

Safeguarding Update

for Superintendents, Circuit and Church Safeguarding Officers and Trainers –
June 2024



1. Policy updates – reminder

1.1 Victims and survivors

Policy and guidance for working with victims and survivors- November 2023

The policy outlines the types of support we can offer to victims and survivors and what they should be able to expect from their contact with the Methodist Church.

[policy-and guidance for-working with victims and survivors-v5-nov 2023.pdf](#)

Survivors Policy - A Short guide for victims and survivors - November 2023

A supporting short guide to the document, summarising the full document, written directly for victims and survivors.

[survivors policy-a short guide-v4-nov 2023.pdf](#)

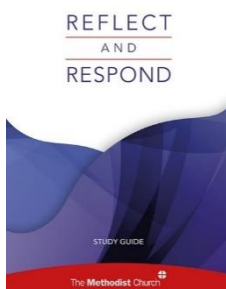
Supporting survivors of abuse

[Safeguarding Survivors Study Guide](#)



The leaflet summarises the Church’s Safeguarding policy in relation to survivors, but more critically explains to those with lived experience what they should expect as a response to their concerns and how to make contact with an appropriate source of initial advice and guidance.

The study guide examines the lived experience of survivors of abuse and relates them to Our Calling.



The guide includes case study material, words of reflection and questions.

The stories of survivors include their relationship with the local church and its impact on their lives. It also focuses on what the Church and individual churches could do better to:

- support those who have been abused
- prevent abuse happening in the future

2. Connexional updates

Access to Safeguarding Training 'Trainers' pages'

Those trainers among you may have noticed that the Safeguarding Trainer webpages have now been moved over to the new connexional website and remain password protected for the appropriate groups.

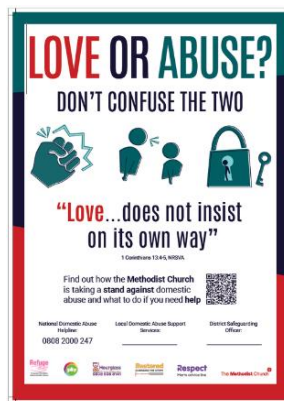
[Advanced Module 2023 Edition](#)

You should be able to log onto the above password protected pages using the existing passwords and no username is required but if you have any difficulties, please let Helen know.

[Foundation Module 2020 Edition \(Modified 2022\)](#)

Domestic Abuse Poster

The English poster with the national Domestic Abuse number for England is available to download.



[Safeguarding Domestic Abuse Poster](#)

Domestic Abuse Study Series

6-Part Group Study Series

[The Bible Doesn't Tell Us So](#)

In an average year, 5.5% of adults in the UK experience domestic abuse. Sadly, the figures are almost identical within UK churches of denomination.

In churches, as in the general population, financial, psychological, and family factors may combine to trap people in abusive situations. However, when domestic abuse occurs in a church setting, there are additional complexities.

We now have a resource that is aimed at equipping our churches to recognise and challenge domestic abuse and coercive control. It is made up of six video sessions for group study and is based on the book of the same name by Revd Dr Helen Paynter, Director of the [Centre for the Study of Bible & Violence \(csbvbristol.org.uk\)](http://csbvbristol.org.uk).



[Your Faith, Your Online World \(thinkific.com\)](http://thinkific.com)

This multi-denominational project, aimed to support young people across the U.K. was launched in March and provides a free guidance pack tailored for UK Church youth leaders, which aims to empower them to facilitate meaningful discussions within their groups, guiding individuals to explore the essence of faith while navigating the complexities of the online world.

3. Webinars



Harmful sexual behaviour

[Preventing Sexually Harmful Behaviour of young people](#)

The Association for Child and Adolescent Mental Health (ACAMH) has published a recording of its webinar on harmful sexual behaviour (HSB). The webinar focuses on the work of the Lucy Faithfull Foundation in preventing HSB, looking at two different initiatives.



The role of faith communities in nurturing a child's faith today

[Webinar: Will our children have faith in post pandemic times? - CYM](#)

The Institute for Children, Youth and Mission have provided a Webinar recording entitled - *Will our children have faith in post pandemic times?*

Within this, they examine the role of faith communities in nurturing a child's faith today and consider the implications for ministry practice in a world changed by pandemic experiences.

4. Safeguarding news and updates



Physical Abuse

[Give children equal protection from physical abuse | NSPCC](#)

The NSPCC has published a news story on physical punishment which calls for equal protection from physical abuse for children. Findings from a YouGov poll of 3,559 adults in England show that:

- 60% think physical punishment has a negative impact on a child's mental health
- 55% think physical punishment weakens the relationship between parent and child



Data also shows that in 2023/24, Childline delivered 717 counselling sessions to children with concerns about physical punishment.

