

# Paper R2

## URC's Safeguarding strategic plan 2020 to 2025

### Safeguarding advisory group

#### Basic information

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<b>Action required</b>	Decision.
<b>Draft resolution(s)</b>	<b>Having already accepted the recommendations of the Past Case Review Learning Group Report, Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, endorses the URC's safeguarding strategic plan as the next step of the journey. Mission Council directs the safeguarding advisory group:</b> <b>(a) to oversee the development, implementation, review and monitoring of the plan</b> <b>(b) to advise Mission Council/General Assembly on progress at subsequent meetings.</b>

#### Summary of content

<b>Subject and aim(s)</b>	The Past Case Review indicated the need for the Church to undertake systemic changes. This strategy with its six clear objectives aims to effect cultural change and improvements in the safeguarding policies, practices and procedures of the Church over the next five years.
<b>Main points</b>	Detailed revision of the Safeguarding strategic plan.  Financial proposal to help implement the plan.  Responses to two public inquiries.  Publication of Good Practice five - <i>Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk</i> .
<b>Previous relevant documents</b>	Paper R2 at Mission Council, May 2019. Paper R2 at Mission Council, November 2018.
<b>Consultation has taken place with...</b>	Members of the SAG. URC General Secretary. Synod Moderators, Synod Safeguarding Officers, Synod Clerks and CYDOs

## Summary of impact

<b>Financial</b>	Proposed resolutions have financial implications that require effective planning and management of available and shared resources among the synods. The costs of safeguarding training, administration and work with adult survivors of abuse will be additional to existing budgets and structures of the Church in the initial five-year period of the plan.
<b>External (e.g. ecumenical)</b>	High potential for partnership working with ecumenical partners and looking at the best use of available resources.

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Responding to the instruction given by Mission Council in May 2019, the Safeguarding advisory group reviewed all the PCR Learning Report's recommendations and consulted with synods, finally producing a comprehensive strategic safeguarding plan for the Church to take effect from 2020 to 2025. The plan sets up priorities and six strategic objectives for the safeguarding policy and practice of the United Reformed Church. According to the URC's mission, the aim of the Church is to proclaim the love of God in Jesus Christ in word and deed. A main strategy to achieve that overall aim is to ensure that anyone who engages with our congregations, synods, institutions, and offices across the three nations of England, Scotland and Wales is committed to protecting children and adults who are or might be experiencing abuse or neglect.
- 1.2 Safeguarding people is a journey and part of the URC's mission. We journey alongside those who have been abused, we safeguard the integrity of creation, and we all go together as one body. The strategy for safeguarding at the URC places ethos, shared responsibilities and collaborative action at the forefront of delivering the tasks and actions of this strategy in ways that align with the conciliar traditions and policies of the Church as well as with safeguarding statutory requirements and regulations. Central to this is the view of safeguarding as being everyone's responsibility, to support the welfare and wellbeing of people across the denomination, along with a commitment to a common policy – *Good Practice 4 - Safeguarding for Children and Adults at Risk* – as the only safeguarding policy of the Church. In Scotland, elements of the URC strategy will be delivered in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures of the Church of Scotland due to the specific Scots law. For instance, safer recruitment and disciplinary processes are not covered in the current safeguarding agreement with the Church of Scotland.

## 2. Updates on actions since last Mission Council

- 2.1 In the midst of reviewing the plan (July 2019), the URC was granted core participant status for IICSA's investigation into child protection in religious

organisations and settings in England and Wales. This investigation is thematic and focuses upon organisational structures and child protection practices, looking at whether there are common issues across religious organisations and settings and how these can be met and overcome. The investigation covers religious settings such as mosques, synagogues, churches and temples; places of faith tuition; and youth groups and camps. It does not examine individual case studies or non-religious youth provision which may be situated in a religious setting: for example, where outside organisations hire church premises.

