirmed. Enhanced Disclosures will include details of cautions, reprimands or final warnings, as well as convictions, and also information relating to police enquiries and pending prosecutions.

APPLICANTS FOR EMPLOYMENT

1. The Methodist Church's written Policy for the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders will be made available to all Disclosure applicants at the outset of the recruitment process.
2. For those positions where a Disclosure is required, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that a Disclosure will be requested in the event of the individual being offered the position.
3. Unless the nature of the position allows The Darlington and Newcastle upon Tyne Districts to ask questions about your entire criminal record, we only ask about 'unspent' convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
4. At interview, or in a separate discussion, we will ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to the withdrawal of an offer of employment.
5. We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a Disclosure with the person seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.

VOLUNTEERS

1. Those involved in the recruitment of volunteers will make it clear to a candidate whenever a Disclosure is required.
2. We guarantee that Disclosure information will be seen only by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process.
3. We undertake to discuss with a volunteer any matters revealed in a Disclosure which relate directly to the position for which they have offered themselves. The welfare of children will always be our first concern.

CHILD PROTECTION: RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE.

THESE DIRECTIONS:

- **Aim** to ensure that all children and young people associated with the church are kept safe.
- **Are for all**
 - ◆ People who have access to children and young people during the time they are in any way associated with the work of the church.
 - ◆ Church councils, because they have governing responsibility within a Church.
 - ◆ People who have concerns for the care, safety and welfare of children and young people, because we all have a duty to care responsibly.
- **Comply** with the most up to date legal and professional directions for the care, welfare and safety of children and young people, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- **Are about the abuse of children.** This includes sexual, emotional and spiritual abuse, neglect and physical injury.

WHAT YOU **MUST DO IF YOU SUSPECT ABUSE IS OCCURRING:**

See also "What To Do If You're Worried A Child Is Being Abused" 2003 issued by the Department of Education and Skills [ref: 31815] www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications

- If you suspect the threat or danger of abuse is current and immediate,
 - ◆ immediately remove the child to a place of safety
 - ◆ immediately inform the police or social services
- If you suspect abuse is occurring but there is no immediate danger or threat inform the police, duty Social Service's Social Worker or the NSPCC.

In either case -

- **Inform the Regional Child Protection Co-ordinator and, if time, consult him before taking action.**

WHAT YOU MUST NOT DO:

- ◆ Is ignore your suspicions.
- ◆ Is do nothing.
- ◆ Is investigate matters yourself; you may clarify what has happened but do not ask other questions.

WHAT THE CHURCH AUTHORITIES WILL DO

- ◆ Report the incident to Social Services or the Police (if this has not already been done) and cooperate with their investigations as appropriate.
- ◆ Require the Regional Child Protection Co-ordinator to immediately and independently check out relevant details to help determine what next steps are to be taken in the Church.

**ENSURE THAT THE SAFETY, WELFARE AND CARE OF THE CHILD REMAIN
THE FIRST PRIORITY**

DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

Following *Safe from Harm, (DoH 1999)* abuse is defined as -

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly described using terms such as fictitious illness by proxy or Munchausen's syndrome by proxy.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve frequently causing children to feel frightened or in danger. It may involve the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetration (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect

Neglect is persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to adequate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs.

Spiritual Abuse (See also separate section page 40)

The Methodist Church also recognises an additional category of Spiritual Abuse which can easily occur in a faith community through the inappropriate use of religious belief or practice. This can include the misuse of authority, of leadership or penitential discipline, oppressive teaching, or obtrusive healing and deliverance ministries, any of which may result in children experiencing physical, emotional or sexual harm. Other forms of spiritual harm include the denial to children of the right to faith or the opportunity to grow in the knowledge and love of God.

Domestic Violence

The connection between Domestic Violence and Child Abuse is now well established. Children will be affected in 90% of families with children where domestic abuse is taking place. Where domestic violence is disclosed particular care should be taken to safeguard any children in the household. The definition of abuse has been extended by law to include 'any harm suffered, for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another'. (Adoption & Children Act 2002)

DO'S AND DON'TS FOR RECEIVING COMPLAINTS OF CHILD ABUSE BY TELEPHONE OR FACE TO FACE.

These points are designed to help anyone who receives a telephone call or a visitor concerned about possible child abuse.