Children's screen time

[Stronger guidance and controls needed to protect children from screen time, Education Committee finds - Committees - UK Parliament](#)

The House of Commons Education Committee has published a report on the impact of screen time on children's educational outcomes and wellbeing. It looks at the effects of screen time on children's mental and physical health, as well as on their education.

It also considers:

- mobile phone use in schools
- support for parents
- the digital literacy curriculum
- the Online Safety Act.

Recommendations include:

- that the Government should do more to protect children from addiction, online harms and the mental health impacts of extensive use of digital devices
- introduce formal monitoring to measure the implementation and effects of a mobile phone ban in schools in England.

Cyberflashing

[Girls' experiences of cyberflashing: images that can't be unseen – Parenting for a Digital Future \(lse.ac.uk\)](#)

The London School of Economics (LSE) has published a new Parenting for a Digital Future blog post on girls' experiences of cyberflashing. The blog discusses a study looking at how children use the terms 'cyberbullying' and 'nudes' and explores the minimisation of gender-based digital sexual violence. The blog also looks at the prevalence of cyberflashing and the impact this has on girls.

Updated posters

[Childline posters | NSPCC Learning](#)

Updated posters are now available for children of primary and secondary school ages. The poster for Report Remove has also been updated to encourage children and young people to use this tool to get help removing nude images shared online.



Podcast - IICSA recommendations [Recommendations for Change: IICSA | NSPCC Learning](#)

NSPCC five-part podcast series exploring the recommendations made in the final report of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA).

1. Introduction to IICSA
2. The importance of data
3. Children in care
4. Online safety
5. The criminal justice system

Barriers when reporting child abuse and neglect [insight-briefing.pdf](#)

NSPCC Learning has published a Helplines insight briefing on barriers for professionals when reporting child abuse and neglect, based on contacts to the NSPCC Helpline and NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line in 2022/23 by people working or volunteering with children and young people.

Issues include:

- gaps in knowledge and confidence for some professionals
- believing they needed to wait for permission to report concerns
- not always confident that concerns were “serious enough” or had enough detail to share with others
- concern that speaking out could put the young person at further risk or could compromise their own safety
- concern about the impact of raising safeguarding concerns about their workplace
- around sharing concerns
- worries about disrupting or breaking up families
- fears for personal safety
- organisational issues e.g. lack of safeguarding processes and concealing of abuse

Why language matters

[Why language matters: how referring to online 'friends' can mask safeguarding concerns | NSPCC Learning](#)

This blog discusses how the term could mask safeguarding concerns and explores changes in language that we can make to reflect the voice of the child and describe concerns.

Key points

- Children sometimes refer to people they meet online as their 'friends,' even though they know little about these people or the potential or actual risk they pose.
- Groomers often seek to befriend and gain the trust of children online as part of the grooming process.
- When a child or young person describes someone who they met online as their 'friend,' dig a little deeper into the dynamic of the relationship.
- When talking to others about the relationship between the child and online person, use language that reflects the voice of the child and accurately describes any safeguarding concerns that may be present.



Podcast - online safety and
child sexual/ abuse

['In Conversation With' Podcast](#)

This podcast discusses new research into offenders' use of end-to-end encrypted apps to contact children or share and find child sexual abuse imagery.

For more information see:

[The future we want for the internet? Child sexual abuse, offenders, and the apps they use to avoid detection \(iwf.org.uk\)](#)

Annual report

[IWF Insights into Online Child Sexual Abuse Trends in 2023](#)

The IWF has published its annual report analysing the trends and data around child sexual abuse material online in 2023. Findings from reports to the IWF show:

- 275,652 webpages were confirmed as containing child sexual abuse imagery
- there was a 25% increase in the number of images involving children aged 7-10 years old
- of the 275,652 webpages actioned during 2023, 92% were assessed as containing 'self-generated' imagery.

[Under sixes manipulated into 'disturbing' sexual abuse](#)

Child sexual extortion

[Teenage boys targeted as increase in child sextortion reports](#)

New IWF data on child sexual extortion report shows that in 2023:

- IWF analysts confirmed 176 reports of sexual extortion that contained child sexual abuse material, eight times as many as the previous year
- boys were targeted most often in the reports received by the IWF
- three in five reports involved 16-and 17-year-olds.

Sexually coerced extortion or child 'sextortion' is a type of blackmail usually involving a threat to share intimate or naked photos or videos to coerce a young person to pay money, share further images or do something else against their will.



