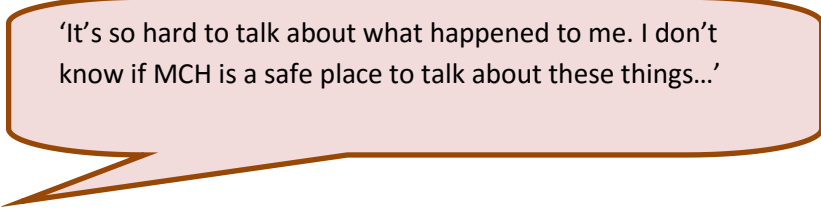


“CREATING SAFER SPACE”

A procedure for Methodist Chaplaincy House



‘It’s so hard to talk about what happened to me. I don’t know if MCH is a safe place to talk about these things...’

Introduction

Students at MCH have chosen to live in a community where they can grow spiritually whatever their faith, and be supported by their fellow students, the Warden, and the wider church community in their spiritual journeys.

Relationships are not always straightforward, and people living in the same space can get irritated, angry and frustrated with each other. That is all part of living in community. But sometimes relationships go wrong in ways that are more serious.

This procedure is intended to point people in the right direction.

Our Commitment

1. MCH and its residents are committed to treating everyone with respect. This means that bullying, sexual harassment or abuse, discrimination, violence or intimidation are unacceptable.

Communication

2. How to report concerns will be displayed prominently within MCH.
3. Information about who to speak to about any issue of concern will be given to all residents in their “welcome” packs. When the warden meets them for their initial conversation about living in community, they will discuss these arrangements face to face.

Reporting Concerns

4. If a student wishes to talk to someone about a concern within MCH, the first person to speak to is the Warden or, if that is not appropriate or practical, the student should speak to the Superintendent Minister of the West London Mission Circuit of the Methodist Church, of which MCH is a part. All ministers have undertaken training in completed the foundation and leaders module of the Methodist Church’s safeguarding policies and practices.¹
5. Together the student and the Warden will decide whether this is:
 - a. A matter for MCH residents to work out between themselves
 - b. Something which needs to be reported to the MCH Management Committee
 - c. An issue of serious concern which needs to be taken further.
6. Those in leadership positions will be guided by the ‘Responding Well to Serious Incidents’ guidance within the Safeguarding Policy of the Methodist Church. For persons aged 18 or over, this distinguishes “vulnerable adults” from others who are raising concerns.

¹ "Safeguarding" is a culture supported through awareness and training that seeks to ensure that children and vulnerable adults within the setting of Methodist Church activities or premises are safe from harm, harassment, abuse and violence of any kind, and also if such should arise that there are recognised channels by which it can be reported confidentially and in the knowledge that appropriate remedial action will be taken. In this document the principles are extended to apply to all students who are resident at Methodist Chaplaincy House.

Vulnerable Adults

7. If it appears that there has been abuse, or harm caused, the Warden or Minister needs to decide whether any of the persons concerned could be thought of as a vulnerable adult. This will depend on circumstances, but may include:

'any adult aged 18 or over, who by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness or other situation is permanently or for the time being unable to take care of her/himself, or to protect her/himself from significant harm or exploitation'

8. If the Warden or Minister is in any doubt about whether an adult is vulnerable, they should consult the District or Connexion safeguarding officer.
9. If any of the people involved are thought to be vulnerable adults, then normal safeguarding procedures apply, and the Circuit Safeguarding Officer should be informed.

If none of the people involved are thought to be vulnerable adults

10. The Warden or Minister and the person raising the concern need to decide together how to proceed. The decision belongs with the person raising the concern, but they should be offered pastoral support in making the decision, and in the next steps (such as reporting it to the police).
11. Decisions about confidentiality, and who needs to be informed, should be taken carefully by the Warden or Minister and the person raising the concern.
12. The person to whom the disclosure/complaint is made should record the date, the names of the people involved, the conversation, details of the concern, the decision about whether an adult is or is not judged to be vulnerable, and what actions are to be taken. This record should be kept in a confidential file. Any further emails, correspondence, phone calls or actions should also be recorded briefly and accurately. Careful thought must be given to how long to keep this information, and when it should be deleted/shredded.

Pastoral support

13. Pastoral support is offered to every student at MCH through the Warden. However, in the case of a serious concern, the Warden should consider whether additional pastoral support should be offered to everyone involved, including the complainant, the alleged perpetrator, and other MCH residents. It may be appropriate for pastoral support to each person involved to be offered by separate people.

Information Sharing and Management

14. Very careful thought needs to be given about whether any relevant information about a reported concern needs to be passed, in confidence, to the Circuit Safeguarding Officer.

The complaints procedure

15. None of this is intended to preclude anyone making a complaint through MCH's grievance procedure (as written in the contract paragraph 6.7 and 6.8) or the Methodist Church's complaints procedure (Details can be found in Part 11 of the Methodist Church Standing Orders.)