DO

- ✓ Stay calm. If possible and appropriate, try to find a colleague to be with you and inform the complainant that you are doing so.
- ✓ Listen rather than talk. Clarify only where necessary.
- ✓ Give the person time to say what they want.
- ✓ Reassure them that they have done the right thing by telling someone.
- ✓ Record in writing what was said as soon as possible and as far as possible use the actual words said.
- ✓ If you or your caller believes a child is in danger, the Police or Social Services must be contacted **immediately**.

Report your concerns to your manager/ a senior member of the Church/ and the Regional Child Protection Co-ordinator as soon as possible. **You must use the Incident Report Form (Appendix 07) to report this matter within the church structures.** This form will be a reliable source of information held confidentially at District and Connexional level. If there are any liability issues stemming from allegations information will also be sent to Methodist Insurance and be held confidentially. This decision will be taken by the Connexional officer responsible.

Try to ensure that the person who first suspects or is told of abuse is the one to report it and that they are given support in doing this.

DO NOT

- ☞ Panic
- ☞ Attempt to deal with the problem alone - share it as soon as you can with someone who is knowledgeable/experienced in child protection matters.
- ☞ Promise to keep secrets.
- ☞ Enquire into the details of the abuse - although you may have to clarify what you are hearing.
- ☞ Ask suggestive or leading questions nor put ideas or words into someone's mouth.
- ☞ Investigate any allegations.
- ☞ Make the person repeat the story unnecessarily or rehearse their story.
- ☞ Contact the person alleged to have been the abuser.
- ☞ Contact the person alleged to have been abused - unless it is to protect them from imminent harm.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The Darlington and Newcastle upon Tyne Districts will adhere to the strictest practice of confidentiality, save where this is over-ridden by considerations of a child's welfare or safety. The statement from the 1989 Children Act that '**the Child's Welfare is paramount**' will guide all decisions in this regard.

Accordingly -

- ◆ No guarantee of confidentiality should be given to any person disclosing or wanting to disclose abuse.
- ◆ The statement in the 1989 Children Act that 'the Child's Welfare is paramount' means that anyone dealing with an incident of (alleged) child abuse must put the child or children's welfare above every other consideration, including the disclosure of information given in confidence.
- ◆ There is a long established pattern of inter-agency working and sharing in the field of Child Protection. All Official records made in the course of investigating allegations or reviewing circumstances are always handled on a "need to know," confidential basis.

This section is written about confidentiality in the context of Safeguarding and Child Protection and the Church's commitment to the care of children. The references to a "pastor" are intended to refer both to a formal pastoral relationship and one which grows informally.

The sharing of confidential information is a natural part of many relationships, particularly in friendship and pastoral relationships. However, there are times when the matter involved is so serious, such as when a child is in danger of harm, that maintaining the confidentiality is likely to be more damaging than passing on the information. It is difficult to lay down absolute rules or make rigid arguments, so it is important to build up an understanding of the issues and knowledge of the resources available to deal with particular problems. This will help in reaching an informed and caring judgement.

It is important to try to avoid any sense of betrayal, either in a friendship situation or pastoral relationship, while recognising that the safety of children must be paramount. The openness which helps the sharing of confidences is also the key to deciding what to pass on to others. Openness must never be forced on people, but where information is shared which indicates a danger to others, the need to report such information to those responsible for protecting others should be indicated from the outset and the normal rules applying to confidentiality should be waived. Such openness on the part of the pastor benefits the relationship in its wider perspective.

Occasionally an unscrupulous person will try to manipulate a pastor by binding them to a confidentiality which promises not to act upon information shared. Care should be taken never to give undertakings of this kind as, in effect it results in the pastor colluding in the avoidance of facing difficult issues and the hiding of dangerous situations. While it is always better for a person to take responsibility for their own actions, in abuse cases it sometimes becomes essential, both for the good of the person themselves and of those at danger from their actions, to break any confidentiality.

In the context of dealing with victims of abuse, it should be assumed that information shared by sufferers from abuse is intended to be confidential. It should not be shared lightly, e.g. in general conversation. However, where a danger remains either to the person who has been abused or to others, the importance of passing on the information should be indicated and the abused urged to report the abuse to the relevant authority. If children are in danger, the information should be passed on in any case. However, in all cases care must be taken to share the information only with those who need to know (i.e. the relevant authority) and not with those who wish to know out of curiosity.

