

RECRUITING SAFELY

- for work with children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable**

INTERIM POLICY OF THE METHODIST CHURCH, OCTOBER 2010

Note:

1. This policy is issued on an interim basis, reflecting the Coalition Government's decision in June 2010 to suspend the full implementation of the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) and the vetting and Barring Scheme (VBS) in England and Wales pending review; in addition the Scottish Government's decision to adjourn implementation of the Scottish Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme until 2011. All references to ISA , VBS and PVG in this policy are currently suspended unless specifically stated otherwise. The policy will be re-issued (and printed) once the Government has clarified these arrangements. No timescale is currently available.

2. The national safeguarding team would like to benefit from this delay, by inviting comments on this interim guidance. These matters can then be addressed in the final document. All comments should be marked 'Methodist Recruiting Safely' and sent to safeguarding@methodistchurch.org.uk

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Joint Statement of Safeguarding Principles for the Church of England and the Methodist Church of Great Britain

Preamble

Every person has a value and dignity which comes directly from the creation of male and female in God's own image and likeness. Christians see this potential 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.

Principles

These are principles for safeguarding work with children and young people (under 18) and with adults who may be vulnerable in the church. This document sets out policy on the principle in bold below. Policy and guidance on the remaining principles are given in the other policies in the Safeguarding Handbook.

We are committed to:

- the care and nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with, all children, young people and adults
- the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults when they are vulnerable
- the establishing of safe, caring communities which provide a loving environment where there is 'informed vigilance' as to the dangers of abuse.

We will carefully select and train all those with any responsibility within the Church, in line with safer recruitment principles, including the use of criminal records' disclosures and registration with¹ the relevant vetting and barring schemes.

We will respond without delay to every complaint made which suggests that an adult, child or young person may have been harmed, cooperating with the police and local authority in any investigation.

We will seek to work with anyone who has suffered abuse, developing with them an appropriate ministry of informed pastoral care.

We will seek to challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust.

We will seek to offer pastoral care and support, including supervision and referral to the proper authorities, to any member of our Church community known to have offended against a child, young person or vulnerable adult.

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

¹ Or 'membership of' (PVG scheme Scotland)

1 Introduction

1.1 This policy applies to all roles in the Methodist Church which involve working with children and adults who may be vulnerable. It should therefore be applied to everyone who is to be considered for work in a role within a church, circuit or district, in order to determine whether the role involves work with children or vulnerable adults.

1.2 The purpose of this document is to set out policy, procedures and guidance. All the procedures set out in this document are either requirements in law or as a result of Methodist policy and therefore must be followed. Should specific circumstances indicate exceptional reasons which justify a variation, then the District Safeguarding Coordinator must be consulted and any variation recorded.

1.3 The Home Office *Safe from Harm* code of good practice for the voluntary sector (1993) was the basis for the first Methodist safeguarding policy. *Safe from Harm* contained strong elements of safer recruitment good practice. Safer Recruitment principles and procedures have since been expanded upon and enshrined in statutory guidance following the Children Act 2004.

1.4 The Children Act 2004, Every Child Matters and Working Together 2006, along with the more recent vetting and barring legislation, mark significant developments in safer recruitment. They bring significant consequences for the Church, as for every other organisation involved in work with children, young people and vulnerable adults. There are new legal duties for many organisations in the UK. The implications for the Connexion with other jurisdictions (including the Crown Dependencies) and especially with regard to Scotland, where another version of the scheme is imminent, need careful consideration.

1.5 These guidelines do not include the Church procedures for safeguarding a child or vulnerable adult they suspect may be being harmed. Those policies and procedures can be found in the other policies within this Safeguarding Handbook.

1.6 The suitability and safety of someone to work with vulnerable groups should not be taken for granted based simply on criminal disclosure checks. This policy therefore sets out wider procedures for safer recruitment. The Methodist Church reserves the right not to appoint or to remove from work, within the principles of due process, those who are unsuitable or who are found to be not suitable for work with children or adults who may be vulnerable.

1.7 When the church ensures that safeguarding features highly in the processes, policies, procedures and practice with children and vulnerable adults, this sends a clear message to applicants and existing staff and volunteers, and helps to deter unsuitable individuals and inappropriate behaviour.

Different approaches across the Methodist Church of Great Britain

1.8 In England and Wales: the implementation of the complete Vetting and Barring scheme has been deferred pending review. The current system for criminal record disclosures from the CRB, and some elements of the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) work, remain in current operation.

1.9 In Scotland: the implementation of the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme has been delayed until February 2011.

1.10 In the Crown Dependencies: these territories are part of the Methodist Church of Great Britain; i.e. the Channel Islands, Gibraltar and the Isle of Man. The same guidance, procedures and best practice are required of all Methodist Churches in the Connexion in so far as safer recruitment procedures can apply. In addition, the Methodist Church in these territories should apply any state vetting schemes to both paid staff and volunteers in so far as these may be adopted by the legislatures of these islands which introduces parity with UK law or similar schemes.

Definitions

1.11 In this document the following words will have the meanings as set out below:

- ‘Child’ and/or “children” includes all children and young people under the age of 18.
- ‘Employee’ this is used (for the purposes of this guidance and convenience only) as a generic term to include all paid staff (including presbyters and deacons). It also includes any contractors and self-employed workers commissioned to deliver a service.
- ‘Employer’ this covers those people who carry responsibility on behalf of the Church for the appointment and management of employees and volunteers.
- ‘Line manager’ this relates to the person responsible for managing, supervising or overseeing the work of an individual employee and/or volunteer, along with managing any process for appointment, performance review, absence, or any other process which may relate to that employee and/or volunteer.
- “Position of Trust” - when one party, through their work or activity, whether paid or unpaid or as a volunteer, is in a relationship of care with a child or young person/vulnerable adult which puts him or her in a position of power or influence over that child or young person/vulnerable adult.
- ‘Recruiting’ applies to all employees and volunteers. Where there is a difference this will be highlighted at the appropriate section.
- “Registered Body” this terminology is from the Criminal Records Bureau and relates to organisations which have registered directly with the CRB to use its services. To be a registered body an organisation must submit no less than 100 applications per year. The Methodist Church uses the Churches’ Agency for Safeguarding (CAS) as our Registered Body.
- ‘Regulated activity’ this terminology is from the SVGA, VBS and the ISA. Regulated activity covers anyone working closely with children and/or vulnerable adults, either paid or unpaid, on a frequent, intensive or overnight basis.² Regulated activities are defined as:
 - i) Any activity of a *specified nature* that involves contact with children or vulnerable adults *frequently, intensively* or *overnight*.
 - *specified nature*: teaching, training, care, supervision, advice, treatment and transportation
 - *frequently*: regularly, once a week or more often
 - *intensively*: 4 days or more in a 30 day period
 - *overnight*: any time between 2 a.m. and 6 a.m.