- 2.2 The inquiry received 33 applications for core participant status and the chair has designated 20 individuals and organisations as core participants to this investigation. The determination of the URC as a core participant is made on the basis that the URC has played a direct and significant role in relation to the matters to which the Inquiry relates through our recent Past Case Review. As a result, we will play a formal role within the investigation set up by the Government and assist the Inquiry by providing information and offering insight into matters relating to child sexual abuse and protection both within this denomination and in religious organisations and settings more widely. We have already submitted a witness statement to account for the policies and procedures the Church follows to protect children from sexual abuse. The hearing for this (in which the Church's Legal Adviser will be involved) will be held between 16 and 27 March 2020.
- 2.3 The Church has also received a request from and submitted evidence to the APPG (All Party Parliamentary Group on Safeguarding in Faith Settings) Inquiry into 'Positions of Trust'. Endorsed by Sarah Champion MP and Michael Tomlinson MP, this second inquiry of the APPG plans to publish a report discussing whether the definition of 'Position of Trust' in the Sexual Offences Act, 2003 needs to be changed. The concern is to ensure that faith settings are sufficiently within the scope of legislation to allow young people to be properly protected. The evidence sessions will be held at the Houses of Parliament on 22 October.
- 2.4 The next edition of URC's safeguarding policy - *Good Practice 5: Safeguarding for Children and Adults at Risk* will be ready in January 2020 to reflect new laws and regulatory requirements. All relevant people and groups were informed about the consultation timeframes to ensure that all wisdom and expertise across the denomination will contribute to this development. Thanks to a dedicated Safeguarding Policy Review Group, the whole Church will access for first time a common safeguarding policy that will be compact, user-friendly and easily accessible to local churches, synods, institutions and bodies of the Church. The handbook for local churches will no longer be in use. *Good Practice 5: Safeguarding for Children and Adults at Risk* will be the only safeguarding policy and guidance document for all parts of the church and will combine best practice guidance on all forms of abuse and practices of safeguarding with the advantages of downloadable appendices from the main website of the URC and an index within the document.

- 2.5 We continue to develop a framework of safeguarding training across the URC to ensure a standardised approach to training and development for those engaged with children and adults at risk in our Church. Following recommendations in the Past Case Review (PCR) Learning report, safeguarding training in the URC must ensure that everyone working in URC affiliated churches, groups, offices and institutions understands the safeguarding processes and policies of the URC, and is appropriately equipped in addressing child abuse and harm in all forms. In alignment with Good Practice four, Safeguarding training – Practice Guidance for the URC has been under development with the support of the Safeguarding training review group. Further work is required to have a fully-fledged guidance tailored to the internal culture of the URC. The Safeguarding Training – Practice Guidance will be brought for consideration to Mission Council in March 2020. We plan that this safeguarding training will align with and be recognised by other denominations for effective ecumenical recognition and partnership.
- 2.6 SAG is liaising with MIND (Ministerial Incapacity and Discipline Advisory Group) in the process to review the current ministerial disciplinary process (Section O). Our focus is on seeking a joined-up and consistent approach to address the present disconnection between safeguarding and discipline. One of the main recommendations given to the URC by the PCR learning group suggests that a new disciplinary process to be developed should prioritise safeguarding.

### **3. Moving towards a five-year strategy**

- 3.1 Making our safeguarding more thorough and careful is bound to involve some fresh investment of resource. We seek a uniformly high standard among synods but may not simply impose this as a demand upon them. They have varied starting points – in funds, in volunteer strength and in patterns of paid staffing. Further consultation with synods in recent months has enabled us to finalise the plan and consider the differing resource implications available to implement the plan in each synod. We have already visited eleven synods and have looked at the budget for 2020 and projections for 2021-22 provided by the Chief Finance Officer. SAG consulted carefully with each synod and with the finance committee.
- 3.2 It was agreed therefore that a Safeguarding Programme Officer be employed to work (4 days a week) with the denominational Safeguarding Adviser, to help synods to implement the plan over the next three years. Such a post would cost approximately 32K per year, and the postholder need not be London based. It is further suggested that a post of part time Safeguarding Administrative Assistant be created, working three days a week. This would cost around 15K per year. In addition to these staff appointments, a sum of £120,000 pounds be made available over the next three years to offer additional assistance to synods for administrative/legal help as may be required to deliver the strategy effectively in the years to 2025. Additionally, a sum of £5,000 has already been added to the 2020 budget to support consultation work with survivors led by the safeguarding

office at Church House, and a previously agreed sum of £3,000 put forward for training and professional development for synod safeguarding officers and coordinators who will support the strategic plan.

