



The
United
Reformed
Church

Help and Advice

Northern Synod Office, 4 College Lane, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 8JJ (0191-232 1168)

Bulletin 64: FRAUD

The Help & Advice Group was set up by Synod in 2009, to support local churches in being informed and effective in their life and mission. The group was disbanded in 2014, as part of a simplification of Synod committees, and its work continues through the Trust Officer, under the oversight of the Trust's Property Subgroup. We are willing to try to provide specific advice on particular topics. Please get in touch if you have questions or suggestions.

This article is part of a series giving an overview of particular subjects of interest for local churches. We also circulate general updates from time to time. Bulletins will also be posted on the website <http://urc-northernsynod.org/help-advice-bulletins>, with direct links to other websites.

Where readers are directed to web-based resources, the Synod Office is willing to respond to reasonable requests for printed out information for readers without web access, although they may find it more satisfactory to follow up their interest through their local library's web access.

Beware of Fraud

Churches should take sensible precautions and be vigilant to protect themselves from the risk of fraud, which can come from outside or inside the organisation. The level or precaution should be proportionate to the risks posed.

The key is to have appropriate financial controls, such as having all payments made by cheque or bank transfer and signed by two people, and having cash receipts counted by two people and banked as soon as possible. It is good practice to check that goods and services have indeed been ordered and provided to the church before paying invoices.

Fraud can also occur if someone impersonates a church officer and asks for an urgent payment to be made, or where a supplier changes their bank details. In such cases, you should check direct before acting.

The Charity Commission has produced useful advice, including ten questions trustees should ask themselves: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/protect-your-charity-from-fraud>.

The Fraud Advisory Panel has also provided guidance on common frauds and how to prevent them:

<https://www.fraudadvisorypanel.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Tackling-Charity-Fraud-Summary-Report-Web-March2018.pdf>.

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