

**BRIEFING NOTE APRIL 2013**  
**Criminal Record & Barred Status Checks**  
**for Presbyters and Deacons**  
**in the Methodist Church of Great Britain**

**Introduction:** *this guidance should be read in conjunction with the interim 'Recruiting Safely' policy and the Sept 2012 update – both on the safeguarding page of the Methodist Church website. The final policy is due during 2013, once the government's remaining changes to the system arising from the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 are in place.*

1. The terminology has changed. CRB and ISA are no more – now combined as the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). There are therefore two checks made through DBS (see Sept 2012 guidance) – criminal record checks (for all those eligible) and barred status check (for those in regulated activity). All ministers are deemed to be doing regulated activity and so both checks are necessary. In practice, that means completing the standard DBS form, ticking 'Yes' to Qs 64&65.
2. The checks are required every 5 years or earlier at any stage where safeguarding concerns arise.
3. Fresh checks are NOT required when the minister moves between Districts. The only exception to this rule is when the minister moves to the country of Scotland from elsewhere in the Connexion. The reason for this is that the PVG scheme which operates in Scotland differs from arrangements elsewhere and therefore a fresh check is required.
4. Checks are required for all candidates for the ministry and again before they are first stationed.
5. Payment is not required to be attached to the form as this is settled centrally by the Connexion.
6. No person should start working in the role of minister without checks having been done and clearance given. This applies to probationer ministers (see above) and to others, for example, those entering as a result of a transfer panel; at the request of their local church; or who are 'recognised and regarded'.
7. Ministers who are 'authorised to serve' or who are 'associate ministers' retain a primary base for ministry within their own denomination. For now, the criminal record and barring checks should therefore be done by the denomination, and confirmation provided to the Methodist Church. (We may be able to simplify this provision once the Government's Online Update Service is in place – but that is still under development.)
8. Ministers who come from abroad should provide information from the previous countries of residence, as set out in 'Recruiting Safely'.
9. Development & Personnel will email all District Chairs each quarter, as stated in the covering email by the Rev'd Gareth Powell.
10. Checks are required for all presbyters and deacons, including supernumeraries, irrespective of whether they are in active work. The provision is that they are capable of a

preaching or pastoral ministry. Chairs should notify the Secretary of Conference on an annual basis in October, of those ministers whom they deem incapable of ministry on the grounds of age or infirmity. The final decision about whether the checks are required will rest with the Secretary of Conference.

11. Supernumerary ministers should normally be described as volunteers. The exception would be when a supernumerary minister is paid for specific work by a circuit – in this case they are deemed employed. The fee is then paid by the Connexion as with all working ministers.
12. Confidential Declaration Form X. This form is for completion by everyone doing a criminal record check. It gives the individual the chance to disclose information up front. It also enables the church to hold them to account should they fail to do so. Ministers' forms should be returned to the Office of the Secretary of Conference, marked 'Confidential Declaration Form X'.
13. Ministers and deacons are based in a manse as the base of their ministry. It therefore follows that they should all tick Yes at Q66. People should be aware (as set out in the Recruiting Safely policy) that this means the police will check the names of all adults known to be linked with that address and may disclose relevant information about these other people.
14. The application can be verified either by another minister or by a lay verifier.
15. Where the disclosure contains information – i.e. it is a 'blemished' or 'unclear' disclosure – then as with all such disclosures, the Methodist Church central safeguarding team will contact the minister to invite him / her to explain, amplify or challenge the information. Any communication will be with the minister directly or with the Connexional Governance section and Chair of District as appropriate, rather than with the verifier. (Note: this whole process will need fundamental change if and when the Government implements the provision in the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, for only one copy of the disclosure to be provided. Currently two disclosures – one for the applicant and one for the appointing body – are provided.)
16. As mentioned above, the process in Scotland is different. This is clarified in a separate PVG policy document for Scotland.

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