



Methodist Church in Scotland

Safeguarding Round Up - April 2020

Euan Morrison – District Safeguarding Officer



We are living in very challenging times and much of how we do things has changed dramatically. Amongst all the health stories that are in the news you may well have seen or heard that safeguarding issues are to the fore.

We know there is an increase in safeguarding concerns and whilst they may not be evident now, many issues will come to notice as the restrictions are lifted. Some of these things may impact on us and we need to be aware and be in a position to react appropriately.

The purpose of this bulletin is to provide some brief tips and guides that may help you in your life within the church and therefore please circulate it accordingly. The hyperlinks will take you to the relevant websites that you can explore further.

The [Safeguarding](#) section of the Methodist Church website has a fund of practical safeguarding information on it including the [Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidelines](#) and there are lots of practical guides taking account of the current pandemic so I would commend this resource to you. But as always, if you have any concerns at all then please let me know.

Scottish Government and Police Scotland Advice

[Volunteer Scotland](#) has advice for volunteers provided by **The Scottish Government** and **Police Scotland** which you may find useful as it provides brief guidance to ensure the safety of volunteers and those they are helping during coronavirus.

Child Protection

Clearly this is a time when children and young people are not attending school and are at home making use of the internet for both education and recreational purposes. The [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) is an excellent resource for everyone in keeping our children and young people safe.

Adult Protection

With the current restrictions that are in place many people who normally receive support in the community are no longer doing so and other arrangements may be in place that could involve you or those from your church.

For those of you who own a smart phone you will most likely have a number of Apps downloaded. One that you may find useful is **“Adult Support and Protection”** which is free to download. Whilst it is designed for professional care providers it gives very easy to follow guidance that anyone helping out may find useful.

Remember, it is critically important that if you are providing a service to others who may be vulnerable that these activities are risk assessed to ensure everyone is kept safe. Definitive guidance can be found on the Methodist Church Safeguarding Website.

Domestic Abuse

Sadly we know that instances of domestic abuse have increased dramatically in recent weeks and this issue may affect people in your church. There is an in depth guidance produced within the Methodist Church Safeguarding Website but as you will know this can be a very complex issue to deal with particularly in the current climate.

There are a multitude of organizations that exist to support and aid victims and the [Police Scotland](#) site lists those for Scotland.

Supervision and Support

It is really important that we support those who are caring for other people and make sure that they are okay but also that they are not putting themselves or others at risk. This could of course be in a number of ways but with regular and appropriate communication we can check that all is well.

Internet Safety

There is a multitude of online resources offering advice to us all on keeping safe whilst using the internet. Many of us are using and depending on this medium more than ever before to order shopping or to communicate with friends and family.

We all need to be aware that there may be risks if we do not use the internet safely and here are some key points from **Police Scotland** to keep us safe

- Be careful online – use a secure browser and only insert card details if the padlock icon is visible
- Do not divulge personal information over the phone unless you initiate the call
- Never enter personal information into a pop up screen
- Never email personal or financial information, even if you are close with the recipient
- Protect your devices by installing anti-virus software on them all and ensure they are up to date

Covid 19

We are all looking to keep updated and seek the best possible advice but there can be misleading messages out there so here are the best ways to be kept safely informed.

Only go to credible and expert sources for Covid-19 information, such as [The World Health Organisation \(WHO\)](#) where you can find up to date information on everything from myth-busting to self-protection, and The UK's [National Health Service \(NHS\)](#).

Bogus Crime

To help keep yourself safe, here are a few golden rules to follow from **Police Scotland**

- Be vigilant and on guard if someone turns up unexpectedly but don't rely on them. Identity cards can be faked – phone the company to verify their identity.
- Never let people try to persuade you to let them into your home even if they are asking for or offering help – they may not be genuine. If someone is persistent, ask them to call at another time and arrange for a friend or family member to be with you.
- Don't feel embarrassed - genuine callers expect you to be careful.
- Never provide any personal data such as your full name, address and date of birth – scammers can use this information to steal your identity.
- Don't keep large amounts of money in your home.
- If in doubt, don't answer the door.

Conclusion

And finally, it may not always be clear that something is wrong but sometimes things just don't seem right. Doing nothing is not an option so please get in touch.

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