



April 2026

Easter Blessings.

The Safeguarding Team, as always, is progressing through a list of strategic processes to strengthen the safeguarding position of the denomination. Two such areas are the Safeguarding Strategic Plan and the Synod Safeguarding Reviews.



A draft of the Strategic Plan has been subject to robust consultations and feedback. It is now in its final draft.

The Central Safeguarding team has recently completed the second of two pilot Synod Safeguarding Reviews, with the aim of bringing a proposal to General Assembly to roll out the reviews across all Synods.

Synod Safeguarding Officers (SSOs) are starting to examine the data from the Annual Safeguarding Returns to clarify what we are doing well and to identify clear pressure points so that we can develop policies, procedures and training to better support our churches. Further information on this will be available in the annual safeguarding report which is available at General Assembly.



1 Peter 1:3: "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead".

Annual Safeguarding Returns

A big thank you to those who completed the Annual Safeguarding Return (ASR).

The Annual Safeguarding Return portal is now closed but you can still [download](#) blank copies of the ASR (one each for England, Scotland and Wales) which can be completed and returned to your Synod Office. It also lists each Synods' point of contact for queries and further help.

DBS/Disclosure Scotland Update



We have seen an upturn in churches instigating DBS/Disclosure Scotland checks for role holders. We thank you for ensuring that the URC is compliant with DBS and Disclosure Scotland requirements. For ease of reference please refer to the [England & Wales DBS](#) matrix and the [Disclosure Scotland](#) requirement matrix.

We undertake short sample audits of disclosure applications and we have identified that there are multiple applications for one person. The URC gets charged for each application and so we are keen to avoid duplicates. [DDC](#) is a great source of information for those undertaking either DBS or Disclosure Scotland applications and here are a few pointers below.

- If you use an incorrect name for an applicant ie you set up an application in the nickname of a person, they can correct this to their legal name on the online application form so there is no need to set up a new application

- Where an incorrect role has been used, please ask DDC to change it. They can do this in the majority of cases (but not for a role which needs to be changed from PAID to VOLUNTARY)

Policy Update

We have been working with the Synod of Scotland to produce a version of Good Practice 6 that reflects the specific Scottish context and legislation.

The Central Safeguarding Team is developing a programme of Synod Safeguarding Reviews to help identify examples of good practice and also areas for improvement. This is part of the URC's response to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) which recommended that faith organisations should strengthen their auditing of safeguarding practice. We have piloted the Review process in two Synods so far. We thank those Synods for their cooperation and hard work. Further details will be shared as the work develops.

Training Update

Our Training Officer continues to work on new safeguarding training content and updating current training to reflect feedback and good practice.



The URC Safeguarding Training matrixes which were approved at General Assembly in 2025 are available [here](#) and are an excellent resource for churches to check that colleagues are accessing the correct level of safeguarding training across England, Scotland and Wales.

Mandatory safeguarding training ie Foundation, Intermediate and Advanced, is organised and delivered by individual Synods so please do visit the safeguarding section of your Synod website to see what training is on offer and whether it is on Zoom or face to face in a church.

Additionally, we offer 'specialist/special interest' safeguarding training which are 2 hour Zoom modules that may be of interest to you either personally or for your church

demographic. Anyone can attend. These courses are bookable through [Emma Pearce](#). The offering for the first half of the year is [here](#), and the second half of the year, [here](#).

Ministers Advanced Safeguarding Training - one of the most significant changes to mandatory training is that Ministers are required to take Advanced safeguarding training. To kickstart the process the central team is offering Advanced Training to Ministers on Zoom. Two sessions have already been delivered and we are pleased to say that they were well attended. There are two more sessions for Ministers in 2026 which are bookable through the links here:

- Wednesday 6 May 1-3pm and Wednesday 13th May 1-3.30pm – [May booking form](#)
- Monday 5th October 1-3pm and Monday 12th October 1-3.30pm – [October booking form](#)

Please also check your Synod's Advanced Safeguarding training offering to maximise your options.

Safeguarding Sunday – one for your diaries!



This year Safeguarding Sunday is on 15 November.

Led by the independent Christian Safeguarding Charity, [Thirtyone:Eight](#) they will shortly start to release resources for the event. Please do check back over the next few months.

