

Circuit Safeguarding Team Report to the Circuit Council and AGM June 2024

This Connexional year has been a busy year for the Safeguarding Team running training across the Circuit, attending drop-in sessions organised by Lois Cross and working with churches and the District Safeguarding Officers to help create robust safeguarding structures across the Circuit. The team consists of: David Bidnell, John Hayward (team leader), Lois Cross, Sally Gall, June Taylor, Amy Shephard, Victoria Etherington, Ann Smallwood (Circuit Steward). Having a Circuit Safeguarding Team means that we are able to pool knowledge and experience and I thank the team for their dedication and support.

My thanks also go to Church Safeguarding Officers who are at the coal face of safeguarding practice. I hope that all churches value and encourage their safeguarding officers and support their work. Having a named Safeguarding Officer does not absolve stewards and church councils from responsibility for safeguarding and truly safe spaces only exist in churches whose ethos is safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Safeguarding Audit

The implementation of safeguarding policies and procedures was brought into sharp focus by an audit conducted across the District. All churches operating under Methodist safeguarding responded to the audit which revealed some gaps in implementation of Methodist policies. It was good to note that all church councils now have Safeguarding as a standing agenda item but reporting both in churches and to Circuit remains patchy. Safer recruitment has not been fully implemented in many churches and record keeping, particularly for groups including children and vulnerable adults is incomplete and, in some churches, non-existent.

An overview of the audit findings was presented at a meeting of the Safeguarding Team and Church Safeguarding Officers on 12th March at which 15 churches were represented by safeguarding officers, stewards or ministers. Since that meeting a detailed analysis of the audit by church has been produced by the District Safeguarding Officer. These will be passed to churches for action in the coming year. Churches needing help with this should contact the Circuit Team through Lois Cross.

Reports from Churches to Circuit

Methodist policies require churches to submit to Circuit every year, the latest version of the Church Safeguarding Policy, safeguarding risk assessments and an annual safeguarding report. The first two of these should be a matter of course but we are still not receiving them automatically.

Regarding the annual safeguarding report, churches have not been asked for these recently and Church Safeguarding Officers have asked for clarification of what is to be reported. A standard format will be sent to churches by the end of June with church reports to be submitted to Circuit by the end of the Connexional year. From 2024/25 churches will be asked for these reports by end of May for inclusion in summary in this report.

Training:

Foundation Module training

The Safeguarding Team continues to run training courses across the Circuit as required. A new Foundation Module has been launched but we will continue to offer the existing module until we have sufficient trainers trained to deliver the new module. Course dates for the 2024/25 Connexional year will be published shortly. The remaining date for 2023/24 is:

Tuesday 25th June 7pm at Copmanthorpe – Victoria Etherington & Amy Shephard with John Hayward chaplain

As ever, we would welcome additional people to join the team as trainers for the Foundation Module. If you feel that this is something you might wish to explore, please contact Lois Cross or John Hayward.

Trainers must complete both the Advanced Module, if they have not previously done so, and the new Train the Trainer course (see below).

Advanced Module Training

District Safeguarding have made significant progress in the number of training sessions available in the 2024/25 Connexional year, with six on site courses planned, two of which are in York, and 20 online courses. To assist the DSO with the delivery of courses Victoria Etherington and Amy Shephard have successfully completed the Train the Trainer course for the Advanced Module. The courses will run subject to a minimum of 20 people booking to attend each session. Dates of next year's courses are listed at the end of this report. The remaining dates for 2023/24 are:

On site: 15th July - Wesley Methodist Church (Oxford Street, Harrogate, HG1 1PP), Nidd Valley Circuit

Online: Thursday 20 June 2024 – hosted by Yorkshire North and East

Train the Trainer for Foundation Module

A revised safeguarding foundation module has been released which means that everyone who trains the foundation course needs to redo 'train the trainers' before they can deliver the new course. There are two parts to the training:

1. Foundation Module Familiarisation, to familiarise trainers with the revised module content.
2. Foundation Module Skills training, this session focuses on the skills needed for facilitating the safeguarding training..