- 3.3 Delivery of the strategic plan will occur in two phases: Years one, two, three and four, will focus on planning, delivery and evaluation. Finally, in year five the Safeguarding advisory group (SAG) will review progress against its published objectives and will undertake planning and consultation to develop a new strategic plan for 2025 onwards. The Safeguarding advisory group will be responsible and accountable for overseeing the priorities and activities in the plan, approving additional funding requests from synods and reporting to Mission Council through its secretary (the Safeguarding Adviser of the Church). The synods will make their own strategic arrangements related to the whole-Church strategy depending on available resources and existing safeguarding practices and they will have access to Assembly-level support.
- 3.4 The SAG advises each part of the Church to review and establish potential risks and identify remedial actions in the journey of effecting cultural change in the safeguarding policies, practices and procedures of the Church over the next five years. The Charity Commission requires trustees to manage risk and protect the reputation and assets of the charity. It is also important for all elders' meetings, synod councils, relevant committees, reference and advisory groups to integrate safeguarding risk management processes in the delivery of the plan considering all available resources, needs, geographies and unique conditions of each local church, synod, office and body of the United Reformed Church.

## GLOSSARY

<b>CC</b> Charity Commission	<b>DDC</b> Due Diligence Check Ltd	<b>PVG</b> Protecting Vulnerable Groups (Scotland Scheme)
<b>CFS</b> Churches Forum for Safeguarding	<b>GP4</b> Good Practice 4	<b>SAG</b> Safeguarding Advisory Group
<b>CH</b> Church House	<b>GP5</b> Good Practice 5	<b>S/G</b> Safeguarding
<b>CRCW</b> Church-related Community Workers	<b>LEP</b> Local Ecumenical Partnership	<b>SSO</b> Synod Safeguarding Officer
<b>CSC</b> Church Safeguarding Coordinator	<b>LADO</b> Local Authority Designated Officer	<b>GA</b> General Assembly
<b>CYDO</b> Children's and Youth Development Officer	<b>MC</b> Mission Council	<b>GP</b> Good Practice
<b>DBS</b> Disclosure and Barring Service	<b>MIND</b> Ministerial Incapacity and Discipline Advisory Group)	<b>URC</b> The United Reformed Church

## Outline of six strategic objectives: charting the way forward

URC Strategic Objective	Key Tasks	Rationale	Success Indicators	Deadlines	Key People	Possible issues and wider implications
1. Instil a safeguarding ethos of care and service within all local congregations, synods and bodies of the URC.	1.1. Ensure that each local church and community have safeguarding designated persons committed to protecting children and adults who are or might be at risk of experience abuse or neglect	All URC churches have at least a single point of contact to protect places of worship and all those who are working for and affiliated with them.	All our churches have a single point of contact to report safeguarding	March 2021	CSC Data/Admin staff Elders Pastoral Committees	Not enough and able volunteers to undertake the role – One CSC can be shared across a pastorate or group of local churches  A transparent approach to local safeguarding arrangements is valued in practice  Good examples of active safeguarding coordinators, elders and volunteers be acknowledged
	1.2. Contact details of safeguarding designated persons are added and updated on church posters and noticeboards, URC databases, Year Book and Synod Directories and websites	Details of designated safeguarding professionals (Church Safeguarding Coordinators/ Synod Safeguarding Officers) are public and easily accessible to raise safeguarding concerns or other general enquiries throughout the Church	Numbers of churches providing this data on church returns  Number of posters displayed	On time of annual returns (normally January)	Church Secretaries CSC Admin staff SSOs S/G Adviser Publications staff	GDPR principles considered and applied  The risk of low rate in church returns.  Using one return form and requesting data only once a year from the churches  Correlate data of synod safeguarding returns and church annual returns to inform and regularly update a centralised database