Those who are involved in counselling situations, whether formal or informal, need a confidant themselves to whom they can 'unload' the burdens they accept on behalf of others. To keep confidences, such unloading should be anonymous (i.e. names and identities should not be shared) but it should be in a place where advice about what information needs to be passed on can be sought.

SOME GUIDELINES

- Make clear the status of a conversation from the outset, including under what circumstances the listener would be under an obligation to share any of the information received.
- Resist any attempt to manipulate silence.
- Be objective and realistic about the dangers involved in the matter that has been divulged and be clear about your own motives and responsibility.
- Encourage the speaker to share the information with the relevant authorities themselves.
- Seek advice and professional guidance. Even if the matter is clear to you, it is better to involve another for guidance and advice.
- Consult with the Regional Child Protection Coordinator.
- Report abuse or suspected abuse only to those who need to know - it is not a matter for general conversation.
- Recognise the stress such matters will place on you and ensure you have the necessary personal support.

- Remember that ecumenical colleagues may help by offering advice and support from outside the immediate situation.

However, breach of confidentiality does have legal implications. If such information has been received in confidence, the person giving the information should, in the first instance, be encouraged to disclose it to the authorities' him- or her-self. Alternatively the person receiving the disclosure should ask permission to pass the information on. If this request is denied it might still be possible to pass the information to a statutory body.

The latest government guidance, 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' (2003) gives helpful advice in its appendix on information sharing.

It states:

Disclosure in the absence of consent

"The law recognises that disclosure of confidential information without consent of a court order may be justified in the public interest to prevent harm to others.

The key factor in deciding whether or not to disclose confidential information is **proportionality**: is the proposed disclosure a proportionate response to the need to protect the welfare of the child? The amount of confidential information disclosed, and the number of people to whom it is disclosed, should be no more than is strictly necessary to meet the public interest in protecting the health and well-being of a child. The more sensitive the information is, the greater the child-focused need must be to justify disclosure and the greater the need to ensure that only those professionals who have to be informed receive the material."

[Page 22 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' (2003)]

- **In the event of a suspicion of abuse and a concern over confidentiality, advice may be sought from the Regional Child Protection Coordinator.**
- **In the event of a decision NOT to disclose a suspicion of abuse to the statutory authorities' IMMEDIATE reference MUST be made to the Regional Child Protection Coordinator.**

There is also a paper on sharing information for all ministers, deacons and District and Circuit Safeguarding reps available on a download (pdf) document on the Methodist Website 'Sharing information' at http://www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/ch_sharinginformation_1105.pdf

SPIRITUAL ABUSE

Spiritual abuse occurs when someone uses their power within a framework of spiritual belief or practice to satisfy their own needs at the expense of others. It has two main facets:

- A church/group leader who has unhealthy power over individuals or even a whole congregation
- Accepted doctrine of a church/group that directly or indirectly controls or oppresses its members through peer pressure.

Spiritual Abuse is likely to happen when:

- One person tells others what to do and always expects to be obeyed.
- The leader or other person in authority within the relationship reacts strongly and personally to being questioned or contradicted.
- Leadership is based on hierarchical authority rather than ability.
- Leadership is never shared or handed on.
- The leader or person in authority expects agreement without having to justify or prove their point.
- The leader or person in authority frequently prefaces their remarks with comments which defy rational analysis - like 'The Lord has told me ...'.
- People in the group or relationship are afraid to make their disagreement known.
- People in the group or relationship never share their different opinions for fear of being put down.

Spiritual abuse can be avoided if

- ✓ A climate of challenge is encouraged.
- ✓ Opportunities are created to encourage the minister or leader to be questioned about theological, Biblical, spiritual and human-relationship issues, particularly relevant to their working with groups, congregations and individuals.
- ✓ People are encouraged to form their own opinions and to express them
- ✓ Ministers and leaders are made accountable to a group of presbyters, 'critical friends' or the **CHURCH COUNCIL**, who observe practices and monitor behaviour, teaching, approachability and style of working.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Definition: Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or are family members, regardless of gender (Home Office)

Domestic violence affects up to twenty five percent of the whole population. It is not limited to any one class, gender, economic or ethnic group but is found universally throughout society.

