Terms of Reference – District Safeguarding Group

North West England District

Connexional Years 2025 - 2028

Document Management

Version	Year	Amendments Made
1.	2024-25	Adopted by the District Policy Committee 9.9.24

Terms of Reference - District Safeguarding Group (DSG)
North West England District (NWED)
Connexional Years 2025 – 2028

1 Purpose

1.1 *Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church in Britain*[1] demands that the District Chair and the District Policy Committee provide support and oversight for NWED in implementing safeguarding policies and procedures in local churches, circuits and church communities.

1.2 The DSG is the group established to deliver this support and oversight and is responsible for the strategic development of safeguarding, in line with local and national requirements. It is also responsible for understanding local safeguarding need and for responding to and reviewing policy and procedural queries.

1.3 The DSG is also a crucial element in terms of governance of safeguarding as they have a key role in modelling healthy cultures in their geographic areas.

2 Governance

2.1 The joint DSG is accountable to the District Policy Committee, and will report, as a minimum, once a year, to the first DPC of each new connexional year.

2.2 The District Policy Committee will review the effectiveness of the DSG against the current Terms of Reference, the Safeguarding Standards and in the light of the annual written report.

> ***For further information see:***
>
> **Appendix 1– Methodist Safeguarding Governance**
>
> **Appendix 2– NWED Safeguarding Governance**

3 Membership

3.1 The DSG will be overseen by a Chair with sufficient independence to allow appropriate challenge and to act as a critical friend.

3.2 The District Chair/ deputy chair/ secretary of the Admin & Compliance Hub and the District Safeguarding Officers (DSOs) are members by virtue of their roles.

3.3 The Safeguarding Team administrator or an administrator from the Administration & Compliance Hub will act as note taker/zoom coordinator for every meeting.

[1] Policies and guidance (methodist.org.uk)

3.4 Core members

The DSG would seek to recruit nine core members as outlined below:

Role/member	Required attendance	Period of membership
The Independent Chair	Every meeting	3 years, with an option to extend by a further 3 years
The Chair of District/ Secretary for Administration and Compliance/ other identified representative	Every meeting	For duration of appointment
The District Safeguarding Officers (*x 4*)	Every meeting	For duration of appointment
A representative of the Learning Network	At least annually	Ongoing
Someone to represent the views of survivors	Every meeting	3 years, with an option to extend by a further 3 years
A representative of pioneers/NPNP	At least annually	Ongoing
Plus administrator	Every meeting *In attendance only*	Ongoing

3.5 Other members

The DSG would seek to recruit from each of the four Mission Areas a representative with specific/key roles:

Minister	This may be a mission area lead, superintendent, presbyter, deacon or active supernumerary
Safeguarding officer	This may be a circuit safeguarding officer, church safeguarding officer or a safeguarding trainer
Lay employee	This may be a lay pastor, a lay pastoral worker, an employed Children, Youth & Family Worker, or other in a relevant paid role.
Other church/ circuit volunteer	This may be a member of church council/ circuit meeting, a local preacher/worship leader, or other who is active in a church/circuit even if they are in no formal role but who evidences an interest in safeguarding.

3.6 At least two of the above members must have/have had a professional background in safeguarding such as within police, probation, education, children's and/or adults' services, health or legal services.

3.7 The DSG should also include at least one member with lived experience as a victim/ survivor of abuse to ensure that the perspectives and needs of this important group are taken into consideration. The DSO or another DSG member will offer them support as required to ensure their full participation is facilitated.

3.7 Recruitment and appointment to all relevant roles, including that of Independent Chair, will be led by the District Chair/deputy chair/secretary of the Administration & Compliance Hub or DSOs, with support from existing DSG members, and all roles are subject to safer recruitment principles.

3.8 To ensure continuity, a minimum commitment of 3 years would be required.

3.9 Thereafter, membership will be reviewed at the first meeting of every connexional year and those who wish to resign at the end of that connexional year will declare it then, in order to allow sufficient time to recruit from the relevant Mission Area(s).

3.10 Should any member be unable to continue in their role on the DSG for any reason, it would be the responsibility of the relevant Mission Area lead, together with the aligned DSO, to recruit appropriately and as soon as possible.

3.11 Membership is on a voluntary, unpaid basis although reasonable expenses can be claimed.

> ***For further information see:***
>
> Appendix 2: Role Description and Person Specification for Independent Chair of the NWED DSG
>
> Appendix 3: Role Description and Person Specification for Member of the NWED DSG

4 Meetings

4.1 The group will meet at least three times a year and dates will be set prior to the start of the forthcoming Connexional year.

4.2 Within CPD (The Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church) there is no quoracy for church, circuit or district meetings therefore the Independent Chair may elect to cancel a meeting if they deem that numbers/representation is insufficient to permit the business of the meeting.

4.3 The aligned Learning and Development Officer of the Learning Network will be invited to every meeting and would be expected to attend at least one meeting annually.