² “Controlled activity” – The VBS Scheme also covers another category of work called “controlled activity” but this is not relevant for church work.

- ii) Any activity allowing contact with children or vulnerable adults that is in a *specified place* frequently or intensively.
 - specified *place*: schools, children’s homes, hospitals, juvenile detention facilities, adult care homes.
 - iii) Any activity that involves people in certain *defined positions* of responsibility.
 - defined *position*: such positions include school governor and trustee of certain charities.
 - iv) Activity which involves on a *regular* basis the *day-to-day management or supervision* of people carrying out activity of a *specified nature* or in a *specified place*.
- ‘Volunteer’ means a person engaged in an activity which involves spending time, unpaid, (except for travel and other approved out-of-pocket expenses), doing something which aims to benefit a third party (individuals or groups) other than or in addition to a close relative and where relevant includes office holders.
 - ‘Vulnerable adult’ is a person who is aged 18 years or older and:
 - In residential or sheltered accommodation
 - Receiving domiciliary care in own home or health care
 - Detained in lawful custody (prison, remand centre etc)
 - Under supervision of the probation service
 - In receipt of a specified welfare service – support/assistance/training/teaching/instruction/advice
 - Participating in an activity for people with needs, due to age or disability
 - An expectant or nursing mother living in residential care
 - Receiving direct payments from a local authority or health or social care trust
 - Requiring assistance in conducting own affairs
 - ‘Vulnerable groups’ refers to children and/or adults who are vulnerable

Acronyms

- CRB Criminal Records Bureau. The equivalent body in Scotland is Disclosure Scotland.
- DCSF Department for Children, Schools and Families – the relevant department until May 2010. The name is now changed to Department of Education.
- ISA Independent Safeguarding Authority
- LADO Local Authority Designated Officer - working in England for children’s social care concerned with allegations in workplaces, or an equivalent officer for adult social care. In Wales and Scotland the LADO role is not a requirement – the local authority social care will advise who is the appropriate person to liaise with in each case.
- LSCB Local Safeguarding Children Board
- OFSTED Office for Standards in Education
- PVGA Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act (Scotland) 2007
- SVGA Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- VBS Vetting and Barring Scheme

2 Methodist Church Policy

2.1 It is the policy of the Methodist Church:

- I. That all those who regularly work with children and vulnerable adults, including those who work on a rota, should have enhanced criminal record checks and registration or membership with the relevant vetting scheme³.
- II. Those who work only occasionally will be asked to apply for Disclosure checks and registration / membership if they fulfil the legal requirements for the scheme.
- III. Those who manage or supervise those who work with vulnerable groups will also be required to undertake a CRB check and become registered / a member.

In addition:

- IV. Those in a leadership capacity who carry responsibility for safeguarding will be required to undertake a CRB check and become registered / a member.
- V. CRB (or Disclosure Scotland) checks will be renewed every 5 years or earlier at any stage where safeguarding concerns arise and a CRB check is needed for the assessment. The individual shares with the Church⁴ the responsibility for noting when a new check is required at the end of five years.
- VI. In addition to criminal record checks and registration / membership with the relevant vetting scheme, the Methodist church will follow safer recruitment and employment good practice.

³ In England and Wales the terminology is *registration with ISA* (this is currently suspended). The PVG scheme in Scotland is due for implementation in Feb 2011. In Scotland the terminology is *membership* and this includes a criminal record disclosure.

⁴ It is for the Church councils, Circuit meetings, the District Councils and those with Pastoral charge working together as appropriate, to ensure that this is done on behalf of the Methodist Church.

3 Safer recruitment practice⁵

Step 1 Ensure that you have an up-to-date recruitment and selection policy that describes the process and roles before you begin.

Step 2 Ensure that your organisation has a safeguarding policy and that a statement about the organisation's commitment to safeguarding is included in all recruitment and selection materials.

Step 3 Ensure that you have an up-to-date job description and person specification for the role(s) you wish to recruit to, that have been agreed with the recruiting manager. Where the recruitment is for a volunteer, the job description should be a role outline (see Appendix 4 Form A).

Step 4 Ensure that you have an appropriate advertisement prepared that contains all necessary information about the role, timetable for recruitment and your commitment to safeguarding.

Step 5 Ensure that you have compiled a suitable candidate information pack containing all the required information about the organisation, role, recruitment timetable, safeguarding policy/ statement, application form and confidential declaration (see Appendix 4 Form X).

Step 6 Ensure that each application received is scrutinised in a systematic way by the shortlisting panel in order to agree your shortlist before sending invitations to interview.

Step 7 Ensure that all appropriate checks have been undertaken on your shortlisted candidates, including references. (See model reference request Appendix 5). Confirm identity and relevant certificates of qualifications/ course attendance. In addition check 'right to work in the UK' status when appropriate. Remember that, under SO 010, the Methodist Church prohibits the appointment of any person with a criminal conviction or caution for offences against children.

Step 8 Ensure that all shortlisted candidates receive the same letter of invitation to interview, supplying them with all necessary information.

Step 9 Ensure that a face-to-face interview is conducted for ALL shortlisted candidates based on an objective assessment of the candidate's ability to meet the person specification and job description.

Step 10 Ensure that all specific questions designed to gain required information about each candidate's suitability have been asked, including those needed to address any gaps in information supplied in the application form.

Step 11 Ensure that you are able to make a confident selection of a preferred candidate based upon their demonstration of suitability for the role.

Step 12 Ensure that your preferred candidate is informed in writing that the offer of employment (including volunteer positions) is conditional on receiving satisfactory information from all necessary checks including CRB checks⁶ and ISA registration/ PVG membership (when implemented) .

⁵ Adapted from the Children's Workforce Development Council, *Recruiting Safely*, 2009

⁶ Or Disclosure Scotland checks

4 Safer Employment Practice

Keeping a record

4.1 Each church should have a record of the following people:

- all staff who are appointed to work on behalf of the Church and Church Council including all volunteers, whether they are members of the Church or not
- all volunteers or paid staff who are appointed by another Church but may help out or work on a joint project
- any staff, where possible, who are employed by a contractor regularly working on site; for example, when there is building work or a special project taking more than a few days
- all others who have been chosen to work in regular contact with children or vulnerable adults. This will cover volunteers, trustees who also work as volunteers within the establishment, and people brought in to provide additional care or support on a sessional basis but who are not staff members, e.g. activities coordinators, sport or other coaches, preachers from other churches, music or drama workers.

