

Safeguarding Newsletter

URC NORTHERN SYNOD

May 2020



“Our duty to safeguard individuals does not stop during the epidemic”

Firstly can I take this opportunity to say I hope that all you and your families are keeping well during this current period of uncertainty facing our churches as well as the worldwide community.

I also wanted to make you all aware that I am available to assist in any way I can during this time with any safeguarding issue which may arise.

We have a collection of wonderful people who perform the role of safeguarding officer within our churches and I am personally contacting them to make sure that they know they have the Synods support in safeguarding all our congregations as well as the wider community as a whole.

Although your church buildings are closed your church safeguarding officers can be contacted if you or anyone you know have any safeguarding concerns and in turn they will contact myself to assist if required.

If you can't make contact with your church safeguarding officer during this time then please don't let the matter go unresolved. Please contact me either by email or mobile phone. I am available to give advice and guidance to any that may need assistance in safeguarding issues.

matt.safeguarding@urc-northersynod.org

Mobile – 07761 525592

I am acutely aware that over the past couple of months you may have been bombarded with emails signposting you to various sites which would give advice and guidance relating to safeguarding matters during the coronavirus. Below is a list which should act as a go to, all in one guide for safeguarding. It is not exhaustive and there are others but these hopefully should assist if you need it.

Northern Synod Safeguarding during coronavirus

<https://urc-northernsynod.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Safeguarding-during-Coronavirus-Crisis.pdf>

National Synod safeguarding during coronavirus

<https://urc.org.uk/information-guides>

<https://urc.org.uk/images/safeguarding/GP5/Appendix R A guide to supporting those affected by domestic abuse.pdf>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-and-domestic-abuse/coronavirus-covid-19-support-for-victims-of-domestic-abuse>

Freephone National Domestic Abuse Helpline, run by Refuge 0808 200 0247

www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk

Galop (for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people) 0800 999 5428

www.galop.org.uk

Men's Advice Line 0808 801 0327

www.mensadviceline.org.uk

Rape Crisis (England and Wales) 0808 802 9999

www.rapecrisis.org.uk

Issues with fraud – both online and offline

www.actionfraud.police.uk/shoponlinesafely

Protecting your online devices

www.ncsc.gov.uk/guidance/securing-your-devices

Also please don't forget all the great work being done by our Field Support Team, Hannah Middleton (Children's Work Advisor) and John Stephenson (Youth Work Advisor). They are doing a lot of work helping support our young people within the church at this time and they can be contacted through the Synod website or by updates via the Synod newsletter.

UPCOMING SAFEGUARDING TRAINING

As we are all looking at how URC life will be after the coronavirus there has been a document published by the URC titled 'Ready for the New "Normal"'. It can be accessed here - <https://urc.org.uk/latest-news/3452-urc-produces-plan-for-new-normal-post-covid-19>

However, from a safeguarding point of view we are not waiting for the lockdown to end before we start our new safeguarding training packages on the back of the updated Good Practice 5 Safeguarding document.

We have been working hard and have put together the new basic safeguarding package which is aimed at everyone who visits and uses our churches and church premises, in whatever capacity you may do so.

It is a package which lasts about 90 minutes and I will be initially providing this online using the Zoom multi-media package. To access the training, you will need an internet connection and a device such as a laptop or tablet with a camera. You will need to download the Zoom app, which is free and I will conduct the training in this manner.

An email will be sent out to all churches shortly in the coming weeks giving details on when the training is to be given and how you can access it. For those who are based in Northern Synod it will also be advertised in the Northern Synod newsletter as well as on the Synod's Website.

Could I ask to you all to try and give some of your valuable time to this training so we can ensure that we are at the best we can be should we need to deal with any sort of safeguarding concern.

I want to conclude by wishing my continued thoughts to you all and I hope you can all stay safe.

Again, to reiterate, if you need any help in relation to any safeguarding issue at this time please contact your local church safeguarding officer and/or if they are not available please make contact with myself via email or mobile phone.

Matt Knowles – Synod Safeguarding Adviser