

Proposed Supervision and Professional Development Model for District Safeguarding Officers

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Contact Name and Details | Tim Carter; Connexional Safeguarding Adviser; cartert@methodistchurch.org.uk |
| Status of Paper | Final |
| Action Required | Decision |
| Resolution | <p>39/1. The Council receives the report.</p> <p>39/2. The Council endorses the understanding and approach to supervision for District Safeguarding Officers as set out in paragraphs 3.0 - 8.12 of the report.</p> <p>39/3. The Council recommends to the Conference Option One (supervision provided externally) as set out in paragraph 9.1 of the report.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>The Council recommends to the Conference Option Two (supervision provided by the connexional Safeguarding Team) as set out in paragraph 9.2.</p> <p>39/4. The Council recommends to the Conference that the increased resources required for implementing supervision for District Safeguarding Officers is an addition to the safeguarding element of the District Assessment.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>The Council recommends to the Conference that the increased resources required for implementing supervision for District Safeguarding Officers is included in the Connexional Central Services Budget.</p> |

Summary of Content and Impact

| | |
|--|---|
| Subject and Aims | To make proposals regarding the introduction of a standardised approach to professional supervision arrangements for District Safeguarding Officers. |
| Main Points | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration whether to offer supervision externally or internally • Definitions of Safeguarding and supervision • Explanations of different approaches • Costs • Changes to Connexional Safeguarding team in relation to roles and responsibilities • Implementation timetable |
| Background Context and Relevant Documents (with function) | Provision of DSO time and resourcing has grown incrementally across the Connexion as safeguarding demands have increased. As a result, there is no consistency in respect of employment arrangements, practice standards or professional support requirements. |

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| | This report focuses on the intention to provide systematic standardised professional supervision to all DSOs, as required by the Conference, in order to ensure that there is a common approach to managing casework and encouraging continuing professional development. |
| Consultations | The Safeguarding Committee, District Chairs, DSOs and District Safeguarding Groups. |
| Impact | Finance Estimated costs of different approaches are identified. |

1.0. The Conference of 2016 resolved that:

- 1.1. *The Conference directs the Methodist Council to bring to the 2017 Conference, as part of the 2017/18 budget preparation, fully costed proposals for achieving professional supervision for all District Safeguarding Officers. [DR 7/12/3]*

2.0. Introduction

- 2.1. District Safeguarding Officers (DSOs) are critical to promoting and ensuring safeguarding practice is understood and delivered in each District. The majority of districts employ paid DSOs, one uses volunteers and two have appointed ministers to fulfil the role in meeting our Christian obligation to take care of and safeguard the most vulnerable in our communities as well as ensuring that the Methodist Church's reputation with statutory agencies and the wider general public is protected and enhanced as we demonstrate professional conduct in making churches truly safe spaces for all.
- 2.2. In order to achieve this, it is important that DSOs are working to the same standards and can display consistent practice across the Connexion. The connexional Safeguarding Adviser has visited Districts to meet with DSOs, district safeguarding teams and District Chairs in order to identify local challenges and achievements, assess individual job descriptions and supervision arrangements. What has emerged from this exercise is a desire for professional supervision for each DSO enabling greater standardisation and consistency in the work, undertaking of risk assessments and delivery of training.
- 2.3. This paper sets out two approaches to delivering professional supervision for DSOs which can be summarised as adopting either an external or internal support to achieve consistency in supervision.
- 2.4. Option one would involve identifying an external provider (or providers) whereas option two involves re-shaping the Connexional Safeguarding Team (CST) and developing a bespoke approach of professional support and development which will also formalise much of the current work of the CST which currently involves working closely with Districts through the DSO in giving advice, guidance, support and direction.
- 2.5. In earlier discussions a third option was explored which would involve moving the line management of DSOs to the CST so that line management and supervision are combined. Having consulted further it has been concluded that the cost of introducing such a model would be prohibitive at this time (DSOs would become Council employees) and District Chairs were very keen not to lose district 'ownership' and responsibility for their DSO. However, they have expressed a welcome for professional supervision to be provided alongside district line management.

