



Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy for Starbeck Methodist Church

This policy was agreed at the Church Council held on 1st November 2021

The Methodist Church, along with the whole Christian community, believes each person has a value and dignity which comes directly from God's creation in God's own image and likeness. Christians see this as fulfilled by God's re-creation of us in Christ. Among other things, this implies a duty to value all people as bearing the image of God and therefore to protect them from harm.

Starbeck Methodist Church is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults and affirms that the needs of children or of people when they are vulnerable and at risk are paramount.

Starbeck Methodist Church recognises that it has a particular care for all who are vulnerable whether by disabilities or by reduction in capacities or by their situation. It is recognised that this increased vulnerability may be temporary or permanent and may be visible or invisible, but that it does not diminish our humanity and seeks to affirm the gifts and graces of all God's people.

This policy addresses the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults. It is intended to be a dynamic policy. It is intended to support the Church in being a safe supportive and caring community for children, young people, vulnerable adults, for survivors of abuse, for communities and for those affected by abuse.

As the people of the Methodist Church we are concerned with the wholeness of each individual within God's purpose for everyone. We seek to safeguard all members of the church community of all ages.

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

Starbeck Methodist Church commits itself to:

1. RESPOND without delay to any allegation or cause for concern that a child or vulnerable adult may have been harmed or may suffer harm, whether in the church or in another context. It commits itself to challenge the abuse of power of anyone in a position of trust.
2. IMPLEMENT the Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance; government legislation and guidance and safe practice in the circuit and in the churches.
3. PROVIDE support, advice and training for lay and ordained people to ensure that people are clear and confident about their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults who may be vulnerable.
4. AFFIRM and give thanks for those who work with children and vulnerable adults and also acknowledge the shared responsibility of all of us for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults who are on our premises.

It is the responsibility of each Church Council to appoint a Church Safeguarding Officer and there should be no gaps in this crucial provision. The safeguarding officer should be a member of the Church Council or have the right to attend at least annually to report on implementation of the safeguarding policy. Where an individual covers the role in more than one location, they must be able to cover the activities identified in the relevant role outline and be facilitated to attend meetings to report on safeguarding in each location.

It is not appropriate for the minister in pastoral charge to hold the church safeguarding officer role because of the potential conflict with their own responsibilities. It is acknowledged that to avoid any disruption in safeguarding provision, it may be necessary for the minister in pastoral charge to take responsibility for some or all of the activities temporarily while other arrangements are made. However, this should only be for a very short period to enable the sharing of the role with another church or the identification of an alternative person to take on the role. The role will usually be undertaken on a voluntary basis although expenses should be met.

Starbeck Methodist Church appoints Christine Thomas as Church Safeguarding Officer (Adults) and Malcolm Binks as Church Safeguarding Officer (Children) and supports them in their role which is to:

- provide support and advice to the minister and the stewards in fulfilling their roles with regard to safeguarding.
- ensure that a suitable, signed church safeguarding policy is displayed at all times in the church on a safeguarding noticeboard, along with names of current safeguarding officers, national helplines and other suitable information. This must be renewed annually.
- record all safeguarding issues that are reported to the church safeguarding officer, according to Methodist policy and procedure.
- promote appropriate routes for reporting of concerns
- identify and inform those who are required to attend safeguarding training and maintain records of attendance. Work with the Circuit Safeguarding Officer (CSO) and District Safeguarding Officer (DSO) to arrange training.
- attend training and meetings relating to the role
- work in partnership with the lettings officer, stewards and user groups to promote good safeguarding practice on church premises. This will include gaining written confirmation that hirers of church premises are aware of the church safeguarding policy or are using an appropriate policy of their own.
- check that safeguarding is included as an agenda item at all Church Council meetings and report to the Church Council annually.

- inform all those with responsibility for recruitment, whether paid or voluntary, of their obligation to follow safer recruitment procedures.
- advise the CSO and/or DSO of any issues with compliance with safeguarding training, policy or safer recruitment requirements and respond promptly to any request from them about audit of safeguarding activities.

1. Purpose

The purpose of the church safeguarding policy is to check that procedures are in place and provide clarity about the roles and responsibilities of those trusted with promoting the church as a safe space for all its users. It is to be read in conjunction with current Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance.