It is characterised by power and control exercised by one person over another and results in low self esteem and a sense of powerlessness in the victim.

Children who witness it (either in the same or the next room) will experience the same trauma as if they had been directly abused. High proportions are directly abused themselves. 90% of children in families where domestic violence is taking place are affected by the experience.

When seeking to help in a domestic violence situation:

- **Do not** seek simplistic solutions - if they existed the victim would probably have found them.
- **Do not** seek to impose your solution on the situation - you will only compound the abuse by taking control away from the victim. In any case the situation will look different from inside than it does to you, from the outside. The solution must be the victim's. S/he may decide to remain in the abusive situation; this must be accepted.
- **Remember that** leaving a violent situation is usually a process not a single event. A victim may return to the abuser several times before they make the final break.
- **Remember that** the most dangerous time for the victim and their children is at the point of leaving and just after it when the abuser is seeking to re-impose their control or gain revenge. Their personal safety has to be of the highest priority then.
- **Remember that** what the victim needs above everything else is your support. One of the weapons an abuser uses is isolation. By being available to the victim you are helping to break that part of the cycle.
- **Remember that** domestic violence is usually a complex situation needing assistance and advice from a number of different Agencies. (No single statutory or voluntary Agency has responsibility for tackling it). **If you really want to help** you will find out which local Agencies recognise domestic violence and give it priority. Housing, legal services, health, social work, police and a range of

voluntary organisations are likely to be able to help, depending on what the need is. There may also be local support groups for such persons.

Northumbria and Durham, Cleveland & North Yorkshire Police Services have local Domestic Violence Coordinators. If there is not a local Domestic Violence Forum or equivalent these Police staff are likely to be the best first source of local information.

For more information contact the **Regional Training and Development Officer**. See also your Synod Handbook or contact the Synod Secretary for the names of those people in the District who are responsible for matters relating to Domestic Violence.

REGIONAL CHILD PROTECTION CO-ORDINATOR

The Child Protection Co-ordinator will work with the responsible persons within the Districts, carrying out actions such as those detailed below:

- ◆ Responding to requests for advice, information and guidance for individuals in the church who are concerned about the welfare of a child. (In most cases this will be carried out in conjunction with the District Safeguarding Advisory Group)
- ◆ Providing guidance and direction where there are concerns about adults who may be a risk to children.
- ◆ Supporting individuals when a referral to social services, the police or other child protection agencies is necessary, co-ordinating with pastoral support from within the Methodist Church where appropriate.
- ◆ Attending strategy meetings and case conferences as requested by statutory agencies. At times this will include preparing church/circuit personnel for such meetings and attending with them.
- ◆ Supporting churches/circuits during a child protection enquiry and afterwards. This may include ensuring support is provided for others in the church/circuit who may be affected by such an enquiry, such as volunteer helpers and other leaders.
- ◆ Collaborating with social services, the police, and the probation service any of whom may make the initial approach. It will be essential to include the building and sustaining of relationships with the relevant agencies.
- ◆ Providing advice to the Chair of District or other employer on the possibility of employment or redeployment of those with convictions or continuing unresolved concerns regarding harm to a child. In order to achieve this it will be necessary to network with other agencies to maintain knowledge of current best practice and cases.
- ◆ Maintaining accurate, appropriate and confidential records.
- ◆ Participate in the North East Ecumenical Child Protection Officers' Forum.

The Child Protection Co-ordinator will be directly responsible to the Chairs of District. Thus ensuring that the advice given at all times is consistent with the practice as set out in the current policies of the Methodist Church. Sometimes the nature of this work will mean that telephone advice will suffice, at other times the role will require meetings with individuals, the preparation of reports, and the setting up of support networks.