New trainers will need to complete both parts, existing trainers need only complete the Familiarisation session, but may also like to attend the Skills session. Details of courses can be found on the District website.

Carecent training

The majority of Carecent volunteers have now completed the Foundation Module. The courses, run by John Hayward and Kiera Snaith, have been tailored to meet the needs of Carecent and have been well received by the volunteers. Additional courses will be run periodically for new volunteers and the handful of infrequent volunteers who have yet to complete the modules.

Kiera is seeking volunteers to do the Advanced Module and Train the Trainer, creating a larger pool of trainers to deliver foundation module training in the future.

Theology of safeguarding – God Welcomes All

Circuit staff have done the God Welcome All course in the last four staff meetings. This is a helpful course setting safeguarding in a theological context and answering many of the questions about the imperative for us as Christians to ensure we Copies of the course booklet are available for free if anyone wishes to run the course or use it for individual study. John Hayward has 20 copies available in Circuit. Copies may also be printed directly from the Methodist Church website or printed copies ordered for the cost of postage and packing. See <https://www.methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/the-theology-of-safeguarding/>

Circuit Safeguarding Policy

The updated policy, required by Methodist Church standing orders, was approved at the Circuit Council meeting on 6th March 2024.

John Hayward

June 2024

Training Dates 2024/25

Foundation Module

To be advised

Advanced Module Training

Training dates for the remainder of 2023-24 and 2024-25 open for booking on the District website are:

On site:

Tuesday September 24th - Lidgett Methodist Church, York, YO26 5NH

Wednesday November 20th - Kingston Wesley Methodist Church, Hull, HU9 3LP

Saturday January 25th - Driffield Methodist Church, Driffield, YO25 6TJ

Thursday February 27th - Kingston Wesley Methodist Church, Hull, HU9 3LP

Monday April 7th - Lidgett Methodist Church, York, YO26 5NH

Tuesday July 8th - Queen Street Methodist Church, Scarborough, YO11 1HQ

All on site courses run 10.00am to 3.30pm with lunch included.

Online:

Monday 16th September 7pm – hosted by Newcastle/Darlington

Tuesday 22nd October 10am – hosted by Yorkshire North and East

Thursday 24th October 7pm – hosted by Yorkshire North and East

Tuesday 5th November 7pm – hosted by Yorkshire North and East

Thursday 7 November 10am – hosted by Yorkshire North and East

Tuesday 3rd December 10am – hosted by Sheffield

Tuesday 3rd December 7pm – hosted by Sheffield

Wednesday 22nd January 10am – hosted by Sheffield

Saturday 25th January 10am – hosted by Sheffield

Thursday 27th February 10am – hosted by Sheffield

Thursday 27th February 7pm – hosted by Sheffield

Saturday 1st March 10am – hosted by Sheffield

Tuesday 4th March 10am – hosted by Sheffield

Saturday 5th April 10am – hosted by Newcastle/Darlington

Monday 12th May 10am – hosted by Yorkshire North and East

Wednesday 14th May 7pm – hosted by Yorkshire North and East

Monday 9th June 7pm – hosted by Yorkshire North and East

Wednesday 11th June 10am – hosted by Yorkshire North and East

Monday 7th July 7pm – hosted by Newcastle/Darlington

Tuesday 12th August 7pm – hosted by Newcastle/Darlington

Train the Trainers

Foundation Module Familiarisation training

15 July at 7pm - online

19 September at 1pm - online

15 October at 7pm -online

16 November at 10am – Acomb Methodist Church

Foundation Module Skills training

This session focuses on the skills needed for facilitating the safeguarding training. It is essential for all new trainers, but existing trainers may like to attend as a refresher.

- 9 July at 7pm
- 19 September at 10am