2.6. In the following discussion it is assumed that DSOs have a single role. Currently we have two DSOs who are ordained (one a deacon and one a presbyter). Therefore, consideration will be given to their circumstances (and anyone in the future) whereby the different supervision arrangements they may be subject to from different parts of the church will be coordinated and a clear agreement established with those who have supervisory/ line management responsibility.

3.0. What supervision means

3.1. Development of a formal professional supervision structure for DSOs is consistent with the broad aims of supervision arrangements which are being introduced over the coming years for ministers (subject to the Conference agreement of a supervision policy in 2017). Both initiatives are indicative of a growing awareness that supervision is good for the accountability of the individual being supervised and the Church and Conference with whom they are in full connexion as well as providing a framework within which their own support and development needs can be addressed.

3.2. This does not mean that the supervision of DSOs has the same theological and ecclesiological understanding as undergirds the supervision proposals for ministers, but it will follow the core functions with a focus on professional safeguarding casework, practice and decision-making. This draws on standard models of social work case work management.

3.3. Bringing supervision proposals for ministers and DSOs to the Conference emphasises the connection and coherence of approach with the final report from the Past Cases Review Implementation Group and enhances the Church's further development of robust safeguarding provision to meet current demands and continue to establish firm foundations for future expectations.

4.0. Safeguarding and supervision

4.1. Supervision is a two-way dialogue defined as "a process by which one worker is given responsibility by the organisation to work with another worker(s) in order to meet certain organisational, professional and personal objectives" (Tony Morrison, 2001).

4.2. Research indicates that there is a strong link between the quality of supervision and outcomes for children and adults, including safeguarding and protection.

4.3. For the purposes of Methodist safeguarding supervision, we are concentrating on casework and professional development functions.

4.4. Supervision for DSOs will provide a structure for looking at:

- Accountability
- Learning and development
- Support and challenge

5.0. The ten aims of supervision

5.1. To enable the effective safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk.

5.2. To ensure the DSO is supported to carry out their duties effectively and efficiently and that work has clear purpose and delivers good outcomes for the beneficiaries.

5.3. To provide a reflective space for professional safeguarding discussion, challenge, advice and consideration of options and approaches.

5.4. To ensure the skills of the DSO continue to be developed.

- 5.5. To identify solutions to address issues of practice or policy as they arise.
- 5.6. To ensure good practice and to challenge and manage poor practice.
- 5.7. To ensure that health and well-being at work matters are addressed.
- 5.8. To assist in the continuous professional development of the DSO.
- 5.9. To ensure good practice in relation to equalities and diversity.
- 5.10. To ensure that professional practice and regulatory requirements are met.

6.0. Supervision Agreement

- 6.1. Each DSO will have a supervision agreement with their supervisor (see Appendix 1 for draft agreement template) which will set out a structure and framework for supervision and reviewed on an annual basis.

7.0. Content of supervision

- 7.1. Update on actions from previous supervision
- 7.2. Progress of case work, review and evaluation of outcomes to include adherence with Methodist policies and procedures, regulatory requirements and professional standards
- 7.3. Safeguarding, protection and health and safety matters
- 7.4. Equalities and diversity matters
- 7.5. Professional development, learning and support needs
- 7.6. Additional agenda items brought by either the supervisor or supervisee.

8.0. Supervision meetings

- 8.1. In both proposed options there will be set supervision meetings of approximately 4 – 6 weeks. In option two, whereby supervision is provided internally by the CST the supervisor will be available for consultation and advice during normal working hours as well. At least every second supervision meeting should be face to face and other meetings can be by telephone or Skype. This will ensure that each DSO receives eight to twelve formal supervision sessions annually with a face-to-face contact at least quarterly.
- 8.2. Each supervisor will cover DSOs in regional proximity to each other and this will lend itself to opportunities for further group supervision and peer-to-peer support arrangements but this will be in addition to core individual supervision arrangements.
- 8.3. Supervision will take place in a confidential and uninterrupted setting that can include by phone or Skype.
- 8.4. If the DSO requires more frequent supervision, for any reason, or feels that supervision is not meeting their needs this should be discussed with the supervisor.
- 8.5. All supervision meetings should be recorded and notes agreed and signed by both parties. The author will record any amendments or disagreement regarding the content of the notes on the relevant record. Each set of notes should be dated with the name of the person who authored them.
- 8.6. All actions should be clearly identified.
- 8.7. All actions should be followed up in subsequent supervision sessions and all outcomes recorded.