Induction and probation

4.2 Regardless of role or previous experience of working with children, churches should plan an induction (and probation) programme for all newly appointed employees and volunteers. The purpose of induction and probation is to:

- provide training and information about the organisation's policies and procedures
- support individuals in a way that is appropriate for the role for which they have been engaged
- confirm the conduct expected of staff within the establishment
- provide opportunities for a new member of staff or volunteer to discuss any issues or concerns about their role or responsibilities and for these to be addressed.
- give an opportunity for the supervisor/ manager/ minister to raise any concerns and ensure they are addressed before the appointment is confirmed.

Roles and responsibilities

4.3 Selection procedures alone are not the only aspects of safer recruitment. In order for an organisation to be safer, employees and volunteers need to understand their roles and responsibilities. They need to be trained and equipped, supported and enabled to fulfil the responsibilities expected of them. There should be regular, planned reviews of the role and responsibilities.

Training, Support and Supervision

4.5 Essential principles in safer recruitment concern the care taken not only in recruitment, but in the training, support and supervision of staff at all levels. This can happen in a variety of ways for different roles. For those working with vulnerable groups, safeguarding should be considered at each supervision meeting. It will directly impact upon the safety of those for whom staff care, including all vulnerable people. It will contribute directly towards developing a safe culture for everyone in our church communities.

Formal processes

4.6 Safer recruitment policies include the careful introduction and implementation of complaints and grievance procedures for all those who work in an organisation. In addition, everyone should know how to raise concerns about safety, through clear lines of communication and support for 'whistle blowing' where necessary.

Responding to safeguarding concerns

4.7 (For more information, see the policies for Safeguarding Children and Young People, and for Safeguarding Adults, in this Handbook.) There may be up to three strands to the proper process of responding to a concern about an employee or volunteer, working with children or vulnerable adults, where the information suggests that he or she may be unsuitable for this work:

- A police investigation of a possible criminal offence.
- Enquiries and assessment by the local authority's children's social care or adult social care services about whether the child or vulnerable adult is in need of protection or services.
- Consideration by an employer of disciplinary action in respect of the individual. This will usually need to wait until the first two have been completed.

4.8 In England, there is a requirement to notify the LADO about any safeguarding concerns about any member of the children's or vulnerable adult workforce (which includes church activities) to the LADO. The person notifying the LADO should explain that the Methodist Church has established complaints and disciplinary procedures; the LADO will probably require information on the outcome, but will also be able to assist in the procedures on occasions and liaise with other agencies when needed. The LADO will also give advice about referral to any professional regulatory body.

4.9 Help may be obtained via District Safeguarding Coordinators and District Lay Employment Advisers.

Recording safeguarding concerns

4.10 It is important to maintain a complete record of any safeguarding concerns that arise in respect of any employee or volunteer. This should provide the date of all actions, the nature of the concern, what happened, and who dealt with the matter and detail the outcomes. This should always be retained, even where the concern was deemed unfounded at the time, in case the information is needed in future. See the section on record keeping in the companion policy Safeguarding Children and Young People.

Suspension

4.11 If someone is found to be barred (by ISA / PVG) they must be removed from working in relevant work immediately. They should be formally suspended pending a disciplinary hearing, and the police should be notified. This requirement is currently in force.

4.12 Suspension without prejudice should always be considered in other circumstances as set out below. Suspension should be considered as an important and urgent measure. This is not part of the disciplinary process, and does not imply judgement, but acts as a safe precaution. (For further information, see section 7 Safeguarding Children and Young People policy.)

- Where a criminal record disclosure includes serious criminal offences, or raises serious safeguarding concerns through the other information provided
- Where there is serious information that the person did not disclose with their application.

- Where the Church / manager learns about serious safeguarding concerns via any other means.

4.13 Where the Connexional Safeguarding Adviser or an Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice recommends immediate suspension or other restrictions, that recommendation should normally be followed.

5 The Independent Safeguarding Authority

5.1 As stated, the full implementation of the vetting and barring scheme in England and Wales is currently under review and the scheme in Scotland has been delayed. No detailed information about the two schemes has been included in this policy. The following information sets out what is currently in force in England and Wales. Separate specific guidance is being developed for Scotland.

Recruitment

5.2 From November 2010 employers must check whether an individual is barred under the ISA registration scheme. This will determine whether they can be appointed as it may be a criminal offence to employ somebody (either paid or voluntary capacity) to work with vulnerable groups if they are barred. This information is made available on the CRB disclosure.

5.3 If an individual is barred, they may still be able to take part in some activities and a risk assessment will be needed to ascertain whether there are activities which are safe for them to undertake.

5.4 If there is a safeguarding concern about an employee or a volunteer, this may require notification to the ISA. It is important that local managers consult with the district safeguarding coordinator. It is also likely to involve consulting with the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) before taking action. For further detail, see the policies for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

Barring

5.5 As from January 2009, certain convictions (mainly relating to serious sexual misconduct and /or physical violence) result in an automatic bar on the individual working with children or vulnerable adults. In most cases the individual will be entitled to make representations before any final decision is made. (See the ISA website for more details).

5.6 Where the offence/s pre-date 2009; where there are less serious convictions; or where there is other relevant serious information, the ISA operate a 'structured judgement process'. In these situations, the individual has a right to make representations before any final decision is made.

5.7 If someone is not barred, they are still not necessarily suitable for working with vulnerable groups in a church context. For individuals who are not barred, it remains the employer's responsibility to assess the relevance of any convictions, cautions, or other information available.

Referrals

5.8 The circumstances in which a referral is needed are set out below. Note that failure to refer may be punishable by fine or imprisonment.

- i) Incidents of harm or serious risk of harm to children and vulnerable adults – as a matter of urgency, refer first to Police and Children or Adults' Social Care (also to the LADO – see above). Following this, also refer the alleged perpetrator to ISA /PVG scheme.
- ii) Incidents of inappropriate behaviour or misconduct where there is an abuse of trust or an abuse of power in relation to children or vulnerable adults (using the ISA definition of VA/ PVG definition of Protected Adult).

- iii) Persistent refusal or negligence concerning safer recruitment or safeguarding procedures.
- iv) Allegations about i), ii) or iii) which have later been substantiated.

5.9 Any of the above should also lead to disciplinary action within the church, although note that (i) should precede any internal church process.

- v) Where someone has resigned because of/pending any of the above. Where possible complaints and discipline procedures must be concluded and a report written.

5.10 Referrals in these situations will not occur often and so advice should always be sought from the District Safeguarding Coordinator or Connexional Safeguarding Adviser. Decisions about who is the most appropriate person to make the referral can then be made on a case-by-case basis.