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS AND CONTACTS

- ❖ Safe from Harm Home: Office 1993. Available from www.homeoffice.gov.uk A code of practice for voluntary organisations
- ❖ Working together to safeguard children: Department of Health 1999. Government blueprint for inter agency working
- ❖ What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: Dept of Health 2003. Available from www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications Practical guidance to be read with Working together to safeguard children.
- ❖ Protecting All God's Children 2004: The Child Protection Policy of the Church of England Available from www.chpublishing.co.uk
- ❖ Child Sexual Abuse and the Churches: Patrick Parkinson Hodder & Stoughton 1997
- ❖ Christianity and Child Sexual Abuse: Hilary Cashman SPCK 1993
- ❖ The Hidden Shame of the Church: Sexual Abuse of Children and the Church: Ron O'Grady WCC Publications, Geneva 2001
- ❖ The Church and Child Sexual Abuse: E Conway, E Duffy, & A Shields. Columba 1999
- ❖ Time for Action. Sexual Abuse, The Churches and a New Dawn for Survivors CTBI 2002
- ❖ Sexual Abuse in Christian Homes and Churches: Herald Press 1993
- ❖ Healing Victims of Sexual Abuse: Victory House 1988
- ❖ The Courage to Heal: a guide for women survivors of sexual abuse: Perennial Library 1990
- ❖ Victims no longer: men recovering from incest and other sexual abuse: Harper & Row 1994

- ❖ Safe to grow: Guidelines on Child Protection for the Local Church and its Youth Leaders: Baptist Union 1994
- ❖ Safeguarding children and Young People: Methodist Church. Available from www.methodist.org.uk/information/safeguarding.htm#safeguarding.
- ❖ A Programme for Action (Nolan Report): Catholic Bishops' Conference 2001. Available from www.nolanreview.org.uk
- ❖ Feeling Happy, Feeling Safe: M Elliot. Hodder & Stoughton 1991
- ❖ Keeping Safe: A practical guide to talking with children: M Elliot. NCVO 1986
- ❖ Mousie: Khadji Rouf. A book for children who have secrets they have been afraid to tell. The Children's Society 1989.
- ❖ Information on the Criminal Records Bureau and the disclosure process available from www.disclosure.gov.uk
- ❖ Keeping it Safe: a young person-centred approach to safety and child protection, standards and guidelines: NCVYS 2002 Available from 020 7422 8630
- ❖ Hear by right: Standards for the active involvement of children and young people: H Wade and B Badham 2003. National Youth Agency/LGA. Available from 0116 285 3709
- ❖ The Learning and Skills Council's Guide to engaging with young people: Putting Learners in the Driving Seat. Available from: www.lac.gov.uk/news_docs/Engage_Young_People.pdf
- ❖ Participation - Spice it up!: Save the Children. Available from 01752 202301
- ❖ Empowering Children and Young People: Save the Children Available from 01752 202301
- ❖ Safe Children Sound Learning: Kirklees Metropolitan Council. Available from www.kirklees.gov.uk Guidance from and for the Muslim community.

USEFUL WEBSITES

Chameleon Internet Security Resource: www.e2chameleon.btinternet.co.uk/childhtm

Children's Society: www.childrenssociety.org.uk

Churches Child Protection Advisory Service: www.cpas.co.uk

Department of Education and Skills - Local Safeguarding Children Boards:
<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/strategy/guidance/>

NCH website for children and young people: www.itsnotyourfault.org

NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk

Our Duty to Care: www.volunteering-ni.org

Protective Behaviours: www.protectivebehaviours.co.uk

Methodist Insurance PLC: www.methodist-insurance.co.uk

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS, ADDRESSES AND REFERENCE INFORMATION
Accurate as of summer 2006

REGIONAL CHILD PROTECTION CO-ORDINATOR	123 4567 890 (mobile)
REGIONAL TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICER	123 4567 890 (mobile) 123 4567 890 (office)
POLICE	
NORTHUMBRIA POLICE	01661 872555 Ponteland including HQ 01289 307111 Berwick 01665 602777 Alnwick 01434 604111 Hexham 0191 214 6555 North Shields 0191 214 6555 Newcastle
CUMBRIA POLICE	01768 891 999
SOCIAL SERVICES	
NEWCASTLE (Refer Child Protection issues to nearest of the following)	
Outer West and North (Blakelaw, Castle, Denton, Fawdon, Fenham, Kenton, Westerhope, Woolsington)	0191 2863311
East (Byker, Dene, Grange, Heaton, Jesmond, Monkchester, Sandyford, South Gosforth)	0191 2955535
Inner West & Central (Benwell, Elswick, Lemington, Moorside, Newburn Scotswood, West City, Wingrove)	0191 2772500
NORTHUMBERLAND	(01670) 714411
North Tyneside	0191 2006161
Cumbria	01768 242242 or 01768 242240