- 8.8. Service users should not be explicitly referenced in supervision minutes. Initials should be used instead.
- 8.9. Where a discussion takes place and/or actions are identified in relation to a service user, this information should be recorded on the case file.
- 8.10. Supervision notes are the property of the Methodist Church and are accessible to the DSO, supervisor, DSO line manager and the Safeguarding Adviser.
- 8.11. Records may be made available during a management investigation or if required by an external agency for a legitimate purpose. The District Chair or Safeguarding Adviser must approve all access to records.
- 8.12. Access to supervision notes must be provided to regulatory bodies but only with confirmation of identification of the inspector/s and there is a legitimate purpose (ie inspection) and in any legal proceedings.

9.0. Two different approaches

9.1. Option One - Externally commissioned supervision from a private agency or set of individuals.

9.1.1. This would enable a clear service level agreement to be established with measures and performance indicators. It would also provide some set parameters in terms of cost and how comprehensive a service the Church wished to receive. Eg, a set number of formal supervision sessions could be agreed at the outset within which casework supervision would be offered. It would not provide for day-to-day access to a supervisor for unforeseen occurrences with the work or more general case direction happening outside of the formal supervision meeting, eg a query about one aspect of a case which simply requires a 10-minute conversation.

9.1.2. Advantages

- supervision held within clear parameters as defined by the service level agreement
- scope of supervisory relationships easily scoped
- professional, independent input from external source can provide 'critical friend' approach
- external supervision can offer more of a critique on the church's processes than internally provided supervision
- clear costings and lack of fixed costs

9.1.3. Disadvantages

- the service will only be as good as the commissioned agreement
- the tighter the parameters the less flexibility in response
- ability for DSOs to have short regular conversations and seek guidance will be limited to more formal supervision meetings and therefore not provide day to day guidance and advice that option two offers
- potential lack of understanding on the part of the external body about the workings of the Methodist Church
- potential confusion between supervisor and line manager where supervision is a confidential arrangement between supervisor and supervisee
- potential higher cost of seeking an external provider at consultancy rates, eg ranging from £50 - £75 per hour (approximate cost of £30-45,000/ year based on 10 sessions (average of the 8-12 range) for each DSO/ year if there are 30 DSOs)

- the additional costs required to run an external contract and quality assure it
- ability to get one provider who can offer a service across England, Scotland and Wales or a network of providers operating to common standards and consistency in advice

9.2. **Option Two** – Provision of Supervision from Connexional Safeguarding Team (CST)

- 9.2.1. This model offers greater flexibility than Option One and a more comprehensive service as the team are full time and therefore contactable outside of formal supervision meetings and able to support and advise as cases unfold and develop.
- 9.2.2. It will enable the current CST to formalise much of what they already do in terms of offering informal close support to DSOs working on specific cases. This can be further developed to provide greater input into meeting agreed quality standards and outcomes.
- 9.2.3. By containing all the supervision within the CST a more consistent, coherent and informed approach can be developed in relation to understanding how well safeguarding practice is being implemented across the Connexion. By supervising a number of DSOs each supervising officer can focus on a regional area and build peer to peer opportunities for DSO groups to support one another and cover for sickness, holiday, or to work together when one district has a complex case.
- 9.2.4. This model is a logical extension of the approach that the CST are increasingly doing working more closely with DSOs and can also include reference to external expertise when this might be required for a specific case.
- 9.2.5. Advantages
- This model will allow the CST to formalise much of what they are already doing informally
 - It can be costed clearly at the same time as allowing maximum flexibility by being incorporated as a central aspect of the team's work plan
 - It will provide opportunities for continuing professional development for DSOs and encourage a learning culture in the work
 - It demonstrates the Church's unequivocal commitment to further establishing solid quality assurance processes and structures in all its safeguarding work
- 9.2.6. Disadvantages
- Providing the service will require the additional funding of two full time equivalent case workers
 - An internally provided service may not have the independence to be appropriately critical in the way an independent body can
- 9.2.7. This option will require close working agreements between the supervisor and the district line management arrangements in order to ensure that lines of accountability and responsibility are clearly drawn. Supervision will be distinguished from the employer's legal responsibilities for the DSO and will operate by way of 'professional advice' in a similar manner that other advice and guidance is provided to line managers from the Connexional Team but does not take away the ultimate authority of the line manager.
- 9.2.8. In order to make sure that the supervisory and management functions are clearly defined an agreement will be produced setting out the different functions between supervisor, line manager and DSO which will be reviewed annually.

