

Lincolnshire Methodist District

Safeguarding Sessions and Conference 2025



Theme: Embedding a positive safeguarding culture within our churches and related activities -

Making places, people and practice safer

Safeguarding Sessions on Zoom – 30th June to 11th July

Welcome to the 2025 Safeguarding sessions. We started these during the Covid lockdown of 2020 in order to bring people together to not only build a sense of community but also keep people up to date with safeguarding matters during a challenging time. Since then we have continued with them and this year the theme is around how we work together to contribute to a positive safeguarding culture.

Different to previous years, **the sessions are open to everyone, not just office holders**. We know that many who are part of our churches or other activities with no specific role have expressed interest in coming along, so this should be encouraged.

You will note, however, that in the commentary about each safeguarding session, there is indication of some of the key people that should attend because of their role. This does not exempt anyone else from coming to those sessions.

The theme of culture within our churches and related activities emerged especially from the Past Case Review of the Methodist Church, which told us that the culture within any setting promotes, or not, the importance and work of safeguarding.

This year the sessions lead into the District Safeguarding Conference on Saturday 12th July at Moorland Park Methodist Church in Lincoln. Some of the themes in the sessions explored further at the conference with keynote speakers expanding these areas of practice.

Some practicalities:

- All safeguarding sessions are on zoom.
- Please book for the sessions you wish to attend (instructions on last page); you can come along to as many as you wish.
- Some of the sessions are repeated and these will be highlighted in the programme.
- Please don't worry if you choose to come along at the last minute – you would just need to get the zoom code so in such instances contact Howard or Alison.
- The zoom codes for the sessions will come to you nearer the time, even the day before.
- We will endeavor to record some of the sessions with consent.

The District Safeguarding Conference:

This will be held on **SATURDAY 12th JULY from 10am until 4pm at MOORLAND PARK METHODIST CHURCH, LINCOLN, LN6 7RB**

The conference will have three keynote presentations:

Rev Karen Jobson – Trauma Informed Practice – exploring how an understanding of trauma helps us to respond in a more sensitive, appropriate and non- judgmental way seeking to create a culture of improved mental and physical health outcomes.

Neil Hutchinson – Upstander/Bystander training – how everyone can be involved in responding well rather than be on the sidelines especially when challenging the way people behave in the life of the church. An upstander is someone who actively intervenes to support others to prevent bullying and injustice. A bystander is a person who witnesses such situations but does not take action.

Sarah McCarthy and Sarah Simpkin – Survivor led practice – hearing from those with lived experience.

The day will start with a period of devotion including Rev Neil Vickers speaking and liturgy by some of our friends from the Methodist Survivors Group.

The programme of the safeguarding sessions, commentary of each session and details on registration follow.....

	Monday 30 th June	Tuesday 1 st July	Wednesday 2 nd July	Thursday 3 rd July	Friday 4 th July	Saturday 5 th July
10.00 - 11.30am	<p>Responding well to Mental Health:</p> <p>What is mental health and how do we recognise the help needed.</p> <p>See Note 4a</p>	<p>Conflict to collaboration - Coercion to co-operation</p> <p>How do we look after each other in meetings and gatherings? How do we ensure everyone has a voice and no-one controls agendas and activities?</p> <p>How can we change cultures within such settings?</p> <p>See Note 3</p>	<p>Responding well to Mental Health:</p> <p>The stigma of living with mental health</p> <p>“no wonder I didn’t tell anyone if that’s the response you get” *</p> <p>How do we respond with kindness, sensitivity, but still set boundaries and care for the carers?</p> <p>As churches, can we challenge the stigma?</p> <p>*someone asking for help in one of our churches</p> <p>See Note 4b</p>	<p>Domestic abuse - a survivors experience and perspective</p> <p>There is so much we still don’t know about people who are victim survivors of domestic abuse and how we need to respond well.</p> <p>Sarah Simpkin shares her own lived experience.</p> <p>NB: There is a vivid account of Sarah’s experience for about 10 minutes in the session. Please take care of yourself.</p> <p>See Note 5b</p>	<p>Unconscious bias mandatory for some roles - (see notes)</p> <p>Led by Tim Annan – Leaning Network</p> <p>Opportunity for all those who have still to complete this training to do so in this session</p> <p>See Note 6</p>	<p>Unconscious bias mandatory for some roles - (see notes)</p> <p>led by Tim Annan – Leaning Network</p> <p>Opportunity for all those who have still to complete this training to do so in this session</p> <p>See Note 6</p>