6 The process for checking criminal records

Eligibility

6.1 There can be confusion about who should be subject to CRB checks⁷. This arises from:

- the complexity of church activities
- the need to translate the requirements from the different context of public services, for which most government guidance is written
- the changing thresholds suggested over time by the government departments who lead on CRB and ISA requirements in England and Wales
- and the church's developing understanding of what is necessary and proportionate in the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults.

6.2 Two appendices address this: appendix 1 sets out an indicative list of those who should, those who may, and those who would not usually be subjected to CRB checks⁸; appendix 2 provides a checklist to help with decision-making in any individual situation.

6.3 If having used these appendices as guidance, there remains uncertainty about whether to carry out a CRB check then the district safeguarding coordinator should be contacted. It is important for decision-makers to realise that undertaking checks when it is not appropriate to do so can constitute a criminal offence.

The Confidential Declaration

6.4 Anyone applying for any appointments working with children or vulnerable adults (lay or ordained, employed or voluntary) should complete a Confidential Declaration and submit it in a sealed envelope with their application (see Form X, Appendix 4). If the applicant has anything they need to declare then this should be written in the space provided or an accompanying document.

6.5 The declarations will be read by the chair of any appointment panel or the minister (in the case of local volunteer appointments) and if it is satisfactory, the appointment can be made subject to a satisfactory CRB disclosure. A false or incomplete Confidential Declaration could be regarded as a disciplinary matter.

6.6 It is the duty of the minister or the appointment panel to check whether the matters declared are relevant to the application by consulting with the District Safeguarding Coordinator, the Connexional Adviser, or statutory agencies as appropriate and in certain circumstances a formal individual risk assessment will be considered.

⁷ Or Disclosure Scotland checks

⁸ As above

The application process

6.7 Application packs are available from Methodist Publishing (MP). This includes detailed guidance about how to complete the form and the cost of applications for people in employed positions. Volunteers are free. A small charge is made by MP for administration, postage and packing. Methodist Publishing, Tel. 01733 235962.

<https://secure2.cyberware.co.uk/~cb537/acatalog/index.html>

6.8 The Methodist Church uses the Churches Agency for Safeguarding (CAS) as the Registered Body to process all CRB checks. The disclosure from CRB is provided back to CAS and a copy is sent directly to the individual.

Verifiers

6.9 The Methodist Council (February 2009) approved that in addition to all ministers, verifiers may include either *church or circuit safeguarding representatives, district safeguarding coordinators or administrators* who are both registered on the Connexional database and approved by their circuit or district for that purpose. No other role may be allocated this task. For those people who are not ministers, the Connexional Safeguarding Adviser must always be informed before the individual acts as verifier. This notification should be through the email address

Safeguarding@methodistchurch.org.uk

6.10 Churches and circuits are asked to appoint, approve and register new verifiers where they consider that they have the need to add to the pool of local verifiers. The Methodist Church and Churches' Agency for Safeguarding (CAS) will be able to recognise and check the names of these additional verifiers in addition to presbyters and deacons for the purposes of verifying Disclosure applications (including registration or membership of the vetting and barring schemes) and completing CAS forms, provided they meet the following conditions.

6.11 Districts, circuits and churches should ensure that:

- any new verifiers are recruited and trained in the process
- this task is listed in the job description *or* there is an agreed addition to the job description for administrators, and the administrator is in agreement to being entered on the national database for the purpose of being a verifier. This may involve application for a disclosure and registration themselves, where this was not the case before.
- in all cases the minister's name should also be entered on the CAS form (in the box named Alternative Contacts) as the person with pastoral charge.

'Blemished' disclosures

6.12 In England and Wales, the CRB disclosure will include information from the relevant barring lists for children and /or vulnerable adults. In Scotland, once the PVG scheme is implemented, the application for membership will include a CRB check. The current process is through Disclosure Scotland.

6.13 The disclosure will contain relevant information about 'soft' information held by the police as well as information about relevant criminal convictions or cautions.

6.14 A small but significant proportion of CRB disclosures are returned with information held by the police about the subject. In these cases, CAS will first check for accuracy and any further information with the subject directly. CAS will then pass the information to the Connexional Safeguarding Adviser for further assessment and decision-making.

6.15 Some blemished disclosures contain information which does not present a safeguarding risk. In these cases, the Methodist Church will apply the principles of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 in respect of the timescale for spent convictions.

6.16 The Connexional Adviser will liaise with the verifier where this is the local minister. Where the verifier is a lay person, the Adviser will still seek to liaise initially with the minister. The Adviser cannot automatically disclose this information, without consent of the subject. The importance of the Confidential Declaration (see above) in these cases is that the information should already be available to the local decision-makers, which then facilitates the process of assessment and decision-making.

Approvals

6.17 Following a clear criminal record or a limited assessment of minor matters on unclear disclosures by the Connexional Safeguarding Adviser, a letter will be sent by CAS to the minister or Superintendent. This will state that the person is not unsuitable on the basis of the information held, along with any small conditions which may be made on minor matters disclosed.

6.18 These letters should be kept securely and a register developed of all those who have been cleared and dates. These records should be kept by the minister in pastoral charge, the Church Council Secretary or a suitable administrator, as designated by the appointing body, usually the Church Council. They will need to be kept indefinitely. These records will form the basis of the local system for ensuring that the checks are renewed after five years.

6.19 Where an application has been considered by the Safeguarding Advisory Panel, any letter of approval (or otherwise) will be sent by the Connexional Safeguarding Adviser and copied to the minister.

'Portability'

6.20 The CRB defines 'portability' as the '*re-use of a CRB check, obtained for a position in one organisation and later used for another position in another organisation.*' There are also times when it is unclear whether a previous CRB check can apply *within* the organisation for example when someone who has been checked for one role now volunteers for working in a different role within the same church.⁹

⁹ There are serious risks with excessive portability, which need to be balanced with the bureaucratic challenge of serial CRB checks. The Methodist Church is currently discussing this matter, through the regional and district safeguarding groups, and further information will be included in the substantive guidance following this interim document. The CRB guidance is provided at: www.crb.homeoffice.gov.uk/faqs/portability.aspx

6.21 On an interim basis, the Methodist Church policy is as follows:

- anyone applying for a further role within the same church does not require a second CRB check, if the work is with the *same* group – i.e. still with children or still with vulnerable adults.
- where the second role transfers into the *other* group (for example, someone who has volunteered at a youth club now offering to work as a pastoral visitor with housebound adults) then a second CRB check is required.
- where a person applies for an employed position working with a vulnerable group, then a new CRB check is always required.
- where a person is training as a local preacher or candidating for the ministry then a new CRB check is always required (see later for further guidance about these particular roles).