POLICE Durham Constabulary – covering Co Durham and Darlington	0845 6060365
Cleveland Police – covering Stockton, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough and Redcar & Cleveland	
Stockton	01642 607114
Middlesbrough	01642 248184
Hartlepool	01429 221151
Langbaugh	
Redcar	01642 483333
South Bank	01642 452323
Guiseborough	01287 633531 or if unsure who to speak to 01642 326326
North Yorkshire Police – covering North Yorkshire and the City of York	0845 6060247
SOCIAL SERVICES	
County Durham	0845 8505010
Darlington	01325 346200 (office hours) 0870 2402 994 (out of office hours)
Stockton on Tees	01642 415030 (office hours) 0870 2402 994 (out of office hours)
Hartlepool	01429 266522 (office hours) 0870 2402 994 (out of office hours)
Middlesbrough	01642 726 004 (office hours) 0870 2402 994 (out of office hours)
Redcar & Cleveland	08456 126 126 (office hours) 0870 2402 994 (out of office hours)
North Yorkshire	01609 780 780 (office hours) 0870 2402 994 (out of office hours)

NSPCC Emergency Helpline (24 Hours)	0191 2260155 0191 800500
Children's Society	0191 2302060
Barnardos	0191 2404800
Mosaic Project (Child Victims of Sexual Abuse)	0191 2120237
Women's Aid National Helpline	0808 2000 247
DIVA (Newcastle Domestic Violence Forum)	0191 2727233
Methodist Insurance PLC	0161 833 9696

Application for a Reference

Confidential

Name/Address of Church
Date

Dear (name of referee)

(Name of applicant) has offered to help with our work with children and young people. S/he will be working mainly with (ages) as (brief description of work).

I am sure you realise that the Church has to be very careful about those whom we place in positions of trust with children and young people. S/he has nominated you as someone who can give a reference on his/her suitability for this work. I will be grateful if, in responding to this request, you would bear in mind the Church's duty to protect those with whom we work from harm of a physical, sexual or emotional nature and that all our workers are required to sign an undertaking that they have not been involved in any activity that has harmed a child or young person.

I will be grateful if you would give your opinion as to the suitability of the above named to undertake the work outlined. I will be grateful if you would also complete the questions below -

1. In what capacity have you known the applicant?

.....

2. For how long have you known the applicant?years.....months

I have the following comments to make on the applicant's suitability for the work outlined:

I certify that I personally know the above-named person well enough to say that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, there is no reason whatsoever to doubt his/her suitability to serve as a volunteer worker in children's and/or youth work in the Church.

Signed:Date:.....

Name (please print) :

Occupation:

Thank you for your help. Please return this letter as soon as possible in the SAE provided.

Many thanks for your help

Yours sincerely

Church Council authorisation of children/young people's group activity programme
N.B. This authorisation is essential for insurance purposes.

The Church Council of(name of Church)

Hereby authorises the programme/activities listed below/attached for the

(name of group)

during the period to

Under the guidance of the registered workers (list held by the Church Council)

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Signed :

Chair of the Church Council

Date:

This authorisation is matched by a resolution of the Church Council on the above date and should be kept with the Church Council Minute Book and updated as necessary.

A copy of this agreed and signed authorisation should be given to the Leader of the named group.

Parents'/Guardians General Consent Form

This form should be completed by parents/guardians annually. This is to ensure prompt action in the event of accident or illness.

Name of child/young person:

Date of Birth:National Health No. (on medical card):

Address:

Post code: Tel No:

Family doctor:.....

.....Tel No:

Name of Church Groups/Organisations of which child is member (continue list overleaf):

.....

Does s/he suffer from any medical condition of which leaders should be aware?

Yes No If YES Please state :

The declaration of a medical condition should lead to a discussion between Worker(s) and Parent/Guardians about appropriate responses which will be recorded below.

N.B. This information will be shared with other responsible adults.

.....

Does s/he require medication? Yes No If YES state :

Can s/he self administer? Yes No

N.B. Workers cannot be responsible for the administration of medicine.

Does s/he have any dietary needs or avoidances? Yes No If so what?

Date of last inoculation against tetanus (if any) :

In the event of illness or accident requiring emergency treatment I authorise the group's registered workers present to sign on my behalf any written form of consent required by the authorities if the delay in obtaining my own signature is considered inadvisable or unnecessary by the doctor(s) concerned.