4.4 The Independent Chair, together with the aligned DSO, will agree the agenda and ensure this is sent to all members, via the allocated note taker, together with all necessary accompanying papers, no less than 10 days before the meeting.

4.5 The Independent Chair will receive and sign off the meeting notes no more than 10 days after the meeting, prior to dissemination to DSG members.

5 Responsibilities of the DSG

5.1 To provide strategic oversight of safeguarding activity across NWED through awareness of and response to local data, as outlined within the District Safeguarding Standards and to identify potential areas of risk or changes in priority.

5.2 To lead the effective implementation of safeguarding policy across all district activities through support, collaboration, communication, information, local audit and training.

5.3 Members may be invited to support the work of Monitoring & Support Groups within the Safeguarding Contract process.

5.4 To develop an action plan to guide its work and provide activity data (e.g. implementation of training and church safeguarding policy compliance) to demonstrate implementation and improvement plans.

5.5 To review these terms of reference at least 3-yearly.

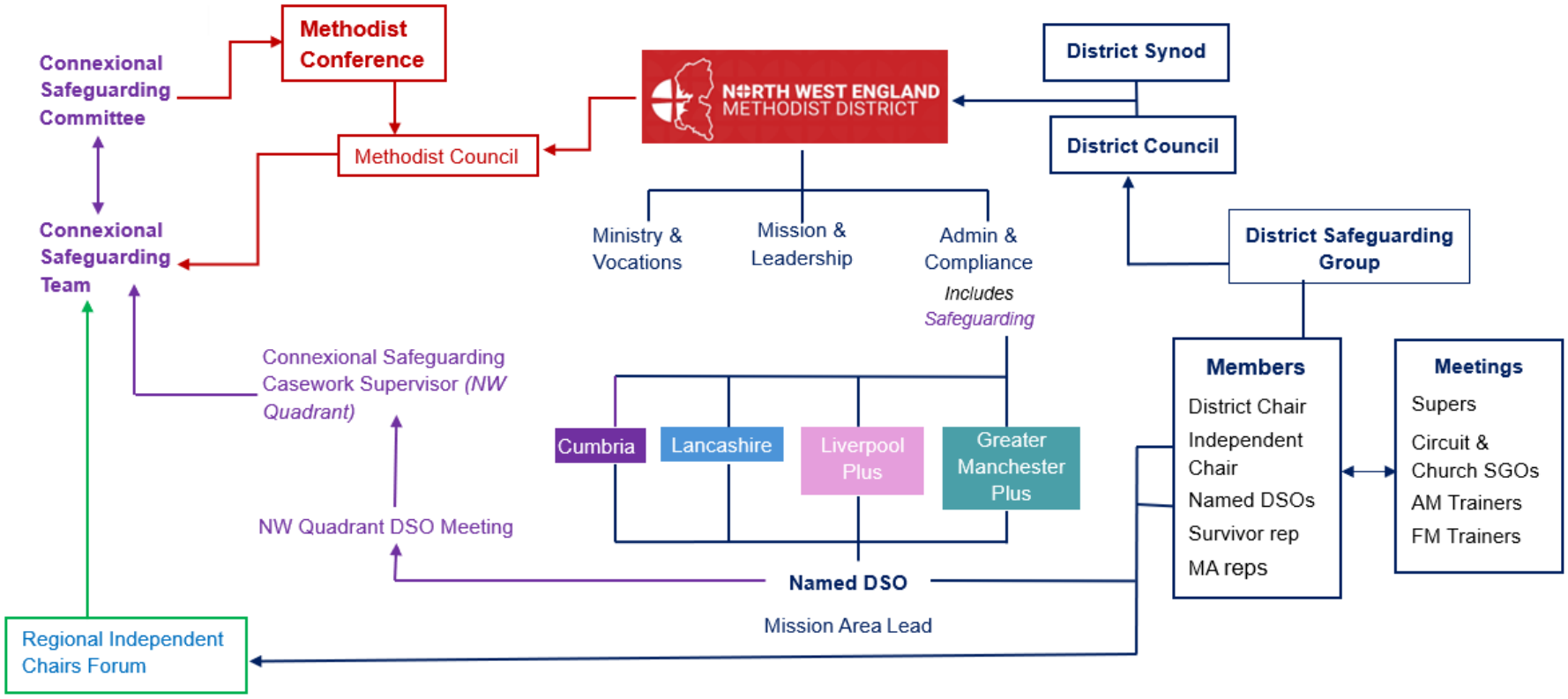
For further information see:

North West England District Safeguarding Policy *relevant Connexional Year*

North West England District Safeguarding Standards *Connexional Year 2024 – 2025*

Signed: ***District Chair***	JWTebbutt
Print name:	Revd Dr James N Tebbutt
Dated:	9.9.24
Date for review: September 2028	

Appendix 1 – NWED Safeguarding Governance



Key

AM	Advanced Module safeguarding training
FM	Foundation Module safeguarding training
SGO	Safeguarding Officer