Data Protection

6.22 Information that is part of a criminal record disclosure must be treated as confidential. It is an offence for disclosure information to be passed to anyone who does not need it in the course of their duties or for a purpose other than for which it has been given. The sharing of information should therefore always be the subject of careful consideration about who 'needs to know'. Where the decision is particularly difficult or unclear, the District Safeguarding Coordinator or Connexional Safeguarding Adviser should be consulted.

6.23 Barring information should be treated with the same care and the ISA/CRB code of practice should be followed in regard to formal notifications of decisions to bar, or when the ISA is considering barring.

7 Safeguarding risk assessments

7.1 Following liaison with the local minister in most cases, recommendations are made by the Connexional Safeguarding Adviser working with suitable senior staff in the Connexional Team on the more minor matters that can be disclosed on a blemished CRB disclosure¹⁰. In the case of matters which raise a serious safeguarding concern, a risk assessment is commissioned by the District Safeguarding Coordinator and Connexional Safeguarding Adviser. This assessment is then considered by the Connexional Safeguarding Advisory Panel (SAP).¹¹ The individual has a right of appeal about any decision made.

7.2 A formal assessment of risk is essential when:

- a) A serious conviction or other police information is known, but where the ISA/ Disclosure Scotland have not decided to bar someone. This could concern retrospective cases (the vetting schemes do not automatically bar people for older, serious matters) or there could be cases where we consider there is a potential risk remaining because of the circumstances of the church or the requirements of the role (e.g. drug or alcohol offences, violence, domestic abuse, deception, harassment).
- b) Where police and/or the local authority have investigated a serious matter concerning harm or the risk of harm, there has not been a prosecution or a conviction *and* they consider there is a residual risk to a child/children, young people (under 18) or vulnerable/protected adults.
- c) any other information becomes available, through any route, which suggests that the individual could present a risk to children or vulnerable adults.

7.3 Appendix 3 provides a role specification for risk assessors. Often there is a suitable person already working with the District Safeguarding Groups who can offer these services. In order for the risk assessment to be seen as independent and enable the district safeguarding coordinator to carry out any ongoing work, the safeguarding coordinator should not undertake assessments in his or her own district. The assessor can be sought via a reciprocal arrangement with a neighbouring district.

7.4 Where there is no one suitable available from these sources or the applicant/candidate is to be appointed connexionally (i.e. ministers), or to a Connexional role, the risk assessor will be sought from another Church with suitable resources, such as the Church of England diocese, or from a list of specialists held connexionally

7.5 Funds to employ a consultant may be needed in certain cases. It is the responsibility of the Methodist body that will become the employer (i.e. church, circuit, district, etc.) to provide these resources.

¹⁰ Or Disclosure Scotland

¹¹ See Methodist Standing Order 232. The panel is made up both of specialists in child protection, adult protection or public protection, appointed on a multi-disciplinary basis, and senior Methodists. The Panel can also provide advice on safeguarding concerns which arise from other sources, not just via blemished CRB disclosures. For example, the Panel deals with all appeals against SO 010 – which sets out that no person can be appointed to any role when they have convictions against children.

8 Additional Information relating to different categories of individuals

Volunteers

8.1 Volunteers (unpaid) make up a huge part of the children's workforce and are seen by children as safe and trustworthy adults. They should be valued and supported. Churches actively seeking volunteers, and considering candidates about whom it knows little, should adopt the same recruitment measures as it would for paid staff.

8.2 Where an organisation approaches a person, or is approached by someone, who is well known to them to take on a particular voluntary role, a shorter procedure may be adopted. This includes as a *minimum* gaining recent references, checking to make sure others in the community have no concerns and can make a positive recommendation, conducting an informal interview to be clear about the person's suitability and conducting appropriate vetting.

8.3 Many volunteers work on a rota. This fits uneasily with the ISA definitions of regulated activity (see 'Definitions' in section 1). The CRB criteria now include a category for people in positions of responsibility, even where their level of activity does not meet the level of regularity required by ISA. Such people retain their responsibility even at those times when they are not actively working their turn on a rota. Volunteers working in roles with vulnerable groups, albeit on a rota, should always be subject to CRB checks. (See Appendix 2 for the checklist for decision-making).

'One-off' Visitors or Helpers

8.4 Where a volunteer's role will be a *one-off*, such as accompanying staff and children on a day outing or helping at an event (e.g. a holiday club), these measures would be unnecessary provided that the person is known to the organisation and is always supervised.

8.5 It is not necessary to obtain a CRB Disclosure for visitors who will only have contact with children on an ad hoc or irregular basis for short periods of time. However, it is good practice to ensure that visitors sign in and out and are escorted whilst on the premises by a member of staff or appropriately vetted volunteer.

Overseas applicants and candidates

8.6 For overseas candidates who have not previously lived in the UK *and* also UK candidates who have lived abroad for significant periods, the recruiting manager should make an additional check by obtaining a certificate of good conduct/police record from the relevant embassy or police force, where that is available, as well as obtaining an enhanced Disclosure. The CRB website gives information about the availability and coverage of these certificates. The level of information they contain varies from country to country. Some are complete extracts from the criminal record; others are partial.

CRB website - http://www.crb.homeoffice.gov.uk/guidance/rb_guidance/overseas.aspx

For Disclosure Scotland see also information from CRBS -

<http://www.crbs.org.uk/news/documents/OverseasDisclosurechecks-Aguide.pdf>

8.7 Where an applicant is from, or has lived in, a country where criminal record checks cannot be made for child protection purposes, or is a refugee with leave to remain in the UK and has no means of obtaining relevant information, the manager should take extra care in taking up references and carrying out other background checks. For example, additional references should be sought and references followed up by phone as well as letter.

8.8 Overseas applicants should apply for scheme membership/registration of vetting schemes *before* arriving to take up prearranged work or apply once they arrive. Once the scheme is in place, they *should not* start work until ISA registration or PVG membership is confirmed.

Contractors, agency staff or other sources of recruitment

8.9 If volunteers are to be recruited by another organisation, e.g. for a joint or ecumenical event, a district or Connexional event, suitable assurances should be obtained from the 'home' church or organisation which first recruited them that the person has been recruited and vetted in line with this guidance *and* that they were recruited and vetted for similar work.¹²

8.10 The same enquiries should be made of any contractor the church uses to provide services that give rise to their staff having contact with children, including vetting procedures and relevant information found arising from these procedures.

Direct involvement of children or vulnerable adults

8.11 Those under 16 must not be in roles where they take responsibility for children of any age¹³. Young people over the age of 16 will need to have a CRB disclosure before working with either children or vulnerable adults. They will not be eligible for ISA registration till they turn 16, but must apply in time for their 16th birthday if they are likely to be engaging in a regulated activity.

