



# Safeguarding Newsletter

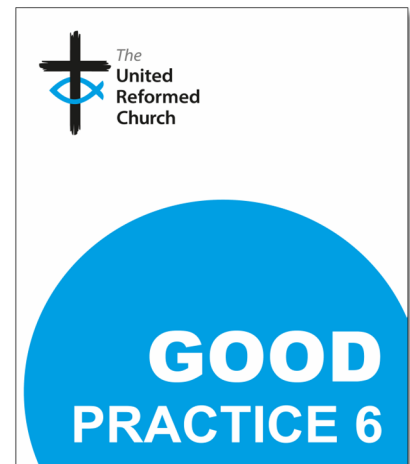


The  
United  
Reformed  
Church  
Safeguarding

## April 2025

Proverbs 31:8 calls us to 'speak out on behalf of the voiceless, and for the rights of all who are vulnerable'.

We all yearn for warmer temperatures after what seems a long, long winter, but we have much to look forward to and wish all our churches and communities a blessed Easter.



## Annual Safeguarding Returns – an update

A warm thank you to all churches that were able to complete their Annual Safeguarding Return (ASR) within the deadline.

If you have yet to complete your church's ASR please do contact your [synod](#) who will be glad to assist you.

The data that you kindly provide is critical to the Safeguarding team's understanding of how we fare as a denomination. It informs us where churches may need more support and what they find challenging, but it also helps us identify next steps for the team, where we can best utilise our resources and guides us on policies and procedures. We can and do also celebrate where we find examples of best practice.

Your Synod Safeguarding Officers will shortly be busy analysing data which will feed into a larger report.

## Training Update

We have some good news!

Our Training and Developer Coordinator, Carrie Kaunda, has been working hard and consulting with key stakeholders to develop a new URC Safeguarding training matrix which will provide greater clarity to you all in identifying the safeguarding training you need for your role. The new framework will be taken to General Assembly in July and we hope to implement it after this.

In the meantime, here is reminder of short (two hour) Zoom courses open to everyone:



01 May 1:30pm **Spiritual Abuse (please note the change of date)**

08 May 7:00pm **DDC Verifier and Safer Recruitment (DBS in England & Wales)**

13 May 7:00pm **Online Safety**

03 June 1:30pm **Domestic Abuse**

12 June 10:30pm **Supporting Survivors**

02 July 1:00pm **Modern Slavery**

10 July 10:30pm **Elders as Trustees**

21 July 1:00pm **Substance Abuse**

09 September 7:30pm **Refugees and Asylum seekers**

10 September 1:00pm **DDC Verifier and Safer Recruitment (DBS in England & Wales)**

22 September 1:00pm **Adult Safeguarding**

09 October 1:30pm **Spiritual Abuse**

17 November 1:00pm **Online Safety**

20 November 7:00pm **DDC Verifier and Safer Recruitment (DBS in England & Wales)**

To book, please contact [Emma Pearce](mailto:emma.pearce@urc.org.uk) stating your name/role/church/course preferences.

For mandatory safeguarding courses i.e. Foundation, Intermediate and Advanced safeguarding training, please contact your [synod safeguarding team](mailto:synod.safeguarding@urc.org.uk).

## Update on Safeguarding Legislation in Scotland

Changes to safeguarding legislation in Scotland, set out in the Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020, came into force on 01 April 2025. The National Synod of Scotland has been working with Disclosure Scotland and the Designated Safeguarding Lead to make sure that URC roles requiring a criminal record check have the appropriate level of disclosure moving forward. The Criminal Record Check Matrix ([Paper S1](#)) was approved by Assembly Executive in February 2025 and the National Synod of Scotland meeting in March 2025.



Local church safeguarding co-ordinators received a presentation from Disclosure Scotland about the changes in the legislation that affect them and this has been supplemented by written material.

The main changes are as follows:

- As of 1 April 2025 it will be mandatory for everyone undertaking a regulated role with children or protected adults to be a member of the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme. Disclosure Scotland will be providing updated guidance to religious bodies on what constitutes a regulated role to expand upon the definitions set out in the legislation. If a person is not engaged in a regulated role they cannot be asked to join the PVG scheme.
- As of 1 April 2026 PVG will cease to be a lifetime membership scheme and people doing regulated roles will have to renew their membership every five years. Disclosure Scotland will alert people as to when their membership expires. In the meantime, Disclosure Scotland is encouraging organisations to advise them that individuals should be removed from the PVG scheme if they no longer do a regulated role. If you have people associated with your church who are members of the PVG scheme no longer doing regulated work through your church email [dsupdate@disclosurescotland.gov.scot](mailto:dsupdate@disclosurescotland.gov.scot) with the individual's name, date of birth and PVG membership number and request they are removed from the scheme.
- In addition, the new legislation will give individuals more rights in relation to the PVG scheme. Individuals will need to confirm they are happy for their results to be shared with an organization; they will be able to explain the context for certain spent or childhood convictions before they're disclosed; they will be able to ask for an independent review of some disclosure content including 'other relevant information'.

If you are involved with the National Synod of Scotland of the URC in any way and have any questions about these changes to safeguarding legislation please contact the [Synod Office](#).

## Disclosure & Barring Update Service – Important notice



### Disclosure & Barring Service

For those of you who are a member of the DBS Update Service you should be aware that the service will contact you if no organisation has carried out a status check in a twelve month period. You will be given 14 days to act to keep your account live. Non action means that your membership will be cancelled.

***Given this development in how memberships are administered for the Update Service, you may wish to check the current status of your own membership.***

## And the Rest...

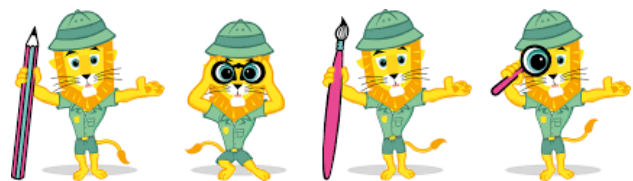
### Save the date 2025 Safeguarding Symposium



The central Safeguarding Team at Church House is pulling together the final content for the next Safeguarding Symposium on the afternoon of **Wednesday 15 October 2025**. We'll update you all further in the next newsletter and we will circulate the flyer shortly.

### Raise your Roar with Roarry!

Several churches have reminded us how wonderful and helpful Roarry the Lion is in helping gift children with confidence and awareness to speak out where they don't feel something is quite how it should be.



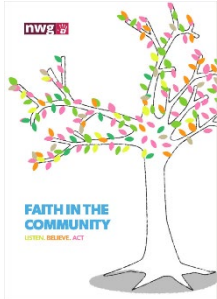
This initiative from the charity Thirtyone:Eight has multiple resources you can use in teaching children about safeguarding. you can find their resources on their [website](#).

### Safeguarding Sunday - shout out to churches

[Safeguarding Sunday](#) is 16 November 2025. If you have positive stories from your church of how you celebrated Safeguarding Sunday last year (or previous years), Carrie Kaunda would love to hear about it and you can drop her an email at [carrie.kaunda@urc.org.uk](mailto:carrie.kaunda@urc.org.uk).

## Resources

Here are some resources that you may find interesting for use in your church:



**Child Exploitation** - Stop CE is an organisation committed to tackling Child Exploitation and they have an area on their website [for faith organisations](#) with a useful downloadable and printable toolkit.

**Modern Day Slavery / Human Trafficking** - [The National Police Chief's Council \(NPCC\)](#) has some useful cultural resources for 4 countries with brief historical backgrounds, customs and key cultural elements.