- 9.2.9. The employment responsibility will remain with the line manager on behalf of the district and professional casework judgements will be overseen by the supervisor. In the instance where there is a dispute about appropriate actions the supervisor will refer to the Connexional Safeguarding Adviser who will discuss the matter with the Assistant Secretary of the Conference and agree the best way forward with the District Chair.
- 9.2.10. At their meeting in January the District Chairs indicated that Option Two was their overwhelmingly preferred option as they wished for greater professional input but did not want to lose line management and local oversight of safeguarding work in their areas.

10.0. Costs

- 10.1. There are 31 districts (to become 30 from 1 September 2017). Some districts share a DSO; this may change as districts increase DSO hours to meet the growing demands of safeguarding work (see separate Conference resolution on formula for calculating DSO hours).
- 10.2. Calculations for option two are based on one supervisor/ line manager for 7 DSO posts. 28 DSOs = 4 supervisors. This will require an increase of two posts in the CST.
- 10.3. Aligning each supervisor with a geographical area will make for the most efficient use of travel time and enable a greater development of sharing between DSO groupings which already occurs in areas like Yorkshire between adjoining districts. There will also be opportunities to work more closely with the Learning Network regional structures.
- 10.4. The current CST team undertakes a number of core tasks for the Connexion (including blemished DBS checks, all DBS renewals for ministers, safeguarding training oversight and development, risk assessment commissioning and Safeguarding Panels as well as many enquiries across all areas of safeguarding) but DSO work is core to the whole structure of this and therefore it is logical to assume that in time a closer relationship of supervision of DSOs by the CST will streamline processes, aid more effective communication and decision making and lead to greater efficiencies and reduced overall safeguarding costs to the Church.
- 10.5. The closest comparator we have in this work is the Church of England and although their coverage is larger they fund full time Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers (in some cases more than one post) and the national safeguarding team (England only) has substantially increased its budget in the last two years and is discussing possible extension to a team of 11 posts.
- 10.6. How can the current caseworkers absorb taking on the supervision role on top of increasing workloads?
- 10.6.1. As indicated above, a lot of current case worker time is taken up with direct work and contact with DSOs on casework and therefore to some extent caseworkers are already in a role where they are undertaking informal supervision and support functions.
- 10.7. Option one costs
- 10.7.1. This option would require commissioning 5 external supervisors.
- 10.7.2. Consultancy rates, e.g. ranging from £50 - £75 per hour = approximate cost of £30-45,000/ year based on 10 sessions for each DSO/ year if there are 30 DSOs + Connexional management of contract and oversight.

10.7.3. Total estimated costs – c £45k p.a.

10.8. Option two costs

10.8.1. The additional cost for the CST would be 2 x f.t.e equivalent caseworkers and part time admin support: £120k

10.8.2. Budget for travel/ expenses for district visits based on 10 supervision meetings per year DSO x £50 travel expenses per meeting: £12,500

10.8.3. Staff subsistence/ accommodation where required: £2,500

10.8.4. Total estimated costs = c. £135k p.a.

11.0 **Changes to Connexional Safeguarding Team**

The current case worker job description requires staff to have had experience of supervising others and also includes supporting and developing relationships with DSOs to support and develop a network of relationships in order to increase collaboration and consistency in dealing with child or adult protection and safer recruitment issues and to provide a contact point for information, advice (eg on training) and the communication of best practice. Therefore, for Option two it is not envisaged that a formal change programme will be necessary to implement these changes beyond the standard open consultation process with the team about what is being envisaged and gaining support for delivering the benefits to the Church.

12.0 Implementation **timescale**

12.1 If the Conference approves Option One districts can begin to identify external supervisors immediately once provision has been made in their district budgets.

12.2 If the Conference approves Option Two it is proposed that the two new members of staff are recruited to start from September 2018. The CST will then phase in (eg region by region) supervision of DSOs by 1 January 2019.

12.3 This will also give time for any existing external supervision arrangements that a few DSOs currently have to be concluded.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

39/1. The Council receives the report.

39/2. The Council endorses the understanding and approach to supervision for District Safeguarding Officers as set out in paragraphs 3.0 - 8.12 of the report.

39/3. The Council recommends to the Conference Option One (supervision provided externally) as set out in paragraph 9.1 of the report.

OR

The Council recommends to the Conference Option Two (supervision provided by the connexional Safeguarding Team) as set out in paragraph 9.2.

39/4. The Council recommends to the Conference that the increased resources required for implementing supervision for District Safeguarding Officers is an addition to the safeguarding element of the District Assessment.

OR

The Council recommends to the Conference that the increased resources required for implementing supervision for District Safeguarding Officers is included in the Connexional Central Services Budget.

Appendix 1 Methodist Church Safeguarding Supervision Agreement



Supervision Agreement between (DSO) and (CST Supervisor)

- 1. Connexional Safeguarding Team Supervision** functions to
 - assess and support the DSO's and work
 - provide support and challenge to the DSO
 - assist in the ongoing professional development of the DSO
 - mediate between the DSO, the Church and other stakeholders

Both parties agree the purpose of good supervision is to enable more effective work practices, which lead to better outcomes for children, young people, adults, families and other stakeholders we support.

- 2. The content and focus of supervision meetings will be based on**
 - A mutually agreed agenda
 - An overview of (DSO's) workload and action planning for the work
 - Monitoring (DSO's) workload capacity, to ensure the workload is reasonable and achieved
 - A recognition of (DSO's) professional achievements, knowledge and skills whilst also attending to (DSO's) ongoing development needs
 - An environment where equality and diversity practice can be developed on a continual basis
 - (DSO's) annual appraisal goals, which will include linking of theoretical frameworks to practice
 - (DSO's) desire to reflect on their work and to be challenged
- 3. Agreed supervision arrangements:**
 - Formal Supervision meetings will take place at least 4-6 weekly
 - Supervision meetings will last between 1 – 2 hours
 - Supervisor will record supervision meetings and take up amendments/ corrections at the next meeting
 - One copy will be retained by each person. The record is the property of the Methodist Church. Supervisor will retain his/her copy securely and confidentially. Records may be made available in a disciplinary or grievance investigation, or if required by an external agency for a legitimate purpose. When a member of staff leaves the Methodist Church the supervision file will be forwarded to HR and retained in accordance with their policies

- If there is a dispute about the record, both parties should discuss this to seek an agreement, which will be recorded as an addendum to the supervision record and signed by both parties. In cases where there is no agreement, this will be recorded in the same way
- Supervision records are confidential between the parties involved and, when required, the Methodist Church
- When a discussion is regarding a service user, member of staff or worker in another agency, the record will not directly identify personal information (i.e. by using initials only). This is in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and to avoid the supervision record becoming part of a person's personal details, available upon request

4. **Agreed Conduct in Supervision Meetings:**

- (DSO) and (supervisor) commit to planning for supervision, reviewing the notes from the last meeting and bringing items for the agenda
- Both parties recognise that openness to learning and honesty will enable supervision to be most effective
- Both parties commit to good timekeeping
- Both parties agree that challenges and criticism should be framed constructively
- Both parties agree that challenges, criticism and questioning are a two-way process, the expertise does not lie only with the supervisor and that the supervisee's feedback on the supervision received is an integral part of supervision.

Signed

Signed

Date