8.12 Family members, or other vulnerable adults, do not require a CRB disclosure where they are assisting a leader in providing an activity for people who experience the same situation as themselves.

8.13 Involving children, young people or vulnerable adults (as relevant to the role) in the recruitment and selection process in some way, or observing shortlisted candidates' interaction with them is common and recognised as good practice. There are different ways to do this. For example, the appointment panel could ask candidates to participate in specific activities or meet some of the children or adults the post-holder is likely to have contact with and, where possible, seek their views. The panel may also wish children or adults to show short-listed candidates around the establishment with an appropriate member of staff. Where children or adults who are vulnerable participate in interviews, they should be trained in interview procedures.

Students on placement

8.14 When offering student placements for professional or vocational training where there is a practice placement element, a CRB Disclosure should be applied for when a place on the programme has been accepted, so that Disclosures are received prior to the trainee commencing the work-based elements of their training. Organisations working with vulnerable groups have discretion to allow an individual to begin the work-based elements pending receipt of the Disclosure, subject to the same considerations on overseas students and workers. The trainee must always be appropriately supervised in the placement location.

Trustees

8.15 Where a charity carries out work targeted at children or vulnerable adults, it is classified under SVGA as a 'children's charity' or 'vulnerable adults' charity'. Church Councils or Circuit Meetings will

¹² Children and young people's work or vulnerable adults' work. If recruited for one vulnerable group, they may not be suitable for the other.

¹³ See Methodist Standing Order 660

therefore fall within this definition, if they carry out work targeted at children (such as a youth club) or vulnerable adults (such as a pastoral visiting scheme for the housebound).

8.16 There is no general requirement or eligibility for all Church Council or Circuit Meeting members to be CRB checked. Trustees should be asked to sign a declaration (see Form C, Appendix 4) confirming their suitability to fulfil the role (e.g. Church Council member, circuit steward).

8.17 Those meetings which fall within this definition, should identify at least one member of the meeting to act as the lead person for safeguarding matters. They will be deemed to hold a supervisory / management role for safeguarding and will therefore be eligible for registration (or membership - in Scotland) and CRB checking.

8.18 If someone is barred by the ISA/ PVG they must not work as Trustees of Children's' or Vulnerable Adults' charities and therefore should not be a member of any meeting which falls within this definition. This would constitute a criminal offence.

Pastoral Workers / Visitors

8.19 Those who are engaged in pastoral visiting or are appointed as pastoral workers for the general congregation will *not normally* be required to register with the ISA (or membership of the PVG scheme in Scotland) or have a CRB check¹⁴.

8.20 Pastoral visitors / workers (either newly appointed or already engaged in pastoral work) who undertake the following duties should be CRB checked:

- a) Those who regularly visit care homes, sheltered housing schemes, hospitals, prisons, probation hostels.
- b) Those engaged in providing regulated activities (see Definitions, section 1) for vulnerable adults or children.
- c) Those who work in projects where regulated activities take place and the funding body requires this.

8.21 It is difficult for the church to make firm rulings about which pastoral work is covered by the scheme. The following questions should assist. Advice can be sought from the District Safeguarding Coordinator or Connexional Safeguarding Adviser.

- Is visiting at home a regular part of the pastoral worker's role?
- Are the people being visited particularly vulnerable e.g. housebound? Those with a physical disability or suffering from a mental illness?

Ordained presbyters and deacons and candidates for ordained ministry

8.22 It is the policy of the Methodist Church to require CRB checks¹⁵ on all successful candidates before they enter training. This applies to all appointments being made for both deacons and presbyters. Once the relevant scheme is in place, the candidate will also be required to register with the ISA/PVG if they are not already registered/ are members.

8.23 References for candidates will always be taken up, including one from a previous recent employment.

¹⁴ Or Disclosure Scotland check

¹⁵ As above

8.24 All presbyters and deacons require a full CRB check , including those in other appointments. The same will apply with regard to ISA registration / PVG membership once the schemes are in operation.

8.25 For any role where there is a query concerning eligibility for either CRB checking, ISA registration or PVG membership, the requirement shall be determined by the General Secretary in consultation with the Connexional Safeguarding Adviser, with the assistance of legal advice where necessary.

8.26 CRB checks¹⁶ will continue to be needed on a five-yearly basis thereafter. Refusal or failure to do so will be regarded as a disciplinary matter.

8.27 The Confidential Declaration Form X (see appendix 4) should be completed before each application for CRB checks is made. For presbyters, deacons and those candidating for the ministry, the forms should be returned to the Secretary of Conference at the Connexional team.¹⁷

Local Preachers and Worship Leaders¹⁸

8.28 It is expected that both during training and once accredited that new Local Preachers and new Worship Leaders will be engaged in church services which are for children or include children, (such as parade services), and vulnerable adults, (such as services in care homes, or in taking extended communion to the housebound).

8.29 It is therefore required that:

- Local Preachers should obtain a criminal record disclosure (and be registered with ISA/PVG membership) prior to going 'on trial'
- Worship Leaders should obtain a criminal record disclosure (and be registered with ISA/PVG membership) before their training commences.
- For those Local Preachers currently on trial, or those Worship Leaders currently in training, a CRB disclosure should be obtained before their accreditation can be completed.

8.30 Currently there is no provision for checks to be made retrospectively in relation to all current Local Preachers and Worship Leaders. Decisions should be based on the nature of their current duties.

Schools

8.31 Schools are subject to separate regulations and guidance, as directed by the Government's Department of Education.

Those working from home

8.32 The CRB form contains a question about whether the applicant works from home. All presbyters and deacons should tick this box¹⁹. For other roles, the decision should be made on a case-by-case basis.

¹⁶ Or Disclosure Scotland checks

¹⁷ Envelopes clearly marked 'Confidential Declaration Form X'

¹⁸ The CRB disclosure application form should record a Local Preacher or Worship Leader's duties as 'preaching /teaching with children and vulnerable adults'.

8.33 Applicants need to be prepared for the fact that, when they tick this box, (box 66), the police may disclose any information held, relating to everyone known by the police to be living at that address.

8.34 Practice across police forces may vary. If conviction information from the Police National Computer (PNC) appears they will exercise judgement as to its likely relevance to the role and if considered relevant will disclose it in the section headed Approved Information. Old and minor matters, e.g. criminal damage or even theft if committed some time ago would probably not be considered relevant although this will depend on the role. Sexual offences and offences of violence would always be deemed relevant.

8.35 In order to minimise intrusion into private life, this 'working from home' box should only be ticked if direct work with children or vulnerable adults is to take place on the premises. For example, a youth group meeting in an applicant's home means that the box should be ticked. However a youth worker, who returns home after the club session and writes up his or her notes, would not need to tick the box if that is the only work being undertaken.

