



Safeguarding Newsletter



The
United
Reformed
Church
Safeguarding

October 2024

Psalm 32:7 - You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with shouts of deliverance. Selah

Following Harvest Festival we are in the midst of autumn and look ahead to Christmas. In the interim we have Safeguarding Sunday, a Spiritual Abuse Webinar hosted by the URC Safeguarding Team and Dr Lisa Oakley, further training opportunities and, of course, guidance.

We'd also like to take this opportunity thank you for all you do.



Safeguarding Sunday



This year Safeguarding Sunday is on 17 November and [Thirtyone: eight](#), the UK's largest Christian safeguarding charity, has chosen as its theme 'Let's Talk About It' - we are encouraged to be open about safeguarding in our churches both in terms of the things we do well and the things that have gone wrong.

Thirtyone: eight has provided some excellent resources and guidance for churches. You can register to receive further information and downloads on their dedicated Safeguarding Sunday [website](#).

Following positive feedback from the annual safeguarding returns about the URC's resources for Safeguarding Sunday last year, Andy Braunston, Minister for Digital Worship has created resources for this year's Safeguarding Sunday and a Daily Devotions series in the week leading up to the 17 November with a safeguarding theme. These resources can be accessed [here](#).

Training Update

Denomination wide safeguarding training sessions

Our safeguarding training offerings continue to be assessed and developed.

The following denomination wide training is available to any church member regardless of role. If you wish to book a place, please email emma.pearce@urc.org.uk with your name, role and church.



- Monday 28 October **DDC Verifier training and Safer Recruitment** 6.30pm – 8.30pm
- Tuesday 5 November **Safeguarding Adults** 1.30pm-3.30pm
- **NEW DATE** Wednesday 6 November **Safeguarding Children and Young People** 1.00pm – 3.00pm
- Monday 11 November **Spiritual Abuse** 7.00pm-9.00pm
- Tuesday 19 November **Online Safety** 1.30pm – 3.30pm
- Wednesday 4 December **DDC Verifier training and Safer Recruitment** 10.00am-12.00pm

The URC wide training timetable for the first half of 2025 is available from the URC [website](#).

Spiritual Abuse Webinar with Dr Lisa Oakley

We are delighted to be hosting a one-off webinar with Dr Lisa Oakley focusing on Spiritual Abuse. This Webinar will be on the 27th November at 1.00pm-3.00pm.

To book your place please visit [Ticketsource](#)

Spiritual Abuse Webinar


Wednesday 27th November 1.00pm – 3.00pm

We are delighted to be hosting a one-off webinar with Dr Lisa Oakley focusing on Spiritual Abuse.

Dr. Lisa Oakley is an Associate Professor at the University of Chester. She is also the Chair of the National working group for abuse linked to accusations of witchcraft and spirit possession and the Church of England Task and Finish Group on Spiritual Abuse and acted as a core participant to the independent inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse. Lisa has conducted research into issues of faith, safeguarding and abuse for the past 16 years. Her doctorate was on the topic of spiritual abuse and in 2013 she co-authored a book entitled *Breaking the Silence on Spiritual Abuse*. In 2019 a further book was published entitled *Escaping the Maze of Spiritual Abuse. Creating Healthy Christian Cultures*. Lisa has presented on these topics nationally and internationally. Please do register [here](#) and join us for this event


Click this link to book

[Spiritual Abuse Webinar booking](#)



The United Reformed Church Safeguarding

www.urc.org.uk



Links to Non-URC Safeguarding Training

Suicide awareness training

The Safeguarding team recommends

<https://www.zerosuicidealliance.com/suicide-awareness-training#> This training for anyone who would like further information on this topic.



Dementia Awareness Training

For those colleagues supporting adults with dementia there are a range of good quality training courses available from the [Alzheimer's Society](#).

Safeguarding your Faith Charity: Charity Commission's Expectations - Wednesday 20th November 2024 at 12.00pm – 1.00pm

This webinar will cover guidance on how to safeguard your faith charity against risks. It will give an overview of:

- Guidance on safeguarding and protecting people who come into contact with your charity;
- Criminal record checks available to charities;
- How to report incidents and allegations if they arise.

