United Reformed Church

Annual Safeguarding Return 2024 - Scotland

The accounting period is 01/01/2024 to 31/12/2024

Church ID number

Church Name

Completing the URC Annual Church Safeguarding Return is your opportunity to highlight the hard work that has gone into safeguarding your church in the past year, as well as an opportunity to identify areas where you may need advice and assistance. The submitted form is sent to and reviewed by your Synod Safeguarding Officer and entered onto the URC Database. The information is assessed and used to standardise our collective ability to identify safeguarding issues within our churches and protect those most at risk, both children and adults. Church Safeguarding Coordinator and PVG verifier details are also collated and entered onto the URC database to ensure that the information on those who oversee safeguarding in each church is accurate.   The Church Secretary will be making sure these details are correct and up to date and the individual/s is/are aware of the Data Privacy Notice at https://urc.org.uk/privacy- policy/ and that of your Synod.

If you are a Local Ecumenical Partnership in Scotland and follow the safeguarding policy of a denomination other than the United Reformed Church, the URC would be grateful if you could complete this return to give us valuable insight into safeguarding in all local churches regardless of the policy they are following. The data provided is used by URC to develop training and support, to gain an understanding of what safeguarding is like in the local church and to gain a holistic view of safeguarding across the country.
As a church following another policy then parts of the return may not feel relevant but we would really hope that you could take the time to complete the return. Thank you for all you do to safeguard those that access your church, it really is appreciated and valued.

If you have any difficulties or questions in relation to this form, please contact your Synod Safeguarding Officer who will be more than pleased to help and advise you with this.

If parts of the form are not applicable to your church in the past year, please indicate so. If you leave sections blank this could mean information has been missed out so, please put N/A if anything doesn't refer to your church.

Guidance Notes

We hope this **guidance** helps with the completion of the returns and everyone throughout the URC, including the Synod Safeguarding Officers and the Church House Safeguarding Team, thanks you for the hard work you put in to make our churches safer.

1.   Safeguarding Procedures

It is essential that each church has a Safeguarding Policy for children, young people and adults at risk, which they should ensure is updated annually, therefore please indicate when your church policy was last reviewed and when the next annual review of your policy is due. Template P1 of Good Practice 6 is a model safeguarding policy for local churches and can be used to ensure your church policy is up to date. The link can be found here: https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/P1.pdf

Members of your congregation and those visiting the building should be able to locate your policy easily and identify your Church Safeguarding Coordinator and Deputy. It is important that your safeguarding policy contains up to date contact information for the Church of Scotland safeguarding service and the Police.

2.   Safer Recruitment

Safer recruitment is an all-encompassing term for the process of ensuring that an applicant or volunteer is safe to work with children and adults at risk. The Annual Church Safeguarding return asks you to provide details outlining the methods used to recruit volunteers and paid workers in the last calendar year, this includes the number of PVG checks done – please liaise with your PVG verifier and/or Safeguarding Coordinator (Primary) who is responsible for recording and processing PVG checks.

3.   Safeguarding Concerns/allegations: Children and Adults at risk

If you have had a safeguarding concern within your church in the accounting period 01/01/2024 to 31/12/2024, it is recommended that you use the Safeguarding Incident/ Concern Form (GP6 Form F1 https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/F1.pdf) to record the information. The Annual Church Safeguarding Return requires you to state the number of safeguarding concerns/ allegations relating to children and adults at risk .

Please identify the categories of abuse relating to the safeguarding concerns/ allegations for children and adults separately.

Please also detail how much information you have shared with the Synod Safeguarding Officer and other agencies.

4.   Risk management

It is important that churches, with the assistance of the Synod Safeguarding Officer, ensure that we adequately protect those within our congregation who may be at risk from certain people being involved in the church, whilst ensuring that those who may pose a risk to others are supported to access church life safely if safe to do so within a signed Safeguarding contract.
This question asks you to record how you manage these issues within your church.
Risk management is an important part of safeguarding within your church and your Synod Safeguarding Officer should be aware of all issues in these cases. If they are not, please contact them so they can support you in this area.

5.   Safeguarding Support to alleged victim, survivor of abuse and/or congregation

If you have a person within your congregation in need, has support been offered to them? It is helpful to capture the details of support offered, so any lessons learned or any advice you can offer can then be shared with the wider church.

6.   Local Church Best Practice

This is your opportunity to show how well your church has safeguarded others within the last calendar year.
Please provide examples, which can then be shared for others to learn from your knowledge and experience.