¹⁹ Reference: Methodist Standing Order 803 '...the Circuit or other body responsible for provision of the stipend of a circuit minister or deacon or other minister or deacon in the active work or probationer appointed to a station within the control of the Church shall provide a manse as a base for the work of ministry as well as a home.'

Appendices

1. Roles in the Church and CRB checks
2. Checklist for making decisions about CRB checks
3. Role Specification for those undertaking individual risk assessments
4. Forms
5. Reference request form for volunteers

Appendix 1 - Roles in the Church and CRB checks²⁰

The following is an indicative list – it is neither prescriptive nor exhaustive. The criteria will still need to be checked for most roles in advance of recruitment. There will be those roles where a parish or diocese needs to carefully consider the role descriptions, the eligibility criteria and definitions, and apply them to new roles.

If in any doubt please contact your District Safeguarding Coordinator.

Table 1a) Those roles which will usually require a CRB check

| |
|---|
| All presbyters and deacons |
| Those candidating for the ordained ministry |
| Safeguarding officers in connexional, district, circuit or church context |
| Designated safeguarding leads on the Church Council or Circuit Meeting (i.e. those who have a supervisory / management role in relation to all safeguarding matters for and on behalf of the meeting) |
| New local preachers |
| New worship leaders |
| Existing local preachers or worship leaders whose work involves preaching / teaching to children or vulnerable adults |
| Lay people employed by the Church whose work is with children or vulnerable adults for example, lay pastoral workers, youth, children and family workers |
| Musical director, organist, choir leader, where the choir or musical group is wholly or mainly for children or vulnerable adults or where they teach, train or supervise children under 16* |
| Youth Club (u 18) Leaders & helpers |
| Sunday School (u18) Teachers & helpers |
| Leaders/Assistant Leaders Church Parent & Toddlers Group (not the parents who supervise only their own children) |
| Church** approved Home Visitors for schemes that are wholly or mainly for families with children or vulnerable adults |
| Church** approved Luncheon Club/specialist club Leaders/assistants/drivers for schemes that are wholly or mainly for vulnerable adults |
| Church** approved Drivers for church sponsored arrangements for children, young people or arrangements wholly or mainly for adults who are vulnerable |

* where a group has only children aged 16-18, then checks are not mandatory but would still be advisable.

** Approval may be given by district, circuit or local church as appropriate

Table 1b) Those roles which *may* require a CRB check

Careful evaluation of these roles will be needed to assess the degree of direct working contact with children or vulnerable adults.

Note: ISA regulations do not cover the sort of casual contact with children or vulnerable adults where there would be no more contact than a local shopkeeper.

²⁰ Or Disclosure Scotland

| |
|---|
| Circuit stewards (for instance, registration will be required if a circuit steward is identified as one of the circuit meeting safeguarding leads (see Section 8.15-18) |
| Church stewards (if working directly with children or vulnerable adults; managing or supervising those who work directly, or if they are one of the church council safeguarding leads.) |
| Church/Church Hall Cleaners/Caretaker |
| Pastoral visitors (see Section 8.19-21) |
| Church tour guides |

Table 1c) Those roles which would not usually qualify for a CRB check

- unless there are specified aspects of their role which mean this person will be responsible for children or vulnerable adults.

| |
|--|
| Musical Director, Organist, Choir leader, where the choir or musical group is mainly for adults |
| Choir members (adults and those over 16) |
| Those serving refreshments |
| People in the church welcome team for services |
| Flower arrangers |
| Family members or other vulnerable adults, assisting the leader in providing a regulated activity for people who experience the same situation as themselves |
| Keyholders |
| Visitors who have only brief contact with children, when staff are present |
| Contractors who come on site to carry out repairs or to service equipment |
| Volunteers or parents who provide 'one-off' support that does not include an overnight stay |
| Those who transport children or vulnerable adults, but this is arranged by the parents/carers/adults directly, not authorised by church |
| People who are on site before or after operating hours of a regulated activity and when children / vulnerable adults are not present, e.g. local groups who hire premises, contract cleaners who work early morning or late evening when the premises are empty. |

Appendix 2 - Checklist for making decisions about CRB checks²¹

| Question | Yes or no? Yes - CRB check No - move to next question |
|--|---|
| <p>Is the activity regulated (with children or targeted at vulnerable adults)? i.e.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Frequent (Once per week or more) - Intensive (4 days per month or more) - Overnight (between 2am and 6am) <p><i>Based on the ISA guidance</i></p> | |
| <p>Is the activity 'specified' – that is, one of the following with children or targeted at vulnerable adults:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - teaching - training - care - transportation - supervision - advice - treatment <p><i>Based on the ISA guidance</i></p> | |
| <p><i>[Where the activity with the child or vulnerable adult does not meet the frequency / intensity / overnight threshold for regulated activity]</i></p> <p>Does the activity place the person in 'a position of trust' (see Definitions section 1). If you are unsure please seek advice from your District Safeguarding Coordinator.</p> <p><i>Based on the CRB criteria</i></p> | |
| <p>Is the role 'regulated' in that it involves the supervision or management of people carrying out any of the above activities?</p> <p><i>Based on the ISA guidance</i></p> | |
| <p>Is the person a trustee of a charity that carries out work targeted at children and/or vulnerable adults (e.g. a Church Council / Circuit meeting)</p> <p><i>and</i></p> <p>is the person one of the nominated leads for safeguarding on that trustee body?</p> <p><i>Methodist application of the discretionary power in the ISA guidance</i></p> | |
| <p>Is the person <i>either</i> a presbyter or deacon</p> <p><i>or</i></p> <p>Is the person candidating for the ministry?</p> <p><i>Based on the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006</i></p> | |
| <p>Is the person <i>either</i> a new local preacher</p> <p><i>or</i></p> <p>A new worship leader</p> <p><i>or</i></p> <p>An existing local preacher / worship leader who has developed a particular ministry of preaching / teaching to children or vulnerable adults?</p> <p><i>Based on Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006</i></p> | |
| <p>If having worked through this list, the answers are all 'NO' but you remain concerned about potential safeguarding risks in the role, discuss the situation with the District safeguarding Coordinator.</p> | |

²¹ Or Disclosure Scotland check

Appendix 3 - Role specification for those undertaking formal risk assessments (see section 7)

Essential

1. Professional qualification, e.g. in social work, medicine, nursing, probation, police, education, family law.
2. Experience of carrying out child or adult protection risk assessments, investigations or similar enquiries.
3. Familiarity with current law, statutory guidance and good practice relating to child protection.
4. Familiarity with the Methodist Church policy and procedures on child protection.
5. Understanding of current good practice in handling allegations made against workers with children and young people.
6. Knowledge and understanding of the dynamic risk factors which feature in offending behaviour, including abusers
7. Ability to make clear decisions and recommendations.
8. Ability to present information in a clear and organised way and to write reports.
9. Ability to work both independently and as a contributor to a corporate process.
10. Ability to think independently, make constructive feedback and professional/ ethical standards.
11. Discretion and confidentiality.