Appendix 2

Role Description: **Independent Chair of the North West England District (NWED)** **District Safeguarding Group (DSG)**	
Accountable to	The District Policy Committee
Key Relationships	The District Chair, the District Safeguarding Officers (DSO), Members of the DSG
Term of appointment	Initially for three years, with a further extension of three years thereafter following discussion
Commitment	There is a minimum of three meetings per annum, usually held in the evenings.
Renumeration	Although no salary is paid for this role, costs and expenses will be agreed prior to appointment
Background	*Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church in Britain*[2] demands that the District Chair and the District Policy Committee provide support and oversight for NWED in implementing safeguarding policies and procedures in local churches, circuits and church communities. The DSG is the group established to deliver this support and oversight and is responsible for the strategic development of safeguarding, in line with local and national requirements. It is also responsible for understanding local safeguarding need and for responding to and reviewing policy and procedural queries.
Role Purpose	The DSG is guided by a Chair with sufficient independence to allow unbiased scrutiny, act as a critical friend, support and encourage as appropriate, but also to provide appropriate challenge as necessary.
Role Description	To ensure the DSG discharges its role and functions in line with the terms of reference and Safeguarding Standards. To work closely with the DSO(s) and District Chair to ensure the group maintains a clear strategic oversight of safeguarding across NWED in accordance with the most current version of Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church in Britain[3]. To provide effective leadership to the DSG, including agreeing the agenda for meetings with the DSO(s). To approve the minutes of meetings and ensure responsibilities for action are allocated and subsequently carried out.

[2] Policies and guidance (methodist.org.uk)
[3] Policies and guidance (methodist.org.uk)

	To ensure that appropriate quality assurance and risk management processes are established and reviewed regularly to enable recommendations to be made for improving safeguarding arrangements. To ensure that the DSG considers the needs and views of survivors, children, young people and vulnerable adults in its work. To engage in the Independent Chairs' national and regional network meetings and the annual Safeguarding Conference as able. To engage in the full range of appropriate Methodist training, including Foundation and Advanced Safeguarding Modules, EDI and unconscious bias.

Person Specification for: Independent Chair of NWED District Safeguarding Group (DSG)

Qualifications, Knowledge and Experience	**Essential/ Desirable**	**How assessed***
Relevant up to date training in child and adult safeguarding at an advanced level	E	App
Knowledge of working with confidential materials subject to GDPR	E	App, IV
Required Skills, Abilities and Competencies		
A confident and empowering leadership style with the ability to strategically plan, manage and chair meetings effectively and influence to build capacity and confidence in safeguarding.	E	App, IV
Able to identify examples of poor practices and ensure that necessary change is implemented.	E	App, IV
Excellent interpersonal and communication skills - written, oral and presentational.	E	App, IV
Other		
In sympathy with the objectives, aims and ethos of the Methodist Church	E	IV
Awareness of structure of the Methodist Church and its safeguarding policies and processes	D	IV
Appreciation of, and commitment to, diversity in all its forms	E	IV

* **App** Application form **IV** Interview **Ref** References **Cert** Certificate

Appendix 3

Role Description: **Member of the North West England District (NWED) District Safeguarding Group (DSG)**	
Responsible to	Independent Chair of the DSG, Chair of District
Key Relationships	District Safeguarding Officers, other members of the DSG
Term of appointment	Reviewed annually but to ensure continuity a minimum of 3 years would be required
Renumeration	Although no salary is paid for this role, costs and expenses will be agreed prior to appointment
Background	*Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church in Britain*[4] demands that the District Chair and the District Council/District Policy Committee provide support and oversight for NWED in implementing safeguarding policies and procedures in local churches and circuits. The DSG is the group established to deliver this support and oversight and is responsible for the strategic development of safeguarding, in line with local and national requirements. It is also responsible for understanding local safeguarding need and for responding to and reviewing policy and procedural queries.
Role Purpose	To support the work of the DSG, including taking a key role in specific strands of activity or individual pieces of work, and to support the work of Monitoring & Support Groups within the Safeguarding Contract process, where appropriate. To engage in the full range of appropriate Methodist training, including Foundation and Advanced Safeguarding Modules, EDI and unconscious bias.

[4] Policies and guidance (methodist.org.uk)

Person Specification for Member of the North West England District (NWED) District Safeguarding Group (DSG)		
Qualifications, Knowledge and Experience	**Essential/ Desirable**	**How assessed***
Relevant up to date training in child and/or adult safeguarding as a minimum at advanced level, or achieved within 6/12 of becoming a member	E	App
Knowledge of working with confidential materials subject to GDPR	E	App, IV
Knowledge and/or experience of safeguarding either professionally, personally or within the church	D	App, IV
Other		
An active minister/member of the Methodist Church within NWED **OR**	E	App
Someone in sympathy with the objectives, aims and ethos of the Methodist Church		
A desire to drive up the quality of safeguarding in the churches, circuits and church communities within NWED	E	IV

* **App** Application form **IV** Interview **Ref** References