7.   Safeguarding Challenges

It is important that Synods and Church House recognise the challenges and obstacles you experience at a local church level, so please provide details of challenges you have experienced to Safeguarding in your role in the last calendar year so your Synod and Synod Safeguarding Officer can assist you with them.

8.   Support from the URC Safeguarding Teams

This question is asking what additional support, help and guidance you may need. Please record this as it is important that we have this information so resources can be directed to churches where it is required. If you haven't needed any, or haven't had any, please let us know.

9.   Training

Please give the total numbers of people who are required to do Safeguarding training at the relevant level as outlined by General Assembly and the actual number of people who are trained to the level required. The information on specific roles that need this training are in the matrix, please use the link Paper T5 - SAG - Safeguarding Training Framework (urc.org.uk).
In Scotland, when looking at the matrix, the Church of Scotland Introductory Training is equivalent to URC Foundation training and the Church of Scotland Advanced Training is equivalent to URC Intermediate training, this training is carried out by the Church of Scotland on behalf of the Synod of Scotland.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your expertise and commitment to working with others to enable our churches to be safer for all concerned, and in particular for the child and adult at risk. Your efforts are very much appreciated.

Thank you,

John Bradbury *(General Secretary)* and

Jenny Mills *(Deputy General Secretary – Discipleship)*

1.0 Safeguarding Procedures – *Every field must be completed*

1.1   When was your church's safeguarding policy last reviewed (day/ month year)?

1.2   When is the next annual review of your policy (day/ month year)?

1.3   Does your church have a website?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

1.3a   If your answer to 1.3 is Yes, please answer, does your church have a Safeguarding section on its website?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

1.4   Does your Safeguarding policy cover?

Adult ☐   Children ☐   Both ☐

1.5   Does your Safeguarding policy contain contact detail for the Church of Scotland safeguarding service?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

1.6   Does your Safeguarding policy contain contact details for the Police?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

1.7   Has "safeguarding" been a standing agenda item/report at your Elders' Meetings at least once in the last calendar year?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

1.8   Is "safeguarding" a standing agenda item/report at your Church Meetings at least once in the last calendar year?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

1.9   Does your church clearly display the name(s) and contact details of the Church Safeguarding Coordinator(s)?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

2.0 Safer Recruitment - *Every field must be completed*

2.1   How many persons, who have access to children and/ or adults at risk, were recruited in the last calendar year? If the answer is zero, please go to question 1.9

[   ]

Of those persons recruited with access to children and/ or adults at risk, how many had:

2.2   Role/Job description

[   ]

2.3   Application form

[   ]

2.4   PVG checks

[   ]

2.5   Interview

[   ]

2.6   References taken up

[   ]

2.7   Self-declaration (when invited for interview)

[   ]

2.8   Are your eldership aware of the paper passed by Assembly Commission November 2021 on the Safer Election of Elders?
The document can be found here: https://urc.org.uk/2021-h4-safer-election-of-elders-2/

[ ] Yes   [ ] No   If no, please share the document with your eldership.

3.0 Safeguarding concerns/allegations:

Children and Adults at risk

Every field must be completed.

3.1   Has your church had any safeguarding concerns/ allegations in the last calendar year?

☐ Yes   ☐ No   **If no, please go to section 4**

If yes, state the number of concerns/allegations in each category

	Adults at risk	Child
3.2 Child Sexual Exploitation		
3.3 Discriminatory Abuse		
3.4 Domestic Abuse		
3.5 Emotional Abuse		
3.6 Financial Abuse		
3.7 Institutional Abuse		
3.8 Modern Slavery		
3.9 Neglect		
3.10 Online Abuse		
3.11 Physical Abuse		

3.12 Radicalisation

Adults at risk | Child

3.13 Self-Harm

Adults at risk | Child

3.14 Self-Neglect

Adults at risk | Child

3.15 Sexual Abuse

Adults at risk | Child

3.16 Spiritual Abuse

Adults at risk | Child

3.17 Other Abuse

Adults at risk | Child

Please Specify

Adults at risk | Child

……………………………………….. ………………………………..

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3.18 How many concerns did you refer out to other Agencies?

Adults at risk | Child

3.19   How many concerns did you refer to Disclosure Scotland?

Adults at risk | Child

3.20 How many concerns did you refer to Church of Scotland Safeguarding Service?

Adults at risk | Child

State the number of safeguarding concerns/ allegations which were made in the last calendar year about the behaviour of:

3.21   Ministers

[   ]

3.22   Elders

[   ]

3.23   Child/Youth workers (paid or volunteer)

[   ]

3.24   Church members/ other Volunteers

[   ]

3.25   Other paid employees (e.g. Caretaker etc...)

[   ]

3.