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<p>1. Instil a safeguarding ethos of care and service within all congregations, synods and bodies of the URC.</p>	<p>1.3 Raise awareness of child protection and safeguarding adults at risk with guidance, resources and material within the worship, care and life of the URC</p>	<p>Keep every minister, children’s and family worker, youth worker, elder, staff member and volunteer regularly updated and well supported to place safeguarding at the heart of church life</p>	<p>Materials downloaded from websites, distributed and used</p> <p>More requests for training made by churches</p> <p>Training intake from children/youth workers, SSO and CSC</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>SSOs</p> <p>CSCs</p> <p>S/G Adviser</p> <p>Comms team</p> <p>Assembly and Synod staff and leaders</p> <p>Church Ministers and Elders</p>	<p>Constant changes in public policy and legislation</p> <p>The use of the website, new technologies, video clips, social media, newsletters and free resource packs to disseminate new knowledge and examples of promoting good practice</p> <p>Churches with no electronic systems are recorded and supported accordingly</p> <p>Pay attention to identifying and defining spiritual abuse at the URC. A working group to look at the contested nature and theological implications of this form of abuse for the benefit of the whole denomination</p>
	<p>1.4 Develop shared awareness of safeguarding, and what counts as a safeguarding concern across the denomination in alignment with legislation and internal ethos</p>	<p>Build on common understanding of protection and safeguarding among leaders, ministers, frontline staff, elders and other volunteers and encourage teamwork and collaboration in dealing with safeguarding incidents and concerns</p>	<p>Training material and resources produced &amp; accessed</p> <p>Working groups crossing boundaries between different departments and roles within the URC</p>	<p>June 2023</p>	<p>S/G Adviser</p> <p>SSOs</p>	<p>A culture of deference and inaction to be alarmed of and discouraged</p> <p>A URC-standardised basic safeguarding training that reflects the needs of our Church</p> <p>The opportunity of updating GP4 and recognise it as the only safeguarding policy and guidance document for the whole church</p> <p>The vital role of keeping up with the regular meetings of SSOs</p>

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1. Instil a safeguarding ethos of care and service within all congregations, synods and bodies of the URC.	1.5. Improve safeguarding communications between Church House, synods, local churches and URC safeguarding designated persons.	Enable better information cascade, sharing of expertise and good practice in handling safeguarding incidents and concerns internally and externally	Agreed flow chart for sharing information within the URC  Number of synods using the main database  Use of URC recording form is standardised and increased	January 2023	S/G Adviser  SSOs  CSCs	Recording and Sharing Information principles are clear and standardised in all parts of the Church  Three national meetings with all SSOs annually  Periodic 121 conversations of SSO with SA  Synod meetings and networks of local churches  Relevant events, training courses and conferences are shared within the Church
2. Ensure initial and appropriate pastoral care and support to those who are impacted by safeguarding incidents and concerns	2.1 Establish ways of support that contribute to a lasting healing process for survivors and those affected by abuse, harm or neglect from the time of disclosure.	This allows individuals who disclose abuse or neglect to feel they are listened to and that the Church is ready to meet their pastoral care and support needs and/or signpost them to appropriate specialist services or other sources of support	Positive feedback and evaluation by survivors  Reduced number of complaints and reports  Increased number of referrals to external specialist support	January 2021	S/G Adviser  SSOs  CSCs  Active Ministers  Elders  Synod Pastoral Committees	Not enough people at the church or synod to provide pastoral support  Access to local help and/or local services to be identified and offered  The ongoing impact of abuse on survivors. Avoid re-traumatisation of processes, which compounds the original abuse.  Standardised training established for those with pastoral care responsibilities within URC