Click [here](#) to book.

Update: National Synod of Wales



The National Synod of Wales has been working to align Synod Safeguarding training delivered in Wales with [Social Care Wales National Safeguarding Training Standards](#).

The revised training content will be delivered from November 2024 to URC churches across Wales.

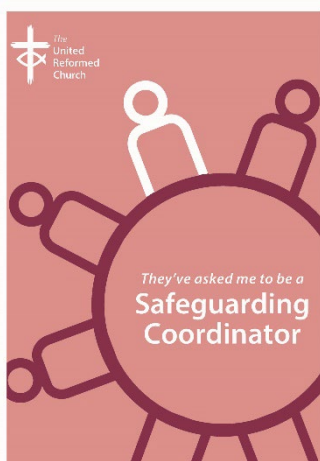
Alongside this, a Good Practice 6 Wales edition has been commissioned. The content of Good Practice 6 Wales edition is practically the same as the English edition, but there are terminology differences and reference to additional legislation which exists in Wales but not in England. It is hoped that the revised training content and Good Practice 6 Wales edition will serve the safeguarding needs of Welsh churches more effectively.

Church Safety and Anti-Radicalisation

Public concerns about safety in public spaces, including churches, have increased, following terror attacks and numerous hate crimes. The URC now has a page on the website which offers support to churches on this area [Staying Safe in Church Buildings - United Reformed Church](#).

We would also encourage someone within your church to undertake the Government's free Prevent on line training which can be found at [Prevent duty training - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) If you have a concern about someone being radicalised in your church then please talk to you church safeguarding coordinator and they will seek the support of the synod safeguarding officer.

Update to 'they've asked me to be a safeguarding coordinator'



'They've asked me to be a safeguarding coordinator' is written for those who may be considering whether to take on the role, and also for those who may have recently started. It summarises the main purposes of the role, the tasks involved and some of the skills required. It has now been updated and changes include:

- Setting out expectations in relation to training and getting a DBS check
- Explaining that contact details for CSCs will need to be stored in the URC database
- The need to ensure safeguarding is a regular agenda item for church and Elders' meetings
- Church safeguarding coordinators can now also act as DBS verifiers
- Reference to Good Practice 6

The revised version will be available shortly at: <https://urc.org.uk/your-church/taking-a-role-in-your-church/church-management-and-admin/become-a-safeguarding-coordinator/>

Save the date 2025 Safeguarding Symposium



Following on from the success of the 2023 Safeguarding Symposium we are pleased to announce that the 2025 Symposium will take place on **Wednesday 15 October 2025** from 2pm on Zoom. Please watch this space for further announcements and ticketing details.

Annual Safeguarding Returns

Each year Church Safeguarding Coordinators (CSC) are required to complete an annual safeguarding return which Synod Safeguarding Officers (SSO's) then collate and submit a report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who then reports the findings to the General Assembly Safeguarding Committee. These reports provide the Synod and the denomination with invaluable data about safeguarding that is used to shape the support, training and policy development offered to synods.

Across the URC 84% of local churches completed the annual safeguarding returns for 2023, 100% of SSO's completed their annual reports. 96% of churches have a CSC which is a really positive step forward.

The annual returns show that 67% of churches include safeguarding as an item at elders meeting and 58% of churches have safeguarding as an item on church meetings.

So a reminder here that safeguarding should be reported on at least annually at your church and elders meetings, this is part of the URC's structure and details can be found [here](#) at point 10. In addition to this your church elders need to be aware and follow the Safer Election of Elder document [here](#).

Thank you to all those that completed their church return, the 2024 return should be landing in your inbox early next year!

Safeguarding: Working with Children and Young People

Children and Youth Elders were recently sent a publication called *Safeguarding For Everyone Working with Children and Youth* as part of a larger all church mailing. Unfortunately, the last page of the leaflet contained a printing error which gives an inaccurate training path for those working with children and young people.

We apologise for that.

Please do refer to the *corrected* version on [URC website](#) and be assured that we will send out a fresh and corrected hard copy of the publication to Children and Youth Elders in due course.