Children's experiences of
harmful content online

[Protection of children online,
research - Ofcom](#)

Ofcom has published three new research reports on children's experiences of harmful content online exploring:

- violent content
- content related to suicide, self-harm and eating disorders
- cyberbullying

The reports look at children's routes to harmful content and highlight a lack of trust and confidence by children and young people in safety measures and tools to report harmful online content. These research reports will form part of the evidence base used by Ofcom to draft new codes of practice to help tech firms meet their responsibilities to keep children safer online under the [Online Safety Act 2023](#).

For more information see:

[Our proposed measures to improve children's online safety - Ofcom](#)

Ofcom Consultation

[Protecting people from illegal harms online](#)

Ofcom has launched a consultation and published draft codes of practice for social media and other online services to help improve online safety for children.

Proposed measures include:

- robust age-checks to stop children accessing harmful content
- preventing algorithms from sharing harmful content with children
- improving the moderation of content.

[Children and Parents: media use and attitudes report 2024](#)

Risks and impact of online harms

[Children's Media Lives](#)

Ofcom has published two reports looking at children's media habits and attitudes across the UK in 2023/24. The findings from the *children and parents: media use and attitudes project* are based on online surveys with children and parents. The children's *media lives* longitudinal study involved interviews with and observation of 21 8- 17-year-olds.

Key findings from both reports show

- 5- to 7-year-olds are becoming increasingly present online
- compared to boys, girls are more likely to say they have experienced 'nasty or hurtful' interactions in some online spaces
- children across all age groups perform potentially risky behaviours online
- children's caution about what they share publicly online has increased
- young people are finding it harder to identify what information to trust on social media compared to last year.

For more information see:

[A window into young children's online worlds](#)



Online safety resource

[New interactive learning resource from Childnet](#)

The UK Safer Internet Centre has developed an online safety resource alongside the Childnet Youth Advisory Board. The interactive resource "*Reliability Online*" helps to teach children about what they can trust when they are online and covers risks such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) generated imagery, scams, and body image.

It is aimed at young people aged 13 – 16-year-olds but can be adapted for use with older or younger learners.

Impact of Safer Internet Day 2024

[Impact Report](#)

The UK Safer Internet Centre has published a report examining the impact of Safer Internet Day 2024 in the UK.

Findings from children aged 8- to 17 show that as a result of the day

- 77% of young people reported feeling more confident about what to do if something was worrying them online
- 76% said that they had learnt something new about online safety.



Financially motivated sexual extortion

[Support with responding to sextortion incidents](#)

The UK Safer Internet Centre has published new guidance on financially motivated sexual extortion or 'sextortion'. The page provides advice, resources and tools designed to help professionals, parents, carers and young people, including information on how to report and escalate incidents.

theguardian

Podcast

[How do we protect teenagers from sextortion scams?](#)

The Guardian has published a podcast episode on financially motivated sexual extortion or 'sextortion'. The podcast discusses the issue in relation to the death of a 16-year-old boy who was blackmailed by a criminal gang after he shared a sexual image, believing he was talking to a girl. It discusses what could be done to better protect children. The Guardian has also published a news story with information for parents on how to help and the signs to look out for.

For further information see the following article:

[How can parents protect their children from sextortion?](#)

Artificial Intelligence

[Can AI image generators be policed to prevent explicit deepfakes of children? | Artificial intelligence \(AI\) | The Guardian](#)

The Guardian has published an article on Artificial Intelligence (AI) generated child sexual abuse material (CSAM) looking at how AI image generators are regulated. The article analyses the risks associated with the technology and approaches to preventing AI-generated CSAM such as filtering generating images.



Criminally Exploited Children

[The Jay Review of Criminally Exploited Children](#)

Action for Children have published their powerful report Criminally Exploited Children - Shattered Lives, Stolen Futures.

It follows a review they commissioned at the end of last year, chaired by Professor Alexis Jay OBE, focusing on how policy and practice can better prevent and respond to this growing issue, which affects the lives of tens of thousands of young people.

Key learning highlights include:

- the need for a clear and consistent definition of the criminal exploitation of children
- tensions between the criminal justice system and child protection, with the criminalisation of exploited children
- difficulties in identifying, preventing and responding to exploitation

The review calls for a single, cohesive legal code designed to tackle the criminal exploitation of children.



Child sexual abuse [Child sexual abuse in institutional contexts](#)

The Crime Survey for England and Wales 2019 found that for one in 10 adults who had been sexually abused in childhood, the abuse had been carried out by a person in a position of trust or authority.

Child sexual abuse in institutional settings, like schools, sports clubs, health institutions, and religious groups, has been highlighted in a number of shocking high-profile cases leading to the establishment of the Independent Inquiry on Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA).

The Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse has summarised the most up-to-date research on abuse in institutions into a short, accessible paper to aid the development of knowledge and understanding, cultures and dynamics to enable all of us working with children and young people to prevent and respond to any concerns with confidence.



Podcast

[The relationship between cognitive and affective control and adolescent mental health](#)

The Association for Child and Adolescent Mental Health (ACAMH) has published a new podcast episode on adolescent mental health. The podcast discusses a recent research paper on cognitive and affective control, associations with depressive symptoms and implications for interventions for adolescent mental health.



Service directory

[Services Supporting Families of Child Sexual Abuse Material Offending](#)

In 2021, there were over 850 arrests across the UK for viewing sexual images of under-18's every single month.

Many of the people arrested have children of their own or contact with children in their wider family. Compared to people convicted of other forms of sexual offending, research suggests that people who view sexual images of under-18s are more likely to be married and have children.

A number of child protection and law enforcement agencies have teamed up to produce an easy-access service directory to guide partners or family members of people who have been arrested for viewing sexual images of under-18s to find support and information.

You can read more here: [Further information](#)

You can also access an article from the Guardian here:

['My 17-year-old son was arrested for sharing child abuse images – he said it was a relief'](#)



Situational crime prevention

[Situational Prevention Final.pdf](#)

The Lucy Faithfull Foundation has published a new paper on the role of situational crime prevention in preventing child sexual abuse in the UK.

Situational prevention focuses on making environments safer to deter people who might offend.

This paper looks at the theory behind this approach and presents practical examples including community-based responses



Gender identity services

[Final Report – Cass Review](#)

Dr Hilary Cass has published the final report of the independent review of gender identity services for children and young people.

The review, commissioned by NHS England, sets out what is known about the young people who are seeking NHS support around their gender identity.

The review makes recommendations on how services and treatments should be delivered to support children and young people questioning their gender identity or experiencing gender dysphoria.



Mandatory reporting duty

[Mandatory Reporting Consultation+Response.pdf](#)

The Government has published its response to the consultation on introducing a mandatory duty in England to report child sexual abuse. It summarises themes arising from consultation responses, sets out proposals for the new duty, and outlines next steps. The Government intends to introduce the duty as an amendment to the Criminal Justice Bill.



Physical Punishment

[Equal protection from assault in England and Northern Ireland: Prohibiting physical punishment of all children | RCPCH](#)

The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) has published a new report calling for the physical punishment of children in England and Northern Ireland to be prohibited. The report sets out the health, education and legal case for reform, providing evidence on the negative impact of physical punishment on children and the safeguarding challenges posed by current legislation. It calls for the removal of the “reasonable punishment” legal defence in England and Northern Ireland and makes key recommendations for policy makers.



5. Circuit and church safeguarding officers meeting - Safeguarding in the new North West England District

As this will be the last such meeting for the Bolton & Rochdale and Manchester & Stockport districts I propose to open this out to all of those within our churches and circuits who hold safeguarding responsibility. So if you are a Superintendent, a minister in pastoral charge, a circuit or church safeguarding officer or a safeguarding trainer you will be most welcome to join this zoom meeting.

To be held: **Wednesday 10th July from 19.30**

Zoom link:

<https://zoom.us/j/4724292071?pwd=eFJMUjJnUkVSZVd1RUdpbJYsXN0QT09>

Meeting ID: 472 429 2071

Passcode: 788238

I will endeavour to update you as far as I am able about what the safeguarding service across the new district may look like. Therefore, if you have any questions queries or comments that you feel should form part of this conversation please let me know soon as possible.

6. How you can support safeguarding in the new North West England District

Would you consider joining the District Safeguarding Group for the new North West England District?

Would you like to help us to help us drive forward safeguarding activity within the new District?

Do you have a desire to drive up the quality of safeguarding within the churches and circuits within the new District?

Do you have knowledge and/or experience of safeguarding either professionally, personally or within the church?

Could you volunteer to support this very important District activity?

Then we would really love to hear from you!

You may have experience of safeguarding within the church, perhaps as a safeguarding officer or trainer, as a Monitoring and Support Group Member or an experienced minister.

We are particularly looking for people who bring specific experience, such as those who work with domestic abuse services or with survivors, those who work with perpetrators or have worked in, for example, social care services, health, the police, probation or counselling services. But most of all.....

Be keen and committed



Safeguarding update June 2024



Expression of Interest
Form re Volunteer Op

Please complete an Expression of Interest form

giving the area of interest and activity that you
might wish to be involved in as

Or for more information please contact Helen
Bolton, District Safeguarding Officer

District Safeguarding Group

07498 800427 or
mands@dso.methodist.org.uk

**If you have anything you wish to share in future updates or anything you
would like covered please contact Helen**