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2. Ensure appropriate and ongoing pastoral care and support to those who are impacted by safeguarding incidents and concerns	2.2. Co-produce with synods an appropriate case management system that provides prompt and proportionate support to those children, young people and adults in greatest need	This helps assess and prevent safeguarding risks with pastoral care needs established as early as possible and followed up	<p>Number of individual cases</p> <p>Number of occasions that pastoral support was offered</p> <p>Number of cases that pastoral care and support has taken</p> <p>Number of referrals to external support</p>	July 2021	<p>S/G Adviser</p> <p>SSOs</p> <p>CSCs</p> <p>Synod and CH admin staff</p>	<p>Not sharing the same understanding of what counts as a case – Definitions be provided in GP5 and internal protocols</p> <p>Access for all synods and Church House’s relevant staff to a centralised recording system of allegations and cases of abuse, harm and neglect</p> <p>Expectations and challenges of managing workload</p> <p>Need for extra specialist support and supervision for those who handle serious cases</p>
	2.3. Consult and engage with survivors and relevant groups and organisations	This ensures that the URC co-produces with survivors, develops and adopts appropriate approaches to supporting survivors and preventing abuse	<p>Number of consultations and reviews with survivors and relevant groups</p> <p>New services of care and support</p>	Ongoing	<p>S/G Adviser</p> <p>SSOs</p> <p>SAG</p>	<p>Budget implications</p> <p>Ethical considerations - Principles of confidentiality and integrity are paramount</p> <p>Voices are heard in meaningful and non-tokenistic ways in all future developments</p> <p>Learn from/work with other denominations, organisations and specialist agencies (e.g. NAPAC)</p>
	2.4 Use internal or external specialists to support local congregations affected by serious incidents of abuse	A whole-congregation approach will enable local church communities to recover from trauma	Lessons drawn and impacted on local safeguarding practice		Ongoing	<p>Elders</p> <p>Active Minsters</p> <p>SSOs</p>

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2. Ensure appropriate and ongoing pastoral care and support to those who are impacted by safeguarding incidents and concerns		and crisis in a supportive environment for all	Sharing good stories of church community work in the area of safeguarding		Synod moderators	<p>High risk of stigma and conflicts to inflict more trauma to the lives of those affected by serious safeguarding situations</p> <p>Principles of informed consents, confidentiality and transparency to be applied.</p> <p>The interrelated work of pastoral committees and LEPs.</p>
3. Set up secure and appropriate systems and processes of data and information handling and reporting safeguarding	3.1 Develop and implement a centralised, standardised electronic system to record and follow up safeguarding cases and concerns from the beginning of the process to resolution	This protects the rights of individuals and relationships across the URC and ensures individual cases, and ministerial and case files are integrated, monitored and securely stored in one unified system	<p>All synods access the system</p> <p>Adoption of <i>Appendix A8: Reporting concerns form</i> across the URC</p> <p>Number of resolved cases</p> <p>Positive reviews from those who access the system</p>	June 2023	<p>S/G Adviser</p> <p>SSOs</p> <p>Ministries office</p> <p>IT and admin staff</p>	<p>No clear lines of accountability and duties to record and report. Guidelines in alignment with Sharing Information Policies and Legislation</p> <p>Not all synods accessing the main database. Added costs for new systems and/or training to be considered at early stages of delivery</p> <p>Disintegration of data in different parts of the church. Protocols are developed, applied and reviewed</p> <p>Access and permissions to appropriate staff are granted</p> <p>Synod of Scotland's different arrangements</p>

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3. Set up secure and appropriate systems and processes of data and information handling and reporting Safeguarding	3.2 Ensure there are clear lines of accountability by use of standard reporting forms and procedures on a regular and annual basis	This helps those with safeguarding leadership responsibilities keep an oversight of practice and share information with councils, committees and groups of the Church	<p>Protocols established, used and reviewed</p> <p>Number of reports produced and shared</p>	June 2022	<p>S/G Adviser</p> <p>SSOs</p> <p>CSCs</p> <p>Members of relevant committees and groups</p>	<p>People not aware of lines of accountability</p> <p>Roles and Job Descriptions with clear reference to responsibilities and duties to report and share information</p> <p>Standardising GP5 as the main safeguarding policy and practice guidance across the URC</p> <p>New policies (whistleblowing, bullying/harassment, lone working) are developed and applied across the URC (by SAG, HRAG or CHMG)</p> <p>Cross-over with HR and Comms / Reputation management</p>
	3.3. Each URC synod provides safeguarding data and information annually in a consistent format	Consistency of what information is required as well as regular reports and reviews of internal safeguarding policy and practice will help monitor and review changes	<p>Evidence of review and changes on policy and practice</p> <p>Use of standardised forms across synods and churches</p>	Each May in all years	<p>Church Secretaries</p> <p>CSCs</p> <p>SSOs</p>	<p>Heavy workloads</p> <p>Risk of not meeting deadlines</p> <p>Provide adequate planning time for those who collate information and produce the annual S/G report for SAG and the whole church</p> <p>Access to appropriate systems</p>
	3.4 Co-produce with synods minimum standards of compliance	This will embed a culture of co-design on the journey of	Synod positive feedback of co-production	Each May in all years	<p>S/G Adviser</p> <p>SSOs</p>	Avoid a hierarchical model