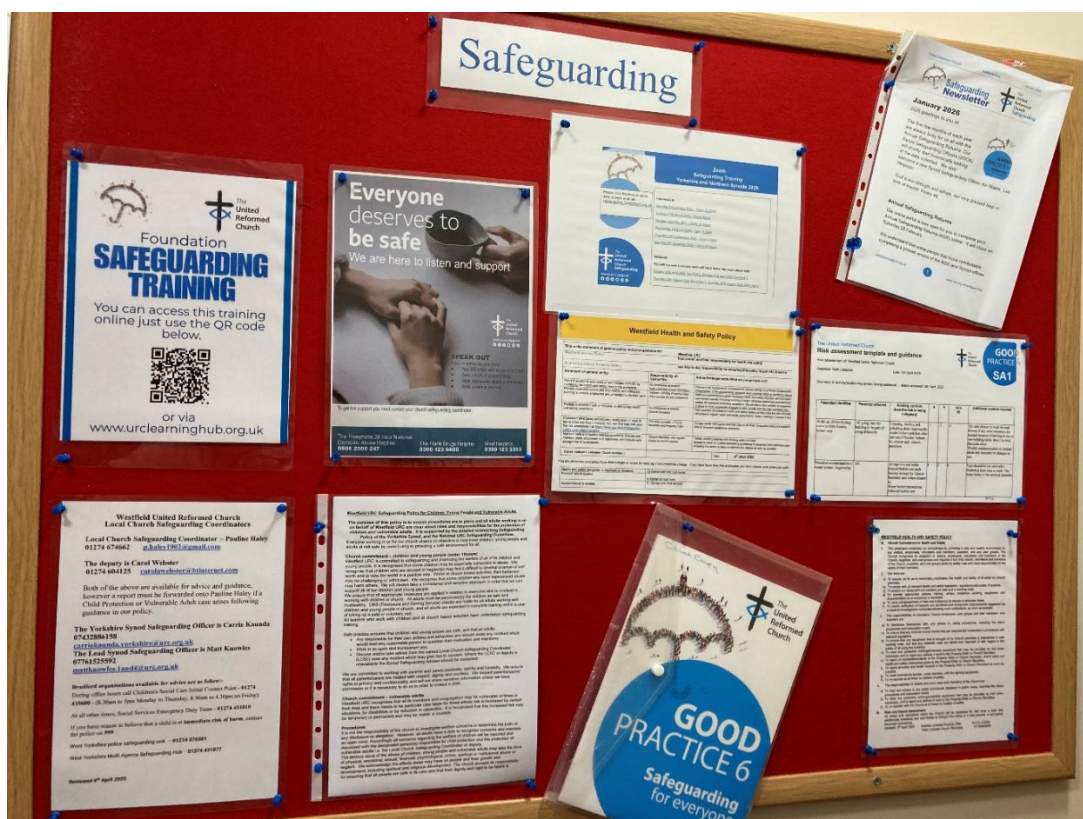
15 November may not suit your dairy and you are welcome to pick any Sunday that better suits your church timetable but we would encourage all churches to use the resources available to raise awareness of safeguarding in your churches

Please email [Emma Pearce](#) with innovative ideas from previous years' Safeguarding Sunday events that you would be happy to share across our Church (photos are very much welcomed!).

Good News Stories

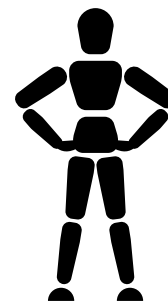
The URC is full of good safeguarding practices across our churches and we'd like to share these across our denomination. Here's one:

Westfield URC In Wyke, Bradford has a GREAT noticeboard dedicated to safeguarding. They have provided an easy link (QR code) to the Foundation e-learning safeguarding module (that can be taken in your own time and at your own pace), feel safe poster, their church safeguarding policy and a hard copy of Good Practice 6. Check out this noticeboard!



Safeguarding Convenor

We are seeking applications for the role Convenor of the United Reformed Church Safeguarding Committee.



You will have a current or recent working knowledge of safeguarding with children and/or adults at risk and have an understanding of contextualised safeguarding within the faith setting. You must be a member of the URC.

As the convenor of the committee, you will be instrumental in overseeing the implementation of the URC's safeguarding policies and the strategic management of safeguarding across the denomination. You will support the Head of Safeguarding in their role as Secretary to the committee and you will chair the committee.

Terms of Reference are downloadable [here](#) and please see the [job description and person specification](#). More information on the role of a General Assembly Committee convenor can be found [here](#).

Interested?

If you want to find out more, please contact:

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