

The Lincolnshire Safeguarding policies, procedures and Guidance 2024

Information and Reminders

Dear Friends, well here we are, at the start of a new Connexional year with grateful thanks to God, for his faithfulness to us and the assurance of his continuing steadfast love as we go into this New Year.

As always, I appreciate everyone's support and on-going commitment to the work of safeguarding in all that we do and for your collegueship in dealing with the many challenges we have had over the last years – but sharing also together the joys of lives safer outcomes.

This document outlines for you information about this new set of policies as well as emphasising again some key points as we work to implement them.

You are receiving all the policies, guidance and summaries that relate to your day to day work of safeguarding and which needs to be displayed on your notice boards or designated spaces.

Then there are more policies on the District website for reference and use as appropriate as you will see.

Once again, many thanks to you all and may God bless you as we work to keep people safe and lead them to green pastures and life in all its fullness.

Howard

DSO 1st September 2024.

Distribution of policies, procedures and guidance.

The set you have received have also been to all Superintendents, Ministers, Deacons, Circuit Safeguarding Officers, District Council and each Circuit Administrator.

Please note that Alison or I don't have our own email addresses for church safeguarding officers, other than a few, and so I am asking if **CIRCUIT SAFEGUARDING OFFICER CAN OFRWARD THEM TO YOUR CHURCH SAFEGUARDING OFFICERS WITHOUT DELAY**, many thanks.

Please also forward to active supernumerary colleagues.

The District website safeguarding pages.

All these polices etc will be put on the District website the week commencing 2nd September. Alison will kindly upload everything for us.

In addition, there will be other policies on the website that don't need to be sent more directly.

I would encourage you to have a look at the website towards the end of next week to become familiar with the sections on there under the safeguarding tab.

Many thanks to Alison for all the work this will need.

New changes to 2024 policies, procedures and guidance.

These are contained in Appendix (i) of this paper.

Roles outlines 2024.

Alison and I are working to finalise a new set of roles outline, which will be put on the website. We have had many requests to put back the many role outlines we had some years ago for different roles. You have in your papers an example of what a new role outline will look like. In addition, once these are completed it will be possible to put back on to the website the safer recruitment tool kit which, again, was popular.

You can start to use the model template if you wish until we have finalised everything.

EDI considerations – accessibility to all information.

It is now important to consider how best to make the policies etc accessible to all. e.g., it will be for the churches/Circuit to consider whether large print copies may be needed for some, as well as printing on certain coloured paper for others to be able to read the information more clearly.

The policies, procedures or guidance must not be changed, in terms of their content. If it is felt there is a better way to present the information i.e. a better format for your and/or others use, then

it is essential that EDI considerations are considered to make sure any new format allows accessibility for all.

Condensing information onto a few pages only is not always the best method of providing information balanced against not wanting to overwhelm people with long documents.

The District Safeguarding Newsletter.

It is some time since the last newsletter simply due to the amount of casework, which has needed to take a priority for the last number of months. However, these are now to be reintroduced each month to update you with local and national developments and any information to help us implement the policies and procedures.

The District Safeguarding Sessions 24/25.

People will know that since the pandemic in 2020, we have developed a model of holding 2 weeks of safeguarding sessions based on particular themes each year since. This year's sessions will concentrate on the implementation into practice of all key Connexional safeguarding strategies, especially the Theology of Safeguarding report and the resources to support victims and survivors.

Practical arrangements are in hand and you will be notified soon of the dates.

Appendix (i) Changes to District Safeguarding Policies 24/25

The District Safeguarding Policy – not necessarily for display given its length but should be available if anyone asks for it. Not to be locked away or inaccessible if needed. Some churches do like to display it along with the summary.

