

# Paper R2

## Safeguarding advisory group

### Past Case Review Update



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### Basic Information

<b>Contact name and email address</b>	Richard Church <a href="mailto:richard.church@urc.org.uk">richard.church@urc.org.uk</a>
<b>Action required</b>	For information
<b>Draft resolution(s)</b>	None

### Summary of Content

<b>Subject and aim(s)</b>	Update on phases 1 and 2 of the Past Case Review
<b>Main points</b>	Closure of open advertising, case progress, learning
<b>Previous relevant documents</b>	Paper R2, Mission Council, March 2016 Paper R2, Mission Council, May 2017 Paper R1, Mission Council, November 2017
<b>Consultation has taken place with...</b>	Elizabeth Gray-King, PCR Project Manager Ioannis Athanasiou, URC Safeguarding Officer Julie Ashby Ellis, external Safeguarding Consultant Safeguarding Advisory Group

### Summary of Impact

<b>Financial</b>	None
<b>External (e.g. ecumenical)</b>	

# Past Case Review Update

This is the last update to Mission Council for the Past Case Review. A final and significant report will go to General Assembly 2018.

## Phase 1 Update

1. Phase 1 is closed. Some cases may still come to light after Safeguarding Officer scrutiny, but there are no unread files.

## Phase 2 Update

### 2. Cases

All cases are now either closed, or with synods in active case handling. Two cases required the attention of statutory authorities, and one required legal attention. It is not yet appropriate to share details.

### 3. Learning

- 3.1 The commissioned Internal Learning Review's analysis will form part of the final report to General Assembly 2018. Additionally, the independent external Safeguarding Consultant's interim and final findings will contribute to that report.

#### 3.2 Learning group

This group, comprised of a church historian, a Bible scholar, a colleague denomination's safeguarding lead with a background in social work and a professor of abuse studies, continues its work.

- 3.3 We expected a draft report from the learning group at this Mission Council. However, the group commissioned an interim piece of work to archive and link files which had hitherto not been linked. Proper linking would enable us to trace the narrative of individuals across various office records which held files on the same person. Once this important piece of archiving and associating is completed, the learning group will continue its analysis. Their findings will be both a stand-alone document, and will contribute to the General Assembly 2018 Report.

### 4. Comments

- 4.1 We continue to be deeply thankful to the support from synods and their officers and to the many volunteers who made up the PCR teams of listeners, allegations panels and the allegations reference group. The URC is profoundly indebted to this commitment and understands the toll it may have taken on some.

- 4.2 It is worth asking if all the time, energy and expense were needed to conduct this Past Case review. The simple answer is yes. The cases which did come forward may not have appeared otherwise. The URC decided to conduct the review with a commitment to ensuring that every aspect of the URC is as safe as possible and honours everyone who is a part of it. We already know that positive changes have been made in local churches, in synods, and within Assembly committees and staff. Records are being improved, with plans for further development. We have a clear and robust process to handle such complaints in the future. We anticipate that those systemic improvements that can be identified will be made, as part of our attempts to prevent further distress or abuse.