



Safeguarding Newsletter



The
United
Reformed
Church
Safeguarding

January 2024

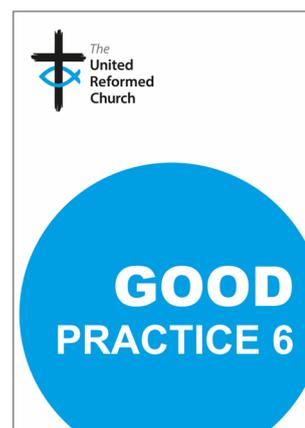
A new year and we're already very busy. The Annual Safeguarding Returns are now open for completion, we have a new schedule of Zoom based training open to everyone, a new colleague and a best practice example from *Good Practice 6 (GP6)*.

Annual Safeguarding Returns

The online Annual Safeguarding Returns (ASR) are open for completion. We would kindly ask you to complete the return by 29 February, 2024 as it gives a fulsome picture of safeguarding in the denomination and how the safeguarding team can better support our churches in terms of training and guidance. We also ask that Local Ecumenical Partnerships that use the safeguarding process of another denomination also complete the ASR so that we are aware of any challenges in your churches.

Each Church Safeguarding Coordinator (primary contact) should have received log in instructions from their synod for the ASR. If not, please do contact your synod who will assist you in accessing the ASR or provide a blank hard copy of the form where you are unable to access or complete an online version.

We aim to keep the list of Church Safeguarding Coordinators up to date so we can communicate with you. Your Church Secretary has access to the United Reformed Church Update Portal which is accessible 24/7 to update details of Church Safeguarding Coordinators. Alternatively, they can contact their synod to ask them to make any changes that they need.



Training Update

Training Review Group – all training developed in line with the safeguarding framework is discussed at our Training Review Group and at each meeting we welcome a member of a local church to join us. If you are interested in joining a meeting to give any feedback on safeguarding training then please contact carrie.kaunda@urc.org.uk

Specialist Safeguarding Courses via Zoom

Modern Slavery 30 January, 6.30-8.30pm

Safeguarding for Elders and Pastoral Workers Supporting Survivors 25 January, 1.30-3.30pm

Elders as Trustees 31 January, 1.30-3.30pm

DDC Verifier Training and Safer Recruitment 8 February, 1.30-3.30pm

Substance Abuse 27 February, 6.30-8.30pm

Refugees and Asylum Seekers 6 March, 1.30-3.30pm

Safeguarding for Ministers Supporting Survivors 18 March, 6.30-8.30pm

The full list of dates and times for 2024 is available here <https://bit.ly/3S52hdn>

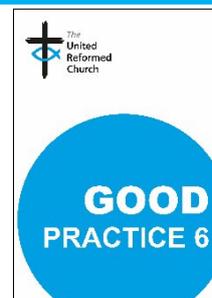
To book, please email emma.pearce@urc.org.uk with your name/church/role and your courses and dates.

For safeguarding courses delivered by Synods, please contact your Synod Safeguarding Officer.

The Safeguarding Foundation E-Learning is now available on the [URC Learning Hub](#). This means you can do the course in your own time. Each month we take a list of participants from the previous and create a training record to show that you have completed the module

GP6 and church Websites

Now that copies of *GP6* have been sent to churches and Synods, it would be a good time to update safeguarding information that you might have on websites or social media pages. Please could you have a look at the information you currently have online and ensure it is up-to-date to refer to *GP6*.



The online version of *GP6* and the supporting Resources can be found here: bit.ly/URCSafeguarding

Children and Young People

Keeping Young People Safe in Private Dwellings is a guidance document produced by Churches Together in England and co-authored by a number of organisations including the United Reformed Church. It gives guidance to those working in children's ministry in private dwellings and is available at here bit.ly/3HmV7Mu to read and download.

A long time in the making and following a number of high-profile cases, the Online Safety Bill received Royal Assent on 26 October 2023. This piece of legislation covers broadly three areas protecting children online, shielding users from illicit content and helping adult users avoid harmful (but not illegal) content. This will be overseen by the Communication Ombudsman Ofcom. The legislation is complex and so the NSPCC has produced guidance on online safety which is available on their website: bit.ly/NSPCC-online-safety

Staffing Update

North Western Synod

We welcome Yvette Robinson as the new Synod Safeguarding Officer for North Western Synod.

Yvette brings to her role decades of experience as a Senior Leader in Further Education, with a notable focus on safeguarding and training initiatives within the sector. Serving as the Designated Safeguarding Officer at Trafford College, she successfully formulated and executed robust safeguarding strategies, leading the delivery of comprehensive training to staff and stakeholders in strict adherence to statutory requirements.

She has a keen interest in mental health and well-being and is a life coach. She has recently become a grandmother and has recognised the importance of work life balance to spend time with her granddaughter. She also enjoys regular walks with her two dogs.

We thank Julie Rafferty for her hard work and commitment to North Western Synod and she hands over to Yvette. Julie continues in her role as Synod Safeguarding Officer for Mersey.

Yvette can be contacted by mobile on 07827 390 299 or email: safeguarding@nwsynod.org.uk



Ruth Goold 1960-2023

We pay tribute to our dear colleague, Ruth Goold who sadly died in November, 2023. Ruth was the Synod Safeguarding Officer for the Synod of Scotland for many years. Experienced and compassionate she gave a level of commitment that enriched the Safeguarding Team and supported the churches in Scotland. She will be much missed both by our team and the Synod of Scotland.



Real Life Case Study from a Church Safeguarding Coordinator

The Church has a Pastoral Care Team which has oversight of a large team of Pastoral Visitors. These Pastoral Visitors are tasked with maintaining contact with church members and providing support and information when necessary. They also undergo training twice a year and have done, or are in the process of completing, the URC Basic and /or Intermediate Safeguarding training.

The church also has two Pastoral Care Elders who ensure that members, and those non-members who ask, have support from these Pastoral Visitors.

In our church, the two Pastoral Care Elders have, unusually, both been the Safeguarding Officers.

The implementation of *GP6* has involved informing the whole church, that safeguarding is the job of all members, and this has been invaluable in raising awareness.

The following case will illustrate how a situation that arose was helped by a Pastoral Visitor alerting one of the Safeguarding Officers to a developing situation.

The concern was around a member's wellbeing and whether, or not, they were coping following a recent discharge from hospital. Attempts were made to contact the person by the Pastoral Visitor who then alerted the Safeguarding Officer for Adults at Risk. Serious concerns for the person's health, safety and well-being were identified and actions were taken to escalate the concern via the GP. We eventually learned from the member

themselves that the GP had instigated a process to ensure someone did a follow up welfare check.

The Church Safeguarding Officer, having contacted the Synod Safeguarding Officer, was advised on further follow up and suggested that when the Pastoral Visitor attempted to make contact it should be recorded, even if no contact was made. The SSO also advised checking with the church member what type of support was wanted and the frequency they would like to be contacted. Several other suggestions were made which have proved to be most helpful.

The *GP6* framework is helpful in raising safeguarding awareness across the church family and is invaluable for training purposes with Pastoral Visitors as it gives clear guidance. Having access to the Synod Safeguarding Officer is most helpful and supportive and enables both Safeguarding Officers at the church to receive objective and helpful, guidance and advice.