

Inclusion and Confidentiality

Updated

Inclusion policy

1. A Vision of Inclusion.

In the spirit of Christ's teaching and example the Snaith and Selby Circuit will endeavour to include all people, regardless of age, gender, race or disability. We will endeavour to foster awareness and to change attitudes so that all can feel welcome, comfortable, enabled and included in every aspect of church life. We seek to value all people for the special gifts they bring to worship, service and ministry of the church.

We will be aware of local rituals which, without explanation, embarrass or exclude.

We will change, wherever possible, rigid structures in worship and in the physical building which can exclude people.

We will make sure that aids to inclusion (eg loop system for hearing impaired) are used.

2. Disability Issues

The Snaith and Selby Circuit aims to fulfil the requirements of the Disability Act in all our churches

The Disability Act 1995

This was introduced by Parliament to help reduce the inequalities that existed between disabled and non-disabled people. Churches are not exempt from implementing reasonable changes in order to include disabled people. Deadline dates were set for implementation of the Act. Under this act churches have a responsibility to work to enable all disabled people to participate in worship and the wider life of the church.

(See attached Connexional Property "The Disability Discrimination Act" Information Leaflet)

How do we define disabilities?

There are various disabilities. Physical disabilities are obvious but other disabilities which are equally disabling are often overlooked. These include: visual impairment, hearing impairment, learning disabilities, mental illness, emotional problems, speech difficulties and dyslexia. We recognise that people with obvious and severe disabilities may be more "whole" people than some of us who have no apparent disabilities.

We recognise that we all have special needs physically, mentally, educationally, emotionally and spiritually which can only be met by special provision, pastoral care, and understanding in our churches.

We accept our responsibility to take such steps as are reasonable, to adapt premises to be accessible and to provide for the needs of all people. What is reasonable is not defined as it will take into consideration resources and premises of each church community. Accessibility refers to physical, intellectual, and spiritual access to the church, its worship, ministry and activities.

When Church Councils are considering changes to their premises they will seek guidance from the District Disability Adviser, The Methodist Church and other resources as shown in the information leaflet. The York and Hull District Disability Adviser is:- Mr Les Crohn <see district directory for contact details>.

Confidentiality

As a pastoral visitor it is understood that you will abide by these guidelines and attend training in the circuit.

In order to establish a relationship of trust within a pastoral relationship and within the wider church community, it is important that the things people share are treated in confidence. There are three exceptions to this.

1. If someone specifically gives the pastoral worker permission to pass on something they have said
2. If a person discloses information that leads a pastoral worker to think that the person or another person is at risk
3. If a person indicates that he/she has been involved in or is likely to become involved in the commission of a serious offence.

In the second and third cases information should be passed on to the appropriate person or agency. Wherever possible the person disclosing information should be supported in sharing that information himself/or herself. If that is not possible they should be encouraged to give permission for the information to be passed on. Only if that is not possible should the pastoral worker disclose the information to the appropriate third party without permission. A child would not necessarily be expected to disclose information themselves, but they should be carefully consulted.

Guidance on the safeguarding of Children, Young people and vulnerable adults can be found on the Methodist Church website.

When a person indicated that what he or she is saying is to be kept confidential, it should be understood that it will remain so, subject to the circumstances outlined above. There is a further responsibility on behalf of the person offering care in the pastoral context to assume confidentiality even without this being explicitly raised. Seeking permission for the person disclosing information as to whom it might be shared with and in what circumstances is an important part of building up trust and demonstrating that they and their story are valued. A trust that is born of a community in which confidentiality is normally maintained will lead to confidence that those who offer care are able to exercise proper judgement on those rare occasions when confidentiality needs to be broken.

Prayer support

People's names and situations should only be mentioned in public worship and contexts of open prayer if they have given express permission. This applies to prayers written in books, hung on prayer trees and passed on to prayer chains and networks. Care should be taken when a worship leader or preacher invites topics for intercessory prayer that people understand that they should only share information about people that is given with their permission.