

Working together



to make our church communities safer

Safeguarding Guidance for Single Congregation Local Ecumenical Partnerships

**Published: 24 June 2015
Review Date: May 2016**

Preface

This joint practice guidance is intended to support the work of Single Congregation Local Ecumenical Partnerships, in respect of safeguarding children and adults. This joint practice guidance has been approved by the Methodist Church and the House of Bishops, and as such it is recommended that you follow this guidance. Failure to do so could invalidate your insurance cover.

We hope you find this useful in your practice.

Yours in Christ's fellowship,

+ *Paul*

Liz

Bishop Paul Butler

Bishop of Durham

Joint chairs of the joint safeguarding group

Revd Dr Liz Smith

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Joint Working

The Church of England and the Methodist Church of Great Britain entered into a covenant commitment in November 2003 after conversations lasting several years¹. One of the expressions of this covenant is to develop joint safeguarding arrangements.

Methodist Church and Church of England Practice Advice Papers are approved by the Joint Safeguarding Working Group of the Methodist Church and the Church of England to assist in the development of local safeguarding arrangements. This is jointly chaired by the Bishop of Durham for the Church of England and Dr Elizabeth Smith for the Methodist Church.

Statement of Safeguarding Principles

The Church of England and the Methodist Church work in partnership with other Christian Churches and other agencies in delivering safeguarding. The following statement of principles appears at the head of each safeguarding policy:

We are committed to:

- The care, nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with, all children, young people and all adults;
- The safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and all adults
- The establishing of safe, caring communities which provide a loving environment where victims of abuse can report or disclose abuse and where they can find support and best practice that contributes to the prevention of abuse

To this end:

- We will carefully select, support and train all those with any responsibility within the Church, in line with the principles of Safer Recruitment.
- We will respond without delay to every complaint made, that any adult, child or young person may have been harmed, cooperating with the police and local authority in any investigation.
- We will seek to offer informed pastoral care and support to anyone who has suffered abuse, developing with them an appropriate ministry that recognises the importance of understanding the needs of those who have been abused, including their feelings of alienation and/or isolation.
- We will seek to protect survivors of abuse from the possibility of further harm and abuse.
- We will seek to challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of respect and responsibility, where they are trusted by others.
- We will seek to offer pastoral care and support, including supervision, and referral to the appropriate authorities, to any member of our church community known to have offended against a child, young person or adult who is vulnerable.

In all these principles we will follow legislation, guidance and recognised good practice.

¹[An Anglican Methodist Covenant.](#)

Definition of an LEP

'A Local Ecumenical Partnership is defined as existing 'where there is a formal written agreement affecting the ministry, congregational life, buildings and or mission projects of more than one denomination; and a recognition of that agreement by the Sponsoring Body, and by the appropriate denominational authorities.'² In a Single Congregation Local Ecumenical Partnership, 'ministry is shared by an Ecumenical Ministry Team and congregations consist of members of several denominations. The buildings may be in a formal Sharing Agreement. There is a common purse and an Ecumenical Council which manages the life of the LEP.'³

1. Safeguarding arrangements for an LEP:

- 1.1. Most denominations have comprehensive and useful safeguarding handbooks and it is inappropriate for an LEP to seek to rewrite these. However, there should be a clear understanding and agreement that appropriate and adequate arrangements are in place and that all those who are concerned are clear about what action to take and from where safeguarding advice may be sought. Good communication throughout is essential.
- 1.2. However, while most churches follow similar safeguarding approaches it is suggested that one set of safeguarding policies of one denomination is used which fully meets the requirements of each denomination participating in the LEP.

2. Checklist of safeguarding policy and procedures:

- 2.1. Safeguarding policy and procedures for work with children and young people.
- 2.2. Safeguarding policy and procedures for work with adults experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect.
- 2.3. Arrangements for safeguarding training.
- 2.4. Safer recruitment, including DBS checks, portability and who will decide on appointment if checks not clear.
- 2.5. Care of victims / survivors.
- 2.6. Actions to take in respect of those who may pose a risk within the church community.
- 2.7. Complaints and grievance procedures for paid and volunteer workers.
- 2.8. Action to be taken if a safeguarding allegation is made.
- 2.9. Risk assessments for church activities.
- 2.10. If the LEP attracts charitable status the trustees should follow the recommendations of the Charity Commission on safeguarding and DBS checks⁴.
- 2.11. Insurance – check insurance cover for the activity engaged in.
- 2.12. Check if any of the activities require registration with Ofsted⁵ or the Care Quality Commission⁶ and their safeguarding requirements.

This list is indicative and not exhaustive. These arrangements should be reviewed annually.

² [LEP definition](#)

³ [Churches Together in England categories of LEP](#)

⁴ [Charity Commission and DBS checks paragraph 5.2](#)

⁵ Guide to [registration](#) for children's social care services

⁶ [Registering with the Care Quality Commission](#)