

North East – Brierley | Hemsworth | Monk Bretton | Ryhill | Staincross

South – Hoyland & Birdwell | Darfield Wesley | Great Houghton | Pilley | Wombwell

North West - Buckley | Dodworth | Emmanuel | Higham | Kexborough

Young Person’s Participant & Volunteering Policy

It is the Methodist Church’s intention to value every human being as part of God’s creation and the whole people of God. At the heart of the Methodist community is a deep sense of the place of welcome, hospitality and openness, which demonstrates the nature of God’s grace and love for all. Our church communities are called to be places where the transformational love of God is embodied and life in all its fullness is a gift, which is offered to all people.

The Methodist Church, along with the whole Christian community, believes each person has a value and dignity which comes directly from God’s creation of humans in God’s own image and likeness. Christians see this as fulfilled by God’s re-creation of us in Christ. Among other things, this implies a duty to value all people as bearing the image of God and therefore to protect them from harm. The Barnsley Methodist Circuit is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults and affirms that the needs of children and of people when they are vulnerable and at risk are paramount.

As an addendum to Barnsley Methodist Church’s Safeguarding Policy, this document aims to address the issue of young persons who become 18 whilst participating or volunteering in our chapels.

In law, as stated in The Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy, a child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th Birthday. Accordingly, when a person reaches the age of 18, they are considered an adult. As such they cannot attend a children’s or youth group/event unless they do so as a ‘young leader’ or ‘volunteer helper’. The Methodist Church Safeguarding policy states that anyone involved in teaching, training, instructing, care or supervision of children (even those closely supervised by someone with an enhanced DBS) requires an enhanced DBS certificate.

Recognising the need for pastoral sensitivity in helping a young person who reaches the age of 18 transition from being a participant in a children’s/youth group or event to being an adult volunteer within the same (or other) groups/events, and following the advice of Alison Hill (Regional Officer for Safeguarding - North East Sheffield District) in January 2026, this policy aims to establish a rationale, procedure and process for enabling a good transition. It is applicable to all groups within the Barnsley Methodist Circuit when an existing participant reaches the age of 18. Anyone who has already reached the age of 18 will not be permitted to join a children’s/youth group/event as a new participant, being required to join as a young leader following The Methodist Church safer recruitment policy.

Existing Participants

Any person who becomes 18 and is an existing participant of a young person’s group is required to complete the Foundation safeguarding course & DBS within 3 months of their 18th birthday (if they haven’t already done so), transitioning to the role of volunteer helper according to the process of Safer Recruitment as adopted by the Methodist Church. The young person may remain a participant during this 3-month period; however, at the end of this 3-month period they can no longer be a participant, so must become a volunteer helper or leave the group.

In the 6 months prior to the young person’s 18th birthday the leader of the group and/or church safeguarding officer will have conversation with the young person about their continued participation in the

group. This will ensure the procedures for transitioning from participant to volunteer helper are actioned. It is intended this process will also encourage and affirm the young person in their deepening discipleship and their place and value within the church.

It must be noted that some Methodist Church Connexional activities eg: 3GEN require anyone 18 years or over to be a volunteer helper with the relevant safeguarding & DBS certification. 3GEN distinguishes anyone under 18 to be a young person / child, and anyone 18 or over as an adult on the day of their 18th birthday. Before booking a place for any event for anyone who has reached the age of 18, it must be ascertained if they are able to attend as a participant, or if they need to attend as a volunteer helper with the relevant paperwork. For the purposes of overnight activities and sleeping arrangements, Barnsley Methodist Circuit will adhere to the Methodist Church regulation as identified above, with all those who have reached the age of 18 being regarded as an adult.

Volunteer Helpers/Young Leaders

It is recognised that some young people under the age of 18 attend children's/youth groups and events in the capacity of volunteer or young leader. In this case, should they wish to continue engaging with the group beyond their 18th birthday, they will be required (without the 3-month period of grace) to complete the Foundation safeguarding course & DBS before their 18th birthday. Ideally, the Foundation safeguarding course & DBS should be completed at least 3 months before the young person turns 18 to ensure everything is in place by the date of their 18th birthday. The group leader and/or church safeguarding officer will be able to help with the arrangements to ensure this is achieved.

If you require more information, please contact Rev Lyn Gregg (lyn.gregg@methodist.org.uk).