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3. Set up secure and appropriate systems and processes of data and information handling and reporting Safeguarding	with legislation and internal procedures and obtain benchmark progress for each synod	improving URC's safeguarding practices in open and transparent ways			Chairs of relevant committees and groups	Provide clear guidance on what is compulsory in the the review of GP4 and production of GP5  Working closely with synods
	3.5. Establish tools to measure change and review adequacy and robustness of procedures and policies	Support a culture of continuous learning and improvement in the local church and identify systemic barriers across the denomination	Standardised and consistent use of audit tools  Periodic independent reviews and audits	April 2024	S/G Adviser  SSOs  CSCs  Elders	Fear of an independent oversight at the denomination, synods and local churches  Building trust and collaboration  Co-produce audits with survivors of abuse in the design and delivery  Avoid long-lasting reviews and excessive paperwork
4. Ensure the safeguarding policies and procedures are updated, reviewed and implemented in practice throughout the URC	4.1 Update URC's safeguarding policy every two years following the publication of Good Practice 5 (annually for each local church)	This ensures good practice guidance is regularly reviewed and updated in line with new legislation and policy changes	Up-to-date publications and e-resources intake	January 2020  January 2022  January 2024	S/G Adviser  SSOs	Meeting the needs for the whole denomination  Consultation with all parts of the church to identify policy areas that require improvements  Resources (writing group, publications, etc)  Update and brief people to use GP5
	4.2 Review current safer recruitment practice of the URC and develop a Good Practice Guidance for all parts of the Church	Provide specific and clear advice that ensures appropriate recruitment, induction and retention of trustees,	New guidance's intake  Reduced number of inquiries to CH,	October 2021	S/G Adviser  SSOs  Ministries Office	Over-checking criminal records of people affiliated with the URC  Create guidance that helps people clarify when it is not

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4. Ensure the safeguarding policies and procedures are updated, reviewed and implemented in practice throughout the URC		and of paid and voluntary workers (ii) arranges lawful criminal record checks (DBS/PVG) for all who need this.	Synods and DDC  Positive feedback in undertaking checks through DDC Satisfaction survey		DBS Verifiers  DDC staff	appropriate to check, and which roles are eligible for criminal record checks  Understanding checks as part of a wider recruitment process  Scotland's different policy requires separate guidance
	4.3 Develop the capacity of safeguarding designated persons to conduct thorough safeguarding risk assessments and support offenders, alleged offenders and perpetrators of abuse across the URC	Protect against abuse and better support those who are accountable to manage risk and monitor anyone who may pose a risk	Tools and resources produced and used  Number of safeguarding contracts/agreements  Number of DBS/PVG referrals  Publications and resources intake	March 2021	S/G Adviser  SSOs  CSCs  Elders	Interpersonal relationships can minimise the importance of risk assessment in the life of the church  Equip people with the right skills and specific guidance  Regular reviews of existing risk assessment tools and relevant sections of GP4/GP5 (Risk assessment and covenants of care forms and templates)  Information sharing protocols with other denominations
	4.4 Connect safeguarding policy and procedures with URC's disciplinary processes, especially those related to ministers/CRCWs	This helps establish good practice and expertise among all members of mandated groups and those involved in safeguarding cases that lead to instigation of	Evidence of joint thinking and consultation in the review process of Section O  Setting up disciplinary processes for	June 2020	S/G Adviser  MIND  Ministries Office  SSOs	Disconnection between safeguarding and disciplinary processes  A clear and transparent process is jointly agreed and reviewed  Mandatory safeguarding training for members of mandated group involved in the Section O process

