

Free Methodist Church in the UK and Ireland Data Protection Notice

Personal Data- What is it?

Personal data relates to a living individual who can be identified from that data. Identification can be by information alone or in conjunction with any other information in the data controller's possession or likely to come into such possession. The processing of personal data is governed by the General Data Protection Regulation (the "GDPR").

Who are we?

The Free Methodist Church in the UK and Ireland is the data controller. This means we decide how personal data is processed and for what purposes.

Organisation Name	Free Methodist Church in the UK and Ireland
Charity Contact	Lucy Awde
Email address	office@freemethodist.org.uk
Phone Number	01173365298

How do we process Personal Data?

The Free Methodist Church in the UK and Ireland complies with its obligations under the "GDPR" by not keeping excessive amounts of data, by protecting personal data from loss, misuse, unauthorised access and disclosure and by ensuring that appropriate technical measures and training are in place to protect personal data.

We use personal data for the following purposes: –

1. Administrative and Governance Purposes

- Maintaining contact details for pastors, leaders, trustees, staff, volunteers and church representatives
- Managing conference attendance, voting rights and denominational records
- Overseeing ministerial credentials, appointments and accountability processes
- Processing reports and correspondence between the National Leader, BOA, MEG Board, and local churches

Lawful basis: Legitimate interest or legal obligation (for governance records).

2. Ministerial Oversight and Support

- Administering the process of ordination, licensing and credentials
- Recording ministerial education, continuing development and pastoral supervision records
- Providing guidance, pastoral care for ministers and their families where necessary
- Managing discipline or safeguarding processes in accordance with the Book of Discipline and UK law

Lawful basis: Legitimate interest, contractual necessity or legal obligation (for safeguarding and accountability).

3. Communication and Networking

- Sending updates, newsletters, invitations and denominational announcements
- Circulating information relevant to church leaders, members or volunteers
- Coordinating training events, leadership gatherings and national or regional gatherings

Lawful basis: Consent (for general communications) or legitimate interest (for internal ministerial communications).

4. Safeguarding and Compliance

- Maintaining records for safeguarding checks (DBS) and training compliance
- Storing and reporting safeguarding concerns as required by law or policy
- Ensuring adherence to statutory and denominational safeguarding frameworks

Lawful basis: Legal obligation (safeguarding duties) and substantial public interest (for processing sensitive data such as safeguarding information).

5. Employment and Volunteer Management

- Processing payroll, pension and HR data for denominational employees
- Managing volunteer or MoU agreements, expenses and performance records
- Ensuring compliance with employment law, charity law and financial regulations

Lawful basis: Contractual necessity and legal obligation.

6. Mission and Ministry Engagement

- Facilitating mission partnerships, training and international connections
- Managing giving, donations and communications

Lawful basis: Consent or legitimate interest, depending on context.

7. Historical and Archival Records

- Retaining ministerial records, conference minutes and historical documents for denominational heritage and research purposes
- Maintaining archives of former pastors, missionaries and churches

Lawful basis: Legitimate interest (heritage) and archiving in the public interest.

8. Financial and Legal Compliance

- Processing and auditing financial transactions
- Submitting statutory returns to regulators (Charity Commission, HMRC)
- Ensuring compliance with charity, financial and safeguarding law
- Managing and maintaining necessary information for VISA sponsorship documentation

Lawful basis: Legal obligation

9. Website, Social Media, and Media Communications

- Publishing blogs, podcasts, testimonies or event photos/videos with explicit consent
- Managing contact through the denomination website or online forms

Lawful basis: Consent (for identifiable personal data such as images or stories)

Consent is obtained via the October review form and before any new engagement or initiative and may be withdrawn at any time.

As a religious organisation, we may process special category data (e.g. information about faith, ministry, or safeguarding) under Article 9(2)(d) UK GDPR, processing carried out by a not-for-profit body with a religious aim and appropriate safeguards in place.

What is the Legal Basis for Processing Personal Data?

We require explicit consent of the data subject so that we can keep our members informed about news, events and activities. Processing personal data is necessary for the reasons identified and stated above. There is no disclosure to any third party without explicit consent. Depending on the type of data and how we use it, we rely on one or more of the following legal bases:

- **Consent**- We may ask for consent to use personal data, for example, to send email updates about events, use photographs or videos taken during events or include names on a prayer list or charity news and updates. Consent may be withdrawn at any time.
- **Legal Obligation**- We process certain information because we are legally required to do so, for example, to maintain accurate records for Gift Aid claims with HMRC or to comply with safeguarding responsibilities.
- **Legitimate Interests**- We may process personal data where it is necessary for our legitimate interests as a community and charity and where rights and freedoms are not negatively affected. Examples include managing volunteers for events, pastoral care, maintaining attendance records, and communicating with members and FM congregants.
- **Vital Interests**- In rare cases, we may need to process your personal data to protect someone's life, such as in a medical emergency.
- **Contractual Necessity** – Where someone has a formal contract with the church (e.g., as an employee or supplier), we may need to process data to fulfil that contract.

We will only use personal data for the purposes stated in this notice unless informed otherwise and, if required we will obtain further consent.

Sharing Personal Data

Personal data will be treated as strictly confidential and will only be shared with other leaders within The Free Methodist Church in the UK and Ireland Conference office in order to carry out a service to the charity as agreed by data subjects. We will only share data with third parties with explicit consent.

How Long Do We Keep Personal Data?

We retain data while it is still current, i.e for active members of the Free Methodist Church in the UK and Ireland or if credentials are held by us. Personal data will be kept for up to 6 years after the calendar year to which they relate, unless an active ongoing gift aid declaration is held or where information relates to safeguarding procedures. Information relating to Safeguarding will be kept in line with statutory guidance. Individuals are given the opportunity each calendar year to let us know if they wish for their data to be removed. If they wish for their data to be removed before our annual GDPR

review, they may contact the Administrator as detailed in section 2.1. Our GDPR review will be completed in October each year.

Rights and Personal Data

Unless subject to an exemption under the GDPR, individuals have the following rights with respect to their personal data: –

- The right to request a copy of their personal data which The Free Methodist Church holds.
- The right to request that The Free Methodist Church corrects any personal data if it is found to be inaccurate or out of date.
- The right to request personal data is erased where it is no longer necessary for The Free Methodist Church to retain such data.
- The right to withdraw consent to the processing or parts of the processing at any time.
- The right to request that the data controller provide the data subject with his/her personal data and where possible, to transmit that data directly to another data controller (known as the right to data portability).
- The right, where there is a dispute in relation to the accuracy or processing of personal data, to request a restriction is placed on further processing.
- The right to object to the processing of personal data, (where applicable).
- The right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office.

Individuals will be given the option to make any changes to the information we hold each year. If no amendments are made to the information or a request to stop is not received, we will continue to process information as per the previous year providing there is justifiable cause for us to do so.

Further Processing

Where and whenever necessary, we will seek prior consent to new processing. If we wish to use personal data for a new purpose, not covered by this Data Protection Notice, then we will provide a new notice explaining this new use prior to commencing the processing and setting out the relevant purposes and processing conditions.

Review

This notice will be reviewed as organisational changes require.

Contact Details

To exercise all relevant rights, queries or complaints please in the first instance contact the Administrator as detailed above.

You can contact the Information Commissioner's Office on 0303 123 1113 or via or at the Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire. SK9 5AF.

Written by: Lucy Awde on behalf of the FMCUK&I trustees
Last Reviewed: 27/07/2026