Desirable

1. Management experience including handling disciplinary matters.
2. Experience of carrying out child protection assessments (i.e. the Common Assessment Framework²²) and/or investigations of abuse.
3. Experience of voluntary organisations.
4. Proven attendance at a course in risk assessments run by CEOP, the Lucy Faithfull Foundation, NSPCC or similar.
5. Registration with an appropriate professional body

²² Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010

Appendix 4 - Forms

Copies of the actual forms can be downloaded from the Methodist website (safeguarding pages).

A description of the basis, use and storage guidance for the forms

Form X – Confidential Declaration

A Confidential Declaration must be completed by those applying for any appointments (lay or ordained, employee or volunteer) where the person will be working with children or vulnerable adults. It should be submitted in a sealed envelope with their application or registration form. The declaration will be read by the relevant officer and if it is satisfactory, the appointment can be made subject to satisfactory vetting procedures.

The forms should be retained securely by the person responsible for the appointment. For presbyters, deacons and those candidating for the ministry, the forms should be returned to the Secretary of Conference at the Connexional team – the envelope marked clearly ‘Confidential Declaration Form X’.

Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, no offences are considered ‘spent’ where work with children or vulnerable adults are concerned (as defined in the relevant Exemptions Orders). Where someone is found subsequently not to have declared the relevant items this will be likely to affect the decision as to suitability for the role.

Form A – part 1 – Registration form for voluntary workers with children, young people or vulnerable adults

This is a registration form for voluntary work with children, young people or vulnerable adults. It must be completed by all those seeking to work or currently working with young people. It does not need renewal but should be completed if someone changes role. It should be retained securely on behalf of the appointing body.

Form A – part 2 – Volunteer agreement including role outline

The volunteer agreement sets out important information concerning what is expected of them in the role and to whom they report. It should be reviewed and updated on an annual basis. Development planning, including identifying any training needed, should take place with the assistance of this form. This should be retained by the appointing body; the applicant/volunteer should also keep a copy.

Note 1

Sample lay employee forms are available in the Lay Employment pack. This or similar should be used for all district/circuit or church paid lay appointments.

Note 2

A copy of the Recruitment of Offenders policy for the Methodist Church must be given to every applicant. If it is not in the pack you order, it is available as a download from the website, under *safeguarding* and *safer recruitment*.

Form B – Local preacher and worship leader declaration

The Methodist Conference has directed that in accordance with Standing Order 010 (2) (i) and (ii), all those who wish to serve as local preachers or worship leaders (or who have been asked to undertake certain specified responsibilities) should complete a declaration concerning certain offences against children, young people under the age of 18 or vulnerable adults.

Form B is retained for the small number of existing LPs/WLs who have not yet completed it.

With regard to the new legislation, it is clear that the role of local preacher and worship leaders includes responsibility for teaching, training or supervising children, young people or vulnerable adults. New local preachers and worship leaders will therefore be required to be CRB checked at the outset, before going 'on trial'. New LPs and WLs will therefore complete the Confidential Declaration (Form X) – as for everyone prior to a CRB check - instead of Form B.

All Local Preacher declaration forms must be kept securely by the Circuit Superintendent.

Form C – Officeholder declaration

Not all office holders work with children, young people and vulnerable adults, and not all such roles are eligible for formal external vetting checks. This form is required by all those in any other office, post or responsibility, trustees and council members, to fulfil Standing Order 010 (2) (ii) qualification for office.

All people nominated or holding positions in the Methodist Church must sign a declaration form C.

Form D – Key holder declaration

Key holders are not eligible for CRB checks unless they do additional work with children or vulnerable adults directly. This form enables the church or church premises to ensure that security will be taken seriously at all levels and that reasonable assurances are given that those who have access to churches give undertakings that they will not abuse this trust. These forms should be kept securely on behalf of the Church Council by the Property committee. The church is not obliged to give keys or access codes to anyone whom they do not know and who has not signed a declaration.

Form E – A model declaration form for users and hirers of Methodist premises

This can be adapted or incorporated into local letting/ hiring agreements.

Church Councils are required to ensure that those who use its premises under licence or who hire the premises for regular or occasional use are given a copy of the local church safeguarding policy *and* declare their willingness to comply with the *Safeguarding* policy of the Methodist Church or comparable equivalent guidelines and procedures (such as Scouting and Guiding national safeguarding policy). These forms should be kept securely on behalf of the Church Council by the Property Committee.

N.B. All information will be held in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

The Methodist Church is registered with the Information Commissioner and therefore documents (including electronic documents) may only be held for the purposes for which they are given. It should be understood that such documents can be required to be produced either to a person about whom they are written²³, for the purpose of detection or prevention of crime, or for the purpose of court proceedings.

²³ Except for third party information where permission has not been given for subject access.

Appendix 5 - A Model Reference Request Form

The Methodist Church

| |
|--|
| Name and address of referee: |
|--|

| |
|--|
| Name and address of minister or person requesting a reference: |
|--|

| |
|-------|
| Date: |
|-------|

Dear

REQUEST FOR REFERENCE FOR VOLUNTARY WORKERS WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE, OR VULNERABLE ADULTS.

(delete as relevant, except when both apply).

**RE: Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms
Address**

Post applicant applying for

The above has given your name as someone who may be contacted in relation to their application to work in the above post. Statutory guidance and Methodist Church policy advise that all voluntary organisations including churches should take steps to safeguard the children and young people entrusted to their care. I would be grateful if you could comment on the factors set out overleaf along with providing any other information which you deem relevant.

Thank you for your assistance.

Yours sincerely

The minister / on behalf of minister

Reference questions

How long have you known the applicant?

What is the applicant's previous experience of looking after or working with children, young people or vulnerable adults?

What is applicant's ability to provide warm and consistent care?

Is there evidence of the applicant's willingness to respect the background and culture of children or vulnerable adults in their care?

What is the applicant's commitment to treat all children, young people and vulnerable adults as individuals and with equal concern?

What is the applicant's physical health, mental stability, integrity (*including financial integrity*) and flexibility (as these factors apply to the role under consideration)?

Is there any evidence or concern that the applicant would not be suitable to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults?

Are there any previous or current difficulties (for example a disciplinary matter currently under investigation) which may raise concerns about the applicant's suitability for this post?

N.B. All information will be held securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act.