

May 2026 Safeguarding Blog

Reflect and respond with an extra twist

Today I received my invitation to the Farrer and Co annual safeguarding conference due to take place in October. It's usually a very stimulating day, capturing what you might call the *zeitgeist*, the current hot topic in the safeguarding world. The speakers are well known in their field, the venue is comfortable – in the offices of the British Medical Association close by Russell Square in central London – and, importantly, the catering is good quality! In case readers are not familiar with Farrer and Co, they are a prestigious law firm who operate a safeguarding unit, which according to their website aims to 'enable organisations to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children or adults in their charge.' If you want to know more about them here is a link to their website <https://www.farrer.co.uk/legal-services/safeguarding-and-child-protection/>. The Methodist Church has engaged Farrer and Co from time to time and several years ago they contributed to the annual safeguarding conference.

This year, they seem to be in reflective mood, looking to take stock of legislative and technological change over the last decade, as well as the learning from safeguarding failures in several sectors. The organisers then posit the question about whether our understanding of organisational responsibilities, risk, culture, and accountability has evolved in the same period, and by inference, are we ready for what might be just over the horizon?

In a far more compact way, this is what we have planned in Lincolnshire in July. The District Safeguarding Group (DSG) is meeting for its own much smaller scale conference – bringing our own sandwiches this time – at which we, too, will probably take some time to reflect on the recent journey of safeguarding in the District, record our learning and then make plans for whatever we know we need to do better and critically, what may lie ahead. We are calling it a strategy day, and it promises to be a useful way to benefit from the learning the recent Connexional audit supplied us with. In due course, later in the year, we will publish the resulting action plan.

'Reflect and Respond' is the title of the small group activity material prepared by the Methodist Survivors' Advisory Group and published early in 2021. Some of you may be familiar with it, and I would strongly commend its use if you wanted to understand more about one key reason why the Church takes its safeguarding responsibilities so seriously. But for the purpose of the strategy day, reflecting, responding and then refreshing our safeguarding plans sounds like a sound idea.

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DSG chair