

Purpose of the role

Safeguarding children and adults at risk is a core part of the Church’s mission, and the Synod Safeguarding Officer is essential to promoting that mission. Working within the structures of the United Reformed Church, their role is:

1. To lead on safeguarding matters and be an advocate for safeguarding in the Synod.
2. To advise and support the synods and local Churches in child and adult protection matters.
3. To ensure that disclosures and allegations of harm, abuse or neglect are appropriately referred to the statutory authorities and that appropriate advice and support is given to survivors of abuse
4. To manage safeguarding cases including liaison with other relevant agencies and services such as the police, children, probation and adult social care services
5. To ensure regular safeguarding training for ministers, workers and those responsible for the care of children and/or adults at risk in the synod and the local churches
6. To keep accurate records, data and information and produce relevant reports.
7. To keep abreast of developments in safeguarding within and outside the URC and maintain appropriate links

Specific responsibilities

1. **To lead on safeguarding matters and be an advocate for safeguarding in the Synod**
 - Maintain an oversight of safeguarding policies and practices in all churches in the synod
 - Encourage and support a positive culture where safeguarding is positively integrated into the life of the Synod and local churches.
 - Ensure that Synod safeguarding processes and procedures are reviewed at least annually and are updated as appropriate.
 - Promote sensitivity within the Church towards all those affected by the impact of abuse.
 - Encourage churches to ensure that all those who work with children or adults at risk (paid or volunteers) attend safeguarding training once every three years.
 - Engage in continuing professional development (CPD), updating their own safeguarding training every three years, and where applicable, maintaining professional registration requirements e.g. social work/health where applicable.
 - Ensure that the Synod website is regularly updated with information about safeguarding.

- Monitor the implementation of safeguarding policies within local churches, and in all activities and projects undertaken by the Synod to ensure that they comply with all URC Safeguarding Policies and procedures.
- Build links with ecumenical safeguarding colleagues and work with them when appropriate.
- To seek appropriate support and advice in carrying out this role from, for example, Assembly Safeguarding Officer, Ecumenical Forums/Colleagues, Clinical Supervision, Line Manager, Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS).

2. To advise and support the synods and local Churches in child and adult protection matters

- Be the designated safeguarding person and the first point of contact that people can talk to regarding all aspects of safeguarding.
- Support local churches in the development and implementation of best practice in safeguarding, including the safer recruitment and appointment of Church Safeguarding Coordinators and/or Children's and Youth Workers.
- Have knowledge of the DBS checks system and advise local churches and others accordingly.
- Support churches in taking the appropriate action in relation to any safeguarding concerns which arise within the Synod and making referrals if appropriate.
- Support the Moderator in situations where there is concern about a Minister of Word and Sacraments and Church Related Community Workers.
- Provide or source safeguarding training for all those working with children and/or adults at risk, in collaboration with others as appropriate.
- Undertake risk assessments of those people who pose a risk, and/or commission professional risk assessments, where necessary.
- Ensure that contracts of support and accountability are in place in respect of those who pose a risk to either children or adults at risk, in order that their safer participation in church life can be encouraged and monitored.
- Provide or source training for anyone involved in giving pastoral support to, or supervising, a known offender.

3. To ensure disclosures and allegations of abuse, harm or neglect are appropriately referred to the statutory authorities and that appropriate advice and support is given to survivors of abuse

- Work in partnership with the statutory authorities, any of which may make the initial approach or seek information to which they are entitled.
- Ensure referrals of allegations and concerns are made to the appropriate statutory authorities in a timely manner.
- Ensure appropriate pastoral care and support is available to individuals affected by safeguarding incidents and concerns.

4. To manage safeguarding cases including liaison with other relevant agencies and services

- Co-operate with the relevant professionals in safeguarding investigations, e.g. those working in Social Care, Children’s services, the Police, Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO), and actively manage our involvement with these cases.
- Attend strategy meetings and case conferences as requested by statutory agencies, including, where appropriate preparing church personnel for such meetings and attending with them or on their behalf.
- Ensure known offenders within (or returning to) the church community are appropriately managed and supported by the church, including preparation and oversight of behaviour contracts with offenders, liaising with the Police and Probation Service as needed.
- Liaise with the URC Safeguarding Adviser in serious safeguarding situations, such as where the Statutory Authorities are involved, and where a case goes to court.
- Notify the URC Press Office in situations that are likely to attract media attention.
- Make arrangements for a suitable person to carry out this role when they are on leave, and to publicise who this is and the dates of the alternative arrangements.

5. To ensure regular safeguarding training for ministers, workers and those responsible for the care of children and/or adults at risk in the synod and the local churches

- Be responsible for ensuring the provision and the delivery of basic and advanced safeguarding training for church workers and those responsible for the care of children and/or adults at risk. This may be delivered by the Synod Safeguarding Officer or by a separate trainer.
- Liaise with and support local churches and their Safeguarding Coordinator(s) to ensure that the relevant people have undergone safeguarding training as recommended by the United Reformed Church (URC)
- Provide information and further details about training available in their Synod.

6. To keep accurate records, data and information and produce relevant reports

- Ensure that written records are kept in relation to safeguarding advice given and action taken, suitable for admission into legal proceedings and compliant with data protection requirements.
- Collate information from the Annual Safeguarding Returns from local churches and produce the annual synod safeguarding report for the attention of the Moderator, Synod Mission Council, Synod Trust Board, Exec and URC’s Safeguarding Adviser.
- Provide written reports to the synod if issues arise that should be brought to the attention of the Synod Officers and Trust Board.

7. To keep abreast of developments in safeguarding within and outside the URC and maintain appropriate links

- Attend the Synod Safeguarding Practice Group, the meeting of all URC’s Synod Safeguarding Officers three times a year.

- Be familiar with URC safeguarding good practice guidance.
- Keep informed of legislative changes and inform the Synod and local churches accordingly.
- Maintain active links with Statutory Authorities, where possible, including the Local Safeguarding Children's Boards, Children's and Adult's Social Care Services, Police, Designated Officers (formerly known LADOs) and Multi Agency Public Protection Agencies (MAPPA).
- Be accountable to Synod Mission Council and the Synod Trust Company and undertake other relevant duties as they arise, as discussed and mutually agreed with the Moderator and Line Manager.