

Paper R1

Safeguarding Advisory Group
Safeguarding Update

United Reformed Church 2017
Church 2017
Church 2017



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Action required	No specific action is requested or required by the information in this paper.
Draft resolution(s)	N/A

Summary of Content

Subject and aim(s)	Safeguarding
Main points	Update on safeguarding practice within the URC
Previous relevant documents	N/A
Consultation has taken place with...	Richard Church

Summary of Impact

Financial	N/A
External (e.g. ecumenical)	N/A

Safeguarding Update

1. The last twelve months have seen the implementation of national safeguarding team meetings which have provided information, training and support to Synod Safeguarding Officers. This has also provided an opportunity to network and create peer support relationships to help develop and promote safeguarding within the denomination. To further that some synods have employed, or intend to employ, Synod Safeguarding Officers to work specifically on a safeguarding remit, as opposed to the current arrangement which sees CYDO's undertaking that responsibility also. This has allowed those officers to focus solely on safeguarding and provide a planned delivery of training to churches, along with advice and guidance around safeguarding concerns.
2. The Safeguarding Advisory Group (SAG) meets regularly to look at the development and progression of safeguarding within the URC. SAG have approved a process for managing DBS disclosures with content, an extension to the phase two open call for the Past Case Review and are currently working on developing a three-year strategic plan for safeguarding within the URC, which will accord with the annual risk assessment. The Synod Safeguarding Officers have been offered an opportunity to attend a meeting with SAG in May 2017, to understand the role of SAG and offer a perspective of safeguarding from a regional level.
3. In November 2016, Synod Safeguarding Officers were asked to complete a safeguarding return and report this to Church House by the end of February 2017. This was the first time this data has been collected by Church House. The basis for requesting this data was to establish an overview of the standard of safeguarding throughout the denomination and areas of concern to be identified prior to training being delivered by CCPAS around working with offenders and risk. Some synods collect this data on an annual basis and in other areas this exercise had not been completed. Good Practice 4 provides a safeguarding return as an appendix for use and Synods were specifically asked to respond to the following questions:
 - How many safeguarding concerns has the church had in the last twelve months and what referrals were made because of those concerns? (Including LADO and Charity Commission referrals)
 - How many known offenders in the church, current and previous, and number of contracts in place to manage this?
4. Seven synods responded by the requested date and reported a 60-80% response rate from their local churches. It was identified that within these synods in the last twelve months there have been 37 safeguarding concerns raised, seven of which have led to external referrals to statutory agencies. There have been 27 offenders identified and 26 'contracts' put in place to manage these offenders. In two synods, it was reported that no safeguarding concerns had been raised in the last twelve months. This task also identified a need for training in local churches, to which the Synod Safeguarding Officers are responding.
5. Responses from the outstanding synods will be obtained to feed into understanding the picture of safeguarding within the denomination and producing standardised documents for synods related to risk assessment and contracts for offenders within the church.