	Monday 30 th June	Tuesday 1 st July	Wednesday 2 nd July	Thursday 3 rd July	Friday 4 th July	Saturday 5 th July
2.00 – 3.30pm		<p>Responding well to survivors.</p> <p>How do we balance the response to those who have hurt people with those who have been hurt?</p> <p>Sarah McCarthy and Vivien Almond</p> <p>See notes 5a</p>				
7.00 – 8.30pm	<p>Safer Safeguarding - Making lessons from practice work for us</p> <p>We have had local cases, national cases, independent inquiries at government level and the voices of survivors heard at last</p> <p>We want to embrace the learning and help to change our cultures.</p> <p>Lessons shared and discussed</p> <p>See Note 1</p>	<p>Domestic abuse from a survivors experience and perspective</p> <p>There is so much we still don't know about people who are victim survivors of domestic abuse and how we need to respond well.</p> <p>Sarah Simpkin shares her own experience.</p> <p>NB: There is a vivid account of Sarah's experience for about 10 minutes in the session. Please take care of yourself.</p> <p>See Note 5b</p>	<p>Pastoral Visitors and Pastoral coordinators workshop</p> <p>Ensuring people are clear in both roles, how we respond well, be clear about boundaries and know how to pass on concerns.</p> <p>Work to implement the Pastoral Guidance 2025</p> <p>See Note 2</p>	<p>Responding well to survivors.</p> <p>How do we balance the response to those who have hurt people with those who have been hurt?</p> <p>This session will include a look at Methodist Resources to help us with this.</p> <p>Sarah McCarthy and Vivien Almond</p> <p>See Note 5a</p>	<p>Responding well to Mental Health:</p> <p>Companionship & Care</p> <p>What can churches do, how should they do it and can the culture of the churches be sensitive to all?</p> <p>See Note 4c</p>	

	Monday 7 th July	Tuesday 8 th July	Wednesday 9 th July	Thursday 10 th July	Friday 11 th July	Saturday 12 th July
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2.00 – 3.30pm	<p>Responding well to Mental Health</p> <p>Self-Care</p> <p>See Note 4d</p>	<p>Responding well to Mental Health</p> <p>Companionship & care</p> <p>What can churches do, how should they do it and can the culture of the churches be sensitive to all?</p> <p>See Note 4c</p>	<p>Responding well to Mental Health</p> <p>Self-Care</p> <p>See Note 4d</p>	<p>Unconscious bias mandatory for some roles - see notes)</p> <p>Led by Tim Annan – Leaning Network</p> <p>Opportunity for all those who have still to complete this training to do so in this session</p>		

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Commentary

1 Safer Safeguarding – making lessons from practice work for us

This is a particularly important session for those in leadership of any kind, including ministers, local preachers, worship leaders and lay workers.

We aim to be a learning organisation. To understand the things that work well in safeguarding and those that need to be worked on allows us to work toward keeping people and places safer. A lot has been happening and it is the responsible thing to embrace those things that we can interpret for our own work and look to implement them together.

This session looks at learning and understanding of how we embed safer safeguarding within our work and ministry in the District and beyond.

2 Pastoral Visitors and Coordinators workshop

Everyone is welcome to this session but it is especially important for those who are currently pastoral visitors and/or pastoral coordinators, or who wish to be in the future. The session builds on the learning we have had in this District on the challenges for these roles, which led to the development of the District Pastoral Guidance, suggested by and written for Pastoral Visitors and coordinators.

The session helps to clarify the role of Pastoral visitors and looks at the challenges of keeping boundaries, maintaining clarity about their role and knowing how to respond to concerns. The role of Pastoral Co-coordinator works in different ways across the District and it will be good to bring some clarity and consistency.

The session will be certificated to all those who attend.