2. Good Practice

We believe good practice means that:

- All people are treated with respect and dignity.
- Those who act on behalf of the Church should not meet or work alone with a child or vulnerable adult where the activity cannot be seen unless this is necessary for pastoral reasons, in which case a written note of this will be made and kept noting date, time and place of visit.
- The church premises will be assessed by the Church Safeguarding Officer with the property steward and/or their representatives at least annually for safety for children and vulnerable adults and the risk assessment report will be given annually to the Church Council in written form. This will include fire safety procedures. The Church Council will consider the extent to which the premises and equipment are suitable or should be made more suitable.
- Any church-organised transport of children or vulnerable adults will be checked to ensure the vehicle is suitable and insured and that the driver and escort are appropriate. A record will be kept in the church file for each driver/car.
- Activity risk assessments will be undertaken before any activity takes place to minimise the risk of harm to those involved. Approval will be obtained from the event leader/minister. A written record of the assessment will be retained securely.
- Promotion of safeguarding is recognised to include undertaking those tasks which enable all God's people to reach their full potential. The Church Council will actively consider the extent to which it is succeeding in this area.

These things are to safeguard those working with children, young people and those adults who may be vulnerable.

3. Appointment and training of workers

Workers will be appointed after a satisfactory DBS disclosure and following safer recruitment procedures of the Methodist Church. Each worker will have an identified supervisor who will meet at regular intervals with the worker. A record of these meetings will be agreed and signed and the record kept. Each worker will be expected to undergo current Foundation Module safeguarding training, within the first 6 months of appointment. The other training needs of each worker will be considered (e.g. food hygiene, first aid, lifting and handling, etc).

- All persons offering to take up positions involving contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults must complete the "Registration Form for Voluntary Workers with Children, Young People or vulnerable adults" which will remain confidential. Details must be given of two persons/organisations from whom appropriate references can be obtained together with confirmation that appropriate training has been or will be undertaken. (FORM A, PART 1).

- (b) The Minister and Leader of the relevant Church organisation will make arrangements with the potential leader/helper to complete Safeguarding Declaration Form CSD/1 and then apply through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for Enhanced Disclosure in respect of offences against children or young people. The details of the Disclosure will be kept confidential and retained by the Minister in accordance with the DBS Code of Practice. A new Enhanced Disclosure will be obtained after 5 years.
- (c) The Minister and the Leader of the relevant Church organisation will take up confidential written references and will also research the background of potential helpers through extended conversation or interview. A confidential record will be retained by the Minister.
- (d) Leaders must prepare a Job Description for each person in their group working or helping with children and young people setting out the work to be undertaken and levels of responsibility. (FORM A, PART 2). The form and included declaration must be signed by the leader/helper.
- (e) The appointment of persons to work with children and young people will be subject to the approval of the Church Council and to an appropriate probationary period, normally one year.
- (f) Additional requirements apply in respect of leaders and helpers in The Boys' Brigade and The Girls' Brigade who must also be registered with their organisations following DBS clearance and approval by the Church Council.

4. Pastoral visitors

Pastoral visitors will be supported in their role with the provision of current Foundation Module safeguarding training upon appointment. If they are undertaking tasks for which a DBS would be required, this will be undertaken prior to appointment.

5. Guidelines for working with children, young people and vulnerable adults

This Policy will be produced and reviewed annually to be given to each worker with children, young people and vulnerable adults outlining good practice and systems

6. Operational arrangements

- (a) Each group leader will be available in the first instance to accept complaints from children, young people and helpers within their group. The Minister will also be consulted. In addition, Starbeck Methodist Church will appoint an independent person whom children and young people may talk with in order for them to confidentially discuss any form of abuse wherever it may occur. Contact details will be displayed in a prominent place.
- (b) Starbeck Methodist Church will make arrangements with the Nidd Valley Methodist Circuit to provide an independent person from whom adult leaders can seek advice.
- (c) Leaders will plan the work of their group so as to minimise situations where the abuse of children and young people may occur or false allegations arise. In particular, the following key procedures will be applied:
 - (i) No adult will be left alone with a group, child or young person where there is little or no likelihood of the activity being observed by others unless (v) below applies.

