

## **Report on Safeguarding in the Northampton District from Jan 24 to March 24**

There is a completely new safeguarding team in the Northampton District comprised of a District Safeguarding Officer (DSO) and Team Leader (Sally Wan) and a Learning and Development Officer (LDO) (Neil Hutchinson) who both commenced working on 3/1/24. Therefore, this report only covers the period from 3/1/24 to date and sets out the key safeguarding activity within the district during this initial period. More information on the experience and expertise that both Sally and Neil bring to their roles can be found at [Northampton Methodist District | Safeguarding](#).

Grahame Snelling, the interim acting DSO, was able to complete a handover of various District safeguarding matters during January 2024 with both Sally and Neil. Grahame has also set up and facilitated the first meeting of the newly reformed District Safeguarding Group (DSG) in March. Sally will continue to develop the membership and operation of the DSG as it becomes established over the coming year.

The main activity to date by both Sally and Neil has included familiarisation with Methodist Safeguarding Policy and Practice, the wider systems and structures of the Methodist Connexion and specifically safeguarding matters across the district. Both Sally and Neil have started to build effective working relationships with the district staff team, superintendents, circuits and churches across the Northampton District and with the Connexional Safeguarding Team through attendance and contribution to meetings at both a district level (including superintendents meetings/residential, circuit stewards annual meeting, district staff meetings and a verbal report to the District Executive) and at a connexional level (including the annual Safeguarding Conference, Quadrant/DSO meetings, and Survivors Group meetings). Additionally, there have been individual meetings with superintendents and circuit safeguarding officers/other circuit/church roles as well as meetings with staff in the Connexional Safeguarding Team.

Both Sally and Neil work closely together but there is now a much clearer focus to the roles to respond more efficiently and effectively to the needs of the district. Sally's main focus will be safer recruitment, managing case work and advising on safeguarding matters/issues. Sally will be the first point of contact for anyone in the district who has any safeguarding questions or needs any support. Sally will continue to oversee those on safeguarding contracts to ensure effective monitoring and compliance. Sally is also working closely with the Mission team to embed safeguarding into FEAST projects and other grant funded projects. Neil's main focus will be to support and deliver safeguarding training across the district. Neil is now able to deliver training across the district and will be the first point of contact for any safeguarding queries related to training. There is currently a very high demand for safeguarding training across the district and Neil will prioritise all delivery of advanced training for the next few months.

It is becoming apparent that more support with DBS checks is needed to start to develop appropriate information and support around the process and correct level of DBS checks for particular roles. This will form part of a wider piece of work in conjunction with Neil to develop a robust model for recording and monitoring compliance with safer recruitment (DBS checks) and training. Both Sally and Neil welcome any ideas or thoughts on these areas or any other areas to develop support and resources that meet the needs of the district. Over the next few months Sally will, in conjunction with Neil, start to develop a more formal strategic safeguarding plan for the district which will reflect the needs and priorities for the district.

Prepared by Sally Wan 5/4/24