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4. Ensure the safeguarding policies and procedures are updated, reviewed and implemented in practice throughout the URC		disciplinary procedures	other relevant roles within the Church  Number of safeguarding cases recorded in the disciplinary processes			Defined role for safeguarding officers and advisers in the new disciplinary process  Adherence to GP4/GP5 requirements and legislation (e.g. Employment Law)
	4.5 Ensure people in positions of leadership and accountability are aware of any changes to safeguarding policy and practice	New policy changes are discussed within supervision and training development of employed staff and shared within teams or working groups	Communication material shared  Policy updates added on agendas  S/G advanced training uptake is increased	January 2020  &  Ongoing	S/G Adviser  SSOs	Challenges in information sharing (language, terminologies, technical issues).  Use of newsletters, briefs and reports to MC/GA to inform the right people  The central role of elders, ministers, synod moderators and General secretaries in understanding safeguarding and being aware of URC's policy and practice
5. Provide appropriate + accessible safeguarding training for all those who are accountable for + working with children, young people and adults	5.1. Benchmark and co-produce with synods URC's standardised safeguarding training programme for all roles and positions within the URC expected to undertake regular and mandatory safeguarding training	Align with current synod practices and public policy requirements to enable all those working with children and adults at risk as well as those responsible for their care undertake regular safeguarding training	Training used consistently in each synod  A system to monitor attendance and renewals is established and standardised	June 2021	S/G Adviser  Education and Learning staff  SSOs  Synod Training officers	Lack of consistency across synods  Recording attendance and renewal of URC or other denominations' training  Resistance to travel to attend training. On-line access can help but limits interaction and collaboration. Accessibility needs.

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5. Provide appropriate and accessible safeguarding training for all those who are accountable for and working with children, young people and adults					CSCs	Accrediting URC safeguarding training  Defining training packages tailored to specific roles and positions (e.g. Elders<->SSO)  Adaptation to national contexts of Scotland and Wales
	5.2. Ensure robust guidance on delivering mandatory training in both areas of safeguarding (children and adults at risk) for all identified groups involved in regulated activities	Mandatory training will ensure monitoring the delivery of standardised and refreshing safeguarding training for identified roles of accountability and leadership	Numerical evidence of training attendance  Evidence of positive action taken as a result of training Number of certificates per role	December 2020	S/G Adviser  SAG  SSOs  Ministries	Non-attendance for those who are involved in direct work with children and adults at risk  A framework of sanctions for non-attendance  Mandatory safeguarding training for active ministers  GA Certificates
	5.3. Develop and maintain quality standards of regular safeguarding training and professional development across the URC	Consistency and quality at different levels of development and delivery of safeguarding training are reviewed regularly	Positive evaluations and reviews of training provision	June 2021	SAG  SSOs  Ministries	Connection with accreditation  Working with Learning Resource Centres
	5.4 Develop and update a comprehensive guidance and package of support resources to make serving elders and trustees (URC and	The aim is that elders/trustees feel confident in preventing abuse for all people in the church as well as	Number of interactions/meetings of designated safeguarding	June 2023 & ongoing	S/G Adviser  SSOs  Education and	Data on elders are not recorded at CH or synods  High number of elders – Cost and GDPR implications

URC Strategic Objective	Key Tasks	Rationale	Success Indicators	Deadlines	Key People	Possible issues and wider implications
<p>5. Provide appropriate and accessible safeguarding training for all those who are accountable for and working with children, young people and adults</p>	<p>synod) aware of their legal responsibilities</p>	<p>protecting the assets and reputation of churches</p>	<p>persons with elders</p> <p>Feedback from elders meeting</p> <p>Numbers of elders attending basic safeguarding training</p> <p>Evaluation of training provision</p> <p>Referrals to CC</p>		<p>Learning Committee</p>	<p>Enabling regular interactions and briefings in Elders or Trustees Meetings to minimise concerns and build trust</p> <p>Working closely with other departments/teams within the URC</p> <p>Keep elders up to date regarding changes to regulations and policies using traditional and visual methodologies (induction material, Reform, video, etc</p>
	<p>5.5 Value the expertise of and contribute to continuous development of Synod Safeguarding Officers</p>	<p>Ensure synod designated persons are equipped and remain resourceful to lead all aspects of safeguarding practice in their local churches with continuous support and supervision</p>	<p>Numbers of co-working groups and surveys with SSOs</p> <p>Records of attending relevant training and professional development opportunities</p> <p>Positive appraisals and feedback from SSOs</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>SSOs</p> <p>S/G Adviser</p> <p>Line managers of SSOs</p> <p>Synod Moderators</p> <p>Relevant synod committees and groups</p>	<p>Heavy workloads and increased commitments</p> <p>Common understanding of safeguarding between SSOs to be fostered</p> <p>Joint posts with CYDO roles to be reviewed</p> <p>Adaptations to national contexts (Wales/Scotland)</p>



URC Strategic Objective	Key Tasks	Rationale	Success Indicators	Deadlines	Key People	Possible issues and wider implications
5. Provide appropriate and accessible safeguarding training for all those who are accountable for and working with children, young people and adults.	5.6 Ensure safeguarding is part of the induction of any newly appointed persons to URC roles (particularly trustees, children’s and youth workers and those in regulated activities with adults) alongside the specific role induction	This enables each new role holder to understand the personal and corporate liability should a safeguarding incident happen, while building a culture of prevention at every church setting, committee, venue.	Number of job and role descriptions where safeguarding is listed as duty	June 2022	HR CSCs Active Ministers Pastoral Committees Training Officers	Oversee essential requirements set up by Government guidance or CC  HR teams to update existing recruitment and induction policies  Update safer recruitment guidance for those who recruit, induct and line-manage workers and volunteers
6. Encourage and build constructive partnerships with statutory, non-statutory bodies, other denomination and faith-based communities	6.1 Produce guidance about when churches should call and report to statutory authorities with the support and advice from synods	This will allow more confidence to people in the setting up of information sharing protocols and sending referrals for cases crossing statutory thresholds to statutory agencies without delay	Download of on-line resource  Number of referrals to Police, Social Services, CC and LADO	March 2022	S/G Adviser SSOs CSCs	Safe and secure systems of information sharing between different parts of the church  Meet legislative requirements (GP5 - GP6 in three years’ time)  Learn from other denominations, e.g. CoE’s recent guidance on reporting and sharing information
	6.2 Improve public awareness of URC’s good practice in safeguarding across denominational, cross-denominational and ecumenical settings	Encourage personal drive and actions of URC people (particularly volunteers) to improve the safeguarding ethos at the local church and public	Increased number of local initiatives and campaigns  Opportunities to share expertise externally	March 2023	Synods S/G Adviser SSOs CSCs SAG	Initiatives and events  Links with other developments ‘Walking the way safely’  Links with Methodists, Baptists and Anglicans

URC Strategic Objective	Key Tasks	Rationale	Success Indicators	Deadlines	Key People	Possible issues and wider implications
6. Encourage and build constructive partnerships with statutory, non-statutory bodies, other denomination and faith-based communities		acknowledgement of personal commitment and collective efforts				
	6.3 Develop and share guidance on safeguarding when churches hire out their premises or providing space to groups/ organisations whose work involves children	Promote good practice in allowing our premises to be used by external organisations working with children and adults at risk and prevent safeguarding issues from occurring	Increased use of the guidance	June 2023	S/G Adviser SSOs	Serious incidents not reported to CC  Clear safeguarding arrangements and agreements
	6.4 Endorse close partnership and knowledge exchange of best practice with other denominations to support LEP's and church communities	Promote ecumenical dialogue and co-produce partnerships for the benefit of public worship, protection of the vulnerable and pastoral care of communities	Publication of material & resources  Number of joint events and seminars	Ongoing	S/G Adviser SSOs CSCs CFS Local ecumenical groups	Shared resources and common events  Ecumenical and international settings