- (ii) Leaders or helpers will not meet with a child or young person off Church premises without a parent or other adult being present.
- (iii) At least two adults will be present with a group when it is the only activity taking place on Church premises otherwise the activity will be cancelled.
- (iv) Where children, young people or vulnerable adults have to be transported by car or minibus as part of a planned activity or returning them to their homes then leaders will arrange for at least two adults to be present during the entire journey.
- (v) Those who act on behalf of the Church should not meet or work alone with a child or vulnerable adult where the activity cannot be seen unless this is necessary for pastoral reasons, in which case a written note of this will be made and kept noting date, time and place of visit
- (vi) All those working with children and young people are to read and comply with the Methodist Church Internet, email, texting and Communication Guidelines.

- (d) All leaders and helpers working with children and young people will be issued with and will follow the “Reference Guide for those Safeguarding Children and Young People” published by the Methodist Church. The Guide sets out the forms in which abuse may occur and the procedure to be followed if abuse is suspected alleged or disclosed.
- (e) Starbeck Methodist Church has a responsibility to groups who hire or use the Church premises under license and for whom the Church Council is not responsible or groups who hire the premises for regular or occasional use, to declare on the booking form that they have a safeguarding policy in place which is at least equivalent to the policy of Starbeck Methodist Church or agree to implement the Church’s Safeguarding Policy.
- (f) All those who hold keys to Starbeck Methodist Church will be required to complete a declaration confirming that they have not been convicted or cautioned concerning a sexual offence against children or young people. (FORM D)
- (g) All office holders within Starbeck Methodist Church will be required to complete a declaration confirming that they are aware of the Church’s Policy to Safeguard the Welfare of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults. (FORM SC/4)
- (h) The Boys’ Brigade and The Girls’ Brigade will follow the policy of the Church and will in addition implement their own operational safety guidelines where they exceed the requirements of the Church.

7. Ecumenical events

Where ecumenical events happen on church premises, safeguarding is the responsibility of this Church Council.

8. Events with church groups off the premises

Adequate staffing, a risk assessment and notification of the event to be given to the Church Safeguarding Officer PRIOR to the agreement for any event or off site activity. Notification of the event will be given to the Church Council Secretary, Mrs Pauline Mulholland. If the activity is unusual or considered to be high risk the church safeguarding officer will contact the circuit safeguarding officer in order that it can be ratified or any queries raised.

9. Other groups on church premises

Where the building is hired for outside use, the hirer signing the letting agreement will be given a copy of that agreement. The lettings secretary will consider the various users of the building in making lettings. All lettings will be notified to the Church Safeguarding Officer who will keep the records and take advice from-both the DSO and CSO.

10. Complaints procedure

There is a formal complaints procedure within the Methodist Church, which allows issues to be raised about actions or behaviour by a member or officer of the Church. In addition, employed staff will be subject to relevant contractual procedures. All complaints will be responded to with care, diligence and impartiality. The provisions of Part 11 of the Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church will be followed.

A complaint should be addressed to the superintendent minister, the Revd. Ben Clowes. If a complaint is made to another person it should be referred to him. Meetings will be arranged with the person making the complaint and, usually, the person against whom the complaint has been made, in an attempt to resolve it. If the complaint is against the superintendent, it should be sent to the District Chair, the Revd. Leslie Newton at Yorkshire North & East Methodist District Office, 28 The Green, Acomb, York, YO26 5LR. Telephone: 01904 786275.

11. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Church Council. The date of the next review is October 2022

12. Key concepts and definitions

- i) A child is anyone who has not yet reached their eighteenth birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, a member of the armed forces, in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change their status or entitlements to services or protection
- ii) Vulnerable Adults: Any adult aged 18 or over who, due to disability, mental function, age or illness or traumatic circumstances, may not be able to take care or protect themselves.
- iii) Safeguarding: protecting children or vulnerable adults from maltreatment; preventing impairment of their health and ensuring safe and effective care.
- iv) Adult/child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect children/specific adults who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm, including neglect.
- v) Abuse and neglect may occur in a family, in a community and in an institution. It may be perpetrated by a person or persons known to the child or vulnerable adult or by strangers, by an adult or by a child. It may be an infliction of harm or a failure to prevent harm.

Dated 20th October 2021

Signed *L Taylor* Rev Lesley Taylor - Chair of Church Council

Signed *P Mulholland* Mrs Pauline Mulholland- Church Council Secretary