**Interim Regional Safeguarding Group (IRSG) Chair – role profile**

The Eastern Methodist Districts (Beds, Essex & Herts, East Anglia, Lincolnshire, Northampton and Nottingham & Derby Districts) are seeking an Independent Chair for the new interim Regional Safeguarding Group (IRSG). Thank you for considering this important voluntary role.

The Independent Chair will be appointed for an initial period of two years.

This is a voluntary role, for which reasonable expenses will be paid, including a daily rate of remuneration. A DBS will be required for the post holder.

**Description of Region**

The Eastern Region is made up principally of four Districts: East Anglia, Lincolnshire, Nottingham & Derby, and Northampton. We also work closely with the Beds, Essex and Herts District (BEH).  The first 4 Districts comprise 56 Circuits and BEH comprises a further 12 Circuits. All 5 Districts already collaborate in a Learning Network region and the first 4 Districts act as a Stationing Region. There is co-operation and collaboration in a number of areas including Probationers and Early Years of Ministry, Complaints & Discipline support. There are Safeguarding Officers who work for more than one District. There will be the same Chair for both the Nottingham & Derby District and the Northampton District for September 2022 and a Deputy Chair in place in Nottingham & Derby. It is expected that a similar pattern of leadership will be in place for the Lincolnshire District in September 2023.

**The context of this appointment**

This is an important time in terms of shaping future safeguarding arrangements within new Methodist Church structures, which will evolve over the next two years as the Church aims to streamline its organisation and governance arrangements. The Church will also be endeavouring to ensure full compliance with all the requirements and recommendations that will follow from the final report due to be published by the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse. The Independent Chair will have a key voice in shaping the future and in building a culture of excellence in safeguarding within the region. This appointment will be made at the start of a period of transition and the key to success will be the full establishment of an effective regional safeguarding service by September 2024. However, it has been agreed that there will be a review of the interim RSG in March 2024 to confirm both its fitness for purpose and effectiveness.

**Introduction**

Safeguarding is an integral part of the life and ministry of the Church and the new region will continue the commitment to the 'whole church' approach to safeguarding which aims to ensure a consistent approach as we work to create a safer culture. Everyone involved in church activities across the region and who may come into contact with children, young people and adults has a role to play as we take steps to maintain a safer environment for all.

The new regional arrangements will build on the good practice already evident in the constituent Districts which undertake safeguarding activity within the context of the Church’s Safeguarding Policy. The safeguarding community currently consists of a team of professional District Safeguarding Officers, who work closely with volunteer church and circuit officers, as well as local clergy. Effective partnership with statutory partner agencies is also a key element of maintaining safe practice across the region.

A key role for the Independent Chair will be to ensure that developing regional systems work efficiently and are properly accountable, and that the interim RSG collectively plays a part in achieving this.

**Main Responsibilities**

To chair the IRSG meeting and ensure that outcomes and actions are documented and implemented.

To ensure that the IRSG discharges its role of advising the District Chairs, and other senior leaders in the constituent Districts, on the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults.

To promote the IRSG as an independent voice, able to fulfil its core role of providing objective, independent scrutiny and challenge of safeguarding practice across the region.

**Key Relationships**

District Chairs and policy group members

District Safeguarding Officer (DSO) team members

Members of the IRSG

Other Independent District Safeguarding Chairs within the Methodist Church

**Key Duties and Responsibilities**

* Ensure that the IRSG works constructively and effectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults across the region, and that their voices are well represented in the work of the IRSG.
* Work collaboratively with District Chairs, advising where necessary, of specific concerns or issues. Where appropriate, raise and report any concerns/issues as part of whistle blowing arrangements.
* Work collaboratively with the current DSO team members and any other senior Church leaders to ensure a constructive relationship with the IRSG.
* Ensure that the IRSG has a strategic overview of safeguarding practice across the region in line with Methodist Church policy and practice guidance, together with appropriate quality assurance and risk management.
* Ensure that the voices and needs of victims/survivors and those affected by abuse are heard, considered and acted upon.
* Agree the IRSG agenda with the DSO team, ensuring that the IRSG is able to carry out its advisory and scrutiny functions effectively, and that key issues and national developments are brought to the attention of and considered by, the IRSG.
* Chair meetings of the IRSG, conducting the meetings in a way that enables all members to contribute their knowledge and skills ensuring clarity of recommendations to the District Chairs and the DSO team.
* Respond to correspondence sent to the Chair, with support, where appropriate, from the relevant member of staff or clergy.
* Attend national meetings of independent Methodist Safeguarding Group chairs, as required. Presenting learning from the region at such meetings and ensuring that key learning from other districts/regions inform practices within the region.
* Produce, in partnership with the IRSG members and the DSO team, an annual report on safeguarding within the region, for submission to the District Chairs and Synods.

**The Ideal Candidate**

**Person specification**

***Qualifications***

* Academic and/or professional qualification in social or health care, education or legal discipline of sufficient standing to command professional respect within the IRSG.
* Professional qualification or significant experience in at least one of the following areas: working with vulnerable adults and/or children;

***Experience***

* Extensive professional safeguarding expertise in a relevant statutory, voluntary or judicial agency.
* Sufficient experience of working within the public or voluntary sector at a senior level to command respect within a multiagency panel of agency representatives.
* Experience of and skilled in the chairing of complex, professional meetings at a senior level in an efficient manner.
* Sufficient experience of the operational context of safeguarding work to enable well-grounded contributions to resolving individual case issues where required.
* Commitment to the welfare of children and/or vulnerable adults, demonstrable through previous or current professional or voluntary activities.

***Knowledge***

* Knowledge and good understanding of developments in health and social care, of legislation and of research underpinning child and adult protection work.
* Knowledge and understanding of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.
* Knowledge of how to maintain effective safeguarding practice.
* Understanding the Methodist Church, its organisation and governance structures.

***Skills***

* Strong organisational awareness to ensure the smooth operation of the IRSG and its relationship to and with other Regional/District governance structures.
* Pragmatic and solutions-orientated approach to resolving situations or issues.
* You will require relevant current or recent child protection or adult safeguarding experience at a senior level in a statutory, voluntary or private organisation.

**Eastern Regional Working Group**

**June 2022**