

Safeguarding Sunday 16th November 2025

Churches play an important role in their communities, offering support to many vulnerable groups. Current legislation expects them to have proper safeguards in place, which is especially vital given their open and inclusive nature. Churches should be safe spaces for all, reflecting the values they teach and promote.

However, the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) has highlighted appalling historic abuse within many institutions, including the church. Ongoing reports of safeguarding failures have led to a serious decline in public confidence. Many now see churches as unsafe places where abusers can hide, and this issue spans denominations.

With around 50,000 churches in the UK and nearly half the population identifying as Christian, the reach of the church in family and community life is significant. When safeguarding fails, the consequences are devastating and long-lasting.

In recent years, many churches have made real progress, working to improve safeguarding and foster safer cultures. Raising local awareness of the importance of safeguarding, and celebrating the positive steps already being taken, are important.

Communicating the importance of safeguarding within congregations, highlighting the actions and measures the church is taking to keep people safe, are vital.

Please ponder these questions:

- Do you know who your church Safeguarding Officer is?
- Do you know where to find your Safeguarding Policy on your church premises?
- Do you know where the safeguarding statement is displayed?
- Do you know who the Regional Safeguarding Officer is and how to contact her?
- Do you know where or who to go to if you want report abuse?
- Do you understand that all church members, not just the safeguarding officer, are responsible for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults who enter their premises?

As a Circuit we continue to work hard to ensure that: -

- the correct training is available,
- DBS checks are up to date,
- the safeguarding policy is readily available and accessible in every church
- the safeguarding statement is visible to all and includes the latest details

On Tuesday 18th November Rev Andrew Pottage (Superintendent Minister), Jane Fisher (Regional Safeguarding Officer), Jill Barnett (Circuit Trainer for Safeguarding), Safeguarding Officers from every church in the circuit, and I will be meeting to share information, understand what is required of our roles and organise new training dates. Please do pray for this meeting.

The Methodist Church affirms that **safeguarding is a shared responsibility**. My message to all is to be vigilant, report concerns, record incidents.

Joyce (Circuit Safeguarding Officer)