



The Methodist Church

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Safeguarding in Lincolnshire District

September 1st 2021

Responding Well to Complex Safeguarding issues – a Rapid Response Policy.

Introduction.

Responding well to Safeguarding concerns is outlined in the District policy and Procedures 2021, along with the Responding Well flowchart 2021.

Most safeguarding situations are resolved satisfactorily through collaboration and co-operation. However, from time to time there is a need, given the above, for a more co-ordinated and swift approach to responding well.

This Policy outlines the threshold for such a response and the approach, which will be adopted.

A Rapid Response approach.

A new approach has been found useful and therefore adopted when a safeguarding matter is:

- Complex in nature – a disclosure of abuse or of likely harm and /or;
- Involves a larger number of people who may have been affected and/or
- Clearly requiring a multi-agency approach and/or;
- Likely to affect the vulnerabilities of those working to support and intervene in the situation.

In addition, it has been effective when it has been necessary for people to know more quickly, what roles and responsibilities they need to adopt.

The decision to meet in this way, usually by Zoom, will be taken on discussion with the DSO when a safeguarding matter is first reported/referred.

Case Examples

Domestic abuse allegations – need for decisions about support to all parties, co-ordination with agencies and support for victims.

Person with mental health issues bombarding people with abusive texts and phone messages – need for co-ordinated approach and clarity about consistent responses.

Concern for missing person – no contact with anyone in the church and concern about welfare

Concerns about the behaviour of an office holder – need for sensitive assessment and approach – co-ordination of responses and sensitive care

Rough sleeper – need for consideration of what to do – pastoral v procedural

Practicalities.

The DSO will confirm if a particular situation being reported requires a Rapid Response approach. If so, all relevant parties will be identified who need to attend a rapid response meeting. Given it is expected that meetings will be called a short notice, it may be necessary to prioritise this meeting to allow for making them as efficient as possible.

The DSO will chair the meetings and it will include:

- Information gathering to ensure everyone is clear on the concerns and how they arose;
- Risk assessment – identify risks to each person including the church;
- Discuss options for action – including involvement of agencies;
- Allocation of roles and responsibilities.

Summary notes will be taken off the meeting.

Benefits of Rapid Response approach

Research and experience indicates that the more complex a situation, the more complex decision-making can be in responding. The more overwhelming a situation can feel to manage, the more overwhelmed those involved can get and the more help that is needed, the more help those supporting people need.

Any support in dealing with any safeguarding concern should be more than giving advice about what to do but also about ensuring those offering help are supported, affirmed and in their own right are safeguarded. To do this in complex situations requires early response, a co-ordinated approach and key people involved from the start as much as is possible. To have a clarity of action has proved beneficial in such circumstances.

Review of approach.

This Policy will be reviewed in 12 months to evaluate its effectiveness and make any changes that may be needed, if any.