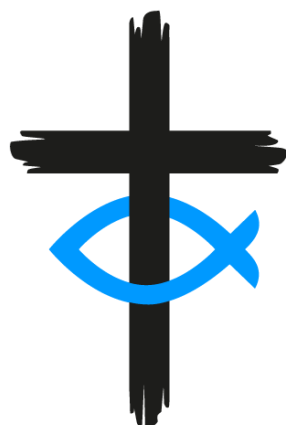


ANNUAL SAFEGUARDING RETURNS REPORT



The
United
Reformed
Church

www.urc.org.uk

This report is created from data captured from the Annual Church Safeguarding Returns for 2022, but does not include analysis from Synod Safeguarding Officers through their reporting due to timeframe for submission. Further in-depth analysis will be reported to the September 2023 Safeguarding Committee.

INTRODUCTION

76.6% of churches completed safeguarding annual returns
7% of churches have no safeguarding coordinator
76% of churches reviewed their policy in the last year

Comments:

Synod Safeguarding Officers will continue to work with local churches who do not have a safeguarding coordinator to support them to achieve this necessary function of the church.

Both appointing a safeguarding coordinator and reviewing the church policy were added to the URC Manual as functions of Church and Elders meeting and this will be shared again through the Safeguarding Newsletter.



SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

Number of concerns related to children: 73 of which 20% related to self harm and mental health and 15% to exploitation.

Number of concerns related to adults: 148 of which 25% related to emotional abuse and 15% to self harm and mental health.

Total number of concerns raised to outside agencies: 56, these are cases that met the threshold for needing external support for managing the case due to the nature of the concern

Comments: The Church House Training Development Coordinator continues to design training that is relevant to the types of concerns that Local Churches are dealing with. Also Synod Safeguarding Officers and the Church House team keep up to date with their own professional development in these areas through their annual away days and peer support sessions.



PASTORAL CARE & SUPPORT

Comments: Synod Safeguarding Officers continue to work with their Synod colleagues to support local churches pastorally when there has been a safeguarding concern raised. If this cannot be provided within the URC then Synods would seek to source this from an appropriate outside agency.



MANAGING RISK

59 known offenders who pose a risk to children or adults at risk attending URC Churches

Comments: This group of people are supported through a Safeguarding Agreement which is managed by the Synod Safeguarding Officer along with those in the local church and any other professionals involved with the individual.



SAFER RECRUITMENT

Comments: The safeguarding team at Church House and Synod Safeguarding Officers have continued to raise awareness of the importance of safer recruitment. This has been through training and highlighting this issue through the safeguarding newsletters.

The team have also launched safeguarding training for elders which includes their responsibilities to adhere to safer recruitment. Safer recruitment is far wider than just DBS checks and should include applications, interviews and references. However as a point of interest the URC carried out 1800 DBS checks in 2022



ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Through this year's annual returns we have experienced push back from LEP's to complete the return if they are following another denomination's safeguarding policy. The URC's Designated Safeguarding Lead is picking this up with the other main denomination to see how we can better support churches in submitting this data as it is invaluable to have this from all churches.