Signed: Name (please print) :

Date:

Address (if different from above) :

Information and Permission Form for specific event

A copy of this form to be retained in the worker's file and by the Parent/Guardian.

Name of Event:

Date(s) of Event:

Description of Event including duration, location and likely activities:

.....

Designated Worker(s):

.....

The above Worker(s) are authorised by the CHURCH COUNCIL for this activity.

Any illnesses or infectious diseases during the last 3 weeks? Yes No

Details of illness and medication taken:

- The details on the Parent(s)/Guardians *General Consent Form* are still correct.
- I acknowledge that the workers named above are acting in loco parentis.

In the event of illness or accident requiring emergency treatment I authorise the group's registered workers present to sign on my behalf any written form of consent required by the authorities if the delay in obtaining my own signature is considered inadvisable or unnecessary by the doctor(s) concerned.

I give my permission for (Name of child)to participate in the above event

Signed: Name (please print) :

Date:

Address:

Tel No:

Another contact if Parent/Guardian is not obtainable in an emergency:

Name: Relationship to Child:

Address:

Tel No:

Church Check List

Item	✓ or X	Action
Do we have a Church CP Policy?		
Have we got a Church Independent Person?		
Is information displayed about the Independent Person contact number?		
At the last Church AGM was there a CP Report?		
Are all activities for children been authorised by the church council?		
Have all children's workers been authorised by the church council?		
Have all workers completed application forms, declarations and CRB Disclosures and have references been obtained?		
Are all confidential documents safely stored?		
Have all new workers been through the Induction process?		
Have workers been trained in relevant issues, including children's Advocacy?		
Are all workers aware of their responsibilities as children's Advocates?		
Have workers renewed their CRB Disclosures and personal information forms where appropriate?		
Do we have an up to date record of those who have completed CRB checks?		
Are there correct ratios of workers and genders to the numbers in each activity?		
Are children with special needs and/or those of different ethnicity or background made welcome?		
Is there a qualified First Aider at each activity or easily accessed?		
Is First Aid equipment easily accessed?		
Have we checked in the past year if workers have any training needs?		
Are we insured for all our work with children?		
Have our buildings been checked & had an annual Health and Safety inspection?		
Are buildings checked by workers for Health and Safety issues before each activity?		
Are there people designated by the church council who are responsible for Fire Equipment and Procedures?		
Do we have an up to date Accident Book?		
*		
*		

*for particular local items which need to be checked regularly.

**Guidance and information for referral
to District CP/ Safeguarding/ Taking Care Group and Connexional officers**

For use by *all* Presbyters and Deacons and Safeguarding co-ordinators

1. In the following circumstances a referral to the District and Connexion is mandatory:
 - a) Where there is an allegation made by an adult about abuse while they were a child (under 18) and the person is still in position to abuse children inside or outside of the church. The adult survivor should always be included in the decisions, and told what action has to be taken at each stage. This should be referred whether or not they ultimately give permission.
 - b) Where there is a current allegation or of abuse against a child or children (under 18).
 - c) Where someone in the church has been suspended or dismissed from work, or arrested for allegations of abuse against children.
 - d) Where a child or children is considered to be at risk of harm or at significant risk of harm.
 - e) Where a person who is a member or regular attendee is known to have been convicted of sexual offences against children or is currently or has been recently (in the past year) subject to investigation for *any* offence against a child or where there have been investigations or convictions for Domestic violence.
2. Referrals should take place whether or not you have spoken to the parties and can be done following an initial discussion in an anonymous fashion.
3. Referrals should take place whether or not you have also referred to Social Services, Probation or Police. Please note the details of the person to whom you referred the matter to assist liaison with all parties in the ongoing process.
4. Ministers and Superintendents are responsible for good practice and management of issues in the local church and circuit. In each case co-operation on these matters should include a decision as to who should liaise from the District group (by the group itself) and who should take a lead in liaising with the statutory authorities. That is - be clear as to who does what, including who attends meetings and who feeds back to whom.
5. The District group *and* all ministers have a clear obligation to send copies of all referrals to the Connexional Officer who may in some cases decide to inform Methodist Insurance.

**DATA WILL BE HELD IN ACCORDANCE WITH GOOD PRACTICE
IN CHILD PROTECTION.**