3 Conflict to collaboration – Coercion to co-operation

Everyone is welcome to this session especially those who chair meetings, attend meetings, lead activities or attend activities.

Have you ever had a bit of conflict within a church council meeting? What do we do if in meeting together for any reason, we have to manage different opinions and views but still respect each other in any final decision or view? How we can make sure the purpose of any of our meetings is honoured and we achieve necessary outcomes.

These sessions will be led by NEIL HUTCHINSON, the training and development Manager in Northampton Methodist District and will look at these issues. A safe culture is about people feeling safe in meetings, feeling safe to speak, feeling safe to contribute – going home glad to have been a part of the work and ministry of the church.

4 Responding well to Mental Health

These sessions have been requested by a number of people in the District as means to have a safe space to explore and reflect on how best to respond to those living with mental health issues. It is often a pastoral challenge given that we would want to help in the best ways possible but sometimes might feel we are not putting boundaries in place as we should.

These sessions are affiliated to, and accredited by, Sanctuary Mental Health Ministries and we will look at the stigma of mental health and illness, compassion and caregiving, and help with some definitions. In a safe space, we will be able to consider real life case studies and think through how we would respond to others in the best and safe ways.

The session will be certificated.

There are several sessions – people can attend any or all:

- a) **What is mental health and how do we recognise the help needed** for ourselves in our work and ministry so we can walk alongside people;
- b) **The stigma of living with mental health** and especially how we create a non-judgemental, safe space for people to be open and honest;
- c) **Companionship & Care** – what this means for those who need people to understand, listen and be kind and how do we offer it safely.
- d) **Self-care** – how we help others and ourselves to look after everyone whilst keeping boundaries clear;

5 Responding well to victims and survivors

All of these sessions will be led by/ involve the Methodist Survivors Group who have contributed to the planning of these sessions. We are looking at a number of relevant themes, which emerge constantly, in ensuring we respond well, respectfully and sensitively to those hurt.

There are two repeated sessions:

- a) **Responding well to survivors** - churches take sides, can get divided and go through the equivalent of the grief cycle when any concerns of a serious nature arise. How do we balance the response to those who have hurt people with those who have been hurt? We have learned that responding well to these challenges often leaves victim survivors out of the considerations of care and support in favour of others. This session helps to understand the importance of getting through all this without losing sight of those who have been hurt. In addition this session will help us understand how to implement survivor resources available to us from the Methodist Church to make people aware of the ways we can affirm victim survivors i.e. our use of language, our attitude and values to survivors, our shaping of worship, being sensitive in all our events and planning.
- b) **Domestic abuse – a survivor experience** – we know there is still a lot to understand about the impact of domestic abuse on individuals and wider family. This is a personal account by Sarah Simpkin of her lived experience which will help us to have safe discussions about not only the nature of domestic abuse but how to respond. **PLEASE NOTE: There is a vivid account of Sarah's experience for about 10 minutes in the session. Please take care of yourself.**

6 **Unconscious bias** – only one session needs to be attended

These sessions are mandatory for certain roles but everyone is welcome to attend. The session will be led by Tim Annan from the Learning Network and is part of the implementation of Justice Dignity and Strategy of the Methodist church. Most people have now done the EDI training within the District but may not yet have done this course.

NB – if you have already done this training in your church or Circuit, you do not need to attend these sessions.

This session will be certificated

Mandatory people to attend are:

1. All ministers (including Superintendents and District Chairs)
2. Local Preachers
3. Connexional Committee members
4. Connexional Team members
5. Church, Circuit and District Safeguarding Officers
6. Circuit stewards and church stewards
7. Lay Workers:
 - a) Lay Pastoral Workers b) Children, Youth and Family Workers c) Pioneers
8. Worship Leaders

Registration:

Please register for the sessions you wish to attend and the Saturday Conference via a Google form which can be found at <https://forms.gle/Loso8eRDKjL6zFqT7> . The same form can be found by using the QR Code:

Alternatively phone 01522 370126 or email PA@lincolnshiremethodist.org.uk stating your name, church, phone number, email address and the name, time and date of the sessions you'd like to attend.