- Extra final bullet point in the Introduction to reflect recent events in Stockport.
- Throughout the policy any reference to Connexional Safeguarding Procedures have a new date of 2024;
- Paragraph 4.5 – important cross reference to our duty to inform the Charity Commission of some concerns – therefore the District policy on referral to the Charity Commission is now dated 2024 and is available on the District website;
- Paragraph 8.2 – Foundation and Advanced course have been revised and are now dated 2024 for roll-out in the new Connexional year once trainers have had their training for trainers on both courses.
- Paragraph 9.6 – Reference to the need to undertake Equality Impact Assessments;
- Paragraph 13.1 – Reference to other policies. We have written these policies because of learning and/or safeguarding sessions. All are on the District website with a few more to come.

The District Safeguarding Policy – summary - for display

No changes other than its date to 2024.

The District Responding Well Flowchart 2024 – for display

No changes other than its date to 2024

The District Respond Well Recording Form 2024 – forms need to be accessible to use when necessary

No changes other than its date to 2024. Advice on when/if to fill this in is usually sought from the DSO once a concern has been discussed.

The District Person in the Pew Flowchart 2024 – for display

No changes other than its date to 2024.

The Church Safeguarding Policy template 2024 – for approval and display.

No changes other than its date to 2024.

The Circuit Safeguarding Policy template 2024 – as above

The District Safer Recruitment Policy 2024

- **There is a new opening paragraph.** The Connexional policy is not localised but more general. Therefore, our policy gives more direction to who should do what. This has been approved by the Methodist church. It remains in line with overall requirements but made more relevant for day-to-day church life.

The District Safer Recruitment Policy 2024 – summary – for display

No changes other than its date to 2024.

The District Pastoral Visitors Guidance 2024

- Whilst this remains as guidance, there are now only two (not 3) role outlines for PV's which are should be used. We have reduced them to two because there was some general confusion in having too many role outlines.

The District Policy on support to victims and survivors 2024.

- This is a new policy;
- Needs to be considered by church councils and CLT's;
- It has very useful links to Connexional resources;
- It provides the Methodist Charter, which should be displayed when agreed in churches.

Other policies.

These are found on the District safeguarding pages on the website.

Appendix (ii)

Reminders – key safeguarding practice reminders.

Asking for advice from the DSO – it is policy to PHONE the DSO with any initial concern rather than email. We have had occasions when an email had contained serious concerns which should not have been “left” in an email.

Most of time there is some action needed or advice to be shared early on and again this should be done over the phone and then the DSO will advise about completing the Responding well recording form 2024.

Non-compliance with training/DBS's/following policy – In the District Safeguarding Policy 2024, it states what should be done in these situations. Firstly, we try a pastoral approach, as there may be reasons a person have for not wishing to comply or wanting some information clarified. If the pastoral approach does not work, the DSO should be consulted and he will do whatever he can to move things on. If this fails, the Chair of District is informed and decisions made.

In relation to training, it is possible for us to be as flexible as possible and the training can be done locally, in small groups, individually, in someone's dining room etc etc etc if it means we can help people be up to date.

Safer Recruitment - approval of roles – The District Safer Recruitment Policy confers responsibility on this process to:

- Church roles – the “safer recruitment subcommittee” – Church safeguarding officer, a steward and the church council secretary. Any two can sign off the appointments.
- Circuit roles – The Circuit Safeguarding Officer;
- District roles – The DSO.

There have been occasions particularly with Circuit Safeguarding Officer not being included in the process so I hope this can be under review locally.

Safeguarding training - Both Foundation and Advanced training has been reviewed by a Connexional review group, of which I have been a part. This has been necessary to generally update information and make the courses up to date.

Then Foundation course hasn't changed too much, but the Advanced course is considerably different in content and presentation.

All those who are in the District training Pool will have a Training for Trainers session for both courses ASAP and then the new training rolled out throughout the year.

Information will be via the District newsletter.

Development with the DSO role – Methodist Conference 2024 approved that all DSO's will be managed by the Connexional Safeguarding Team from September 2025. There will be discussions with HR colleagues and an independent consultant has been appointed to look at the practicalities of the transition.

It seems that this may make little difference to the presence of a DSO in their "home" District but there may be a need to do some work more regionally alongside other Districts, as we will be part of regional hubs.

I will keep everyone updated via the District newsletter.

Howard Smedley

DSO

1st September 2024