



Epworth Scunthorpe and Gainsborough

Circuit Safeguarding Policy

Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy

For the Connexional year 2025/2026

Philosophy

The Methodist Church, along with the whole Christian community, believes each person has a value and dignity which comes directly from God's creation of humans 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.

The Epworth Scunthorpe and Gainsborough Circuit 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.

The Epworth Scunthorpe and Gainsborough Circuit 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.

The Epworth Scunthorpe and Gainsborough Circuit fully agrees with the statement reiterated in Creating Safer Space 2007:

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.

The Epworth Scunthorpe and Gainsborough Circuit 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 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.

Commitment

The Epworth Scunthorpe and Gainsborough Circuit commits itself to:

RESPOND without delay to any allegation or cause for concern that a child or vulnerable adult may have been harmed, whether in the Church or in another context. It commits itself to challenge the abuse of power of anyone in a position of trust. It commits itself to providing informed pastoral care to those in need, including the supervision of those who have committed criminal offences.

Ensure the **IMPLEMENTATION** of Connexional Safeguarding Policy, government legislation and guidance and safe practice in the circuit and in the churches.

The **PROVISION** of support, advice and training for lay and ordained people that will ensure people are clear and confident about their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults who may be vulnerable.

AFFIRM and gives thanks for the work of those who are workers with children and vulnerable adults and acknowledges the shared responsibility of us all for safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults who are on our premises.

The Epworth Scunthorpe and Gainsborough Methodist Circuit through its CLT will have oversight of :

- Systems for overseeing those who need safeguarding training, DBS clearances and key holders;
- Connexional and District Safeguarding information on its websites with particular links to contact numbers for those in a safeguarding role and to District and Connexional safeguarding links;
- Safer recruitment of all volunteers;
- Commitment to Foundation and Advanced training as appropriate;
- Use of letting agreements when outside groups use our premises;
- Risk assessments for special events or activities;
- The process for making a complaint so that people can be put in touch with the Superintendent or the Chair of District if about the Superintendent.
- **Commitment to the support and care of victims and survivors.**
- The church will give the utmost care, respect and support to those who have been hurt in the life of the church. It will seek to offer safe spaces for those who wish to share their experiences and/or take them seriously and seek advice at the earliest opportunity.

The Circuit Safeguarding Officer is: Mrs Karen Elvidge

Cover will be provided by: The ROS or another Circuit Safeguarding Officer- e.g. Mrs Trish Hicken or Mrs Pam McCartney

In particular, the Circuit will affirm and support the Circuit Safeguarding Officer(s) in carrying out required responsibilities as attached. This person will be invited to be a part of the CLT, either by being a member or by invitation to speak about safeguarding matters and updates.

This policy was agreed by a majority of the Circuit Meeting representatives on 17/10/2025. It will be reviewed September 2026.

Appendix - The role of the Circuit Safeguarding Officer:

1. Support and advice to the circuit superintendent and the church safeguarding officers in fulfilling their roles.
2. Work with others, especially if there is a Circuit Safeguarding Team in place, ensuring the safety and well-being of all children and vulnerable adults within the circuit is maintained.
3. Be the point of reference for individual Church Safeguarding Officers throughout the circuit to guide and advise them on Methodist Church safeguarding policy requirements.
4. Liaison with the Regional Officer for Safeguarding (ROS);
5. Provide support to the superintendent, make sure that any incidents and allegations are followed up or referred as necessary, especially in linking with the Regional Officer for Safeguarding;
6. Reporting (in conjunction with the superintendent and relevant minister) any concerns to the Regional Officer for Safeguarding without delay firstly by phone and then as advised by the Regional Officer for Safeguarding, the appropriate recording form.
7. Support the Superintendent with regard to reports required by the district or Connexion
8. Ensure that safeguarding is on the Circuit Meeting agenda as a 'standing' item and present a report to each meeting about safeguarding events (noting the need for relevant confidentiality regarding specific cases).
9. Attendance at the circuit staff meeting as necessary to discuss concerns brought to their attention i.e. ensure they are known to the Circuit staff team and what action has been taken;
10. Liaison with the individual church safeguarding officers to make sure that they are being compliant with Connexional policy, procedures and guidance. This may be best done by meeting with them at intervals;
11. Meetings with the church safeguarding officers at least annually.
12. Attendance at training as necessary.
13. Attendance at district safeguarding events.
14. Membership of and active participation in district safeguarding meetings as called by the Regional Officer for Safeguarding
15. Review of the circuit safeguarding policy at least annually and provision of an updated copy to the Regional Officer for Safeguarding.
16. Advice to churches where necessary on their policies.
17. Review of the safeguarding policy for each church in the circuit each year after any amendments by the churches.
18. Source of up-to-date knowledge of current policies and practice in statutory services and within the Church.
19. Organisation of and contribution to safeguarding training for all those working in voluntary and paid roles within the circuit.
20. Maintenance of a record of all people within the circuit who have received Foundation Module training, Foundation Module Refresher training together with dates of attendance
21. Ensuring that all persons receive appropriate Methodist training when working with children and vulnerable adults, hold an office of responsibility, or are in other applicable roles as defined in the Methodist Church policy.
22. Overseeing timely delivery of appropriate training, in liaison with the Church Safeguarding Officers and accredited Circuit Trainers

23. Ensuring that all circuit churches adopt a safer recruitment policy when appointing staff, or volunteers when implemented;
24. DBS verification on behalf of the circuit.
25. Retaining records of names of those at circuit level who have DBS checks.
26. Be a point of reference for reminders to Church Safeguarding Officers about the need to apply or reapply for checks in accordance with the Methodist Church policy (for updates, the period is currently every five years).
27. Maintenance of a directory of useful names and contact details.

For the Connexional year 2025/26, the Circuit Safeguarding Officer will be a member of District Safeguarding Group. This serves to inform the role with up to date information which can be implemented more quickly and gives an opportunity for the Circuit to be represented at DSG with relevant issues and practices.

Further, it allows the Circuit Safeguarding Officer to properly represent their Circuit in appropriate safeguarding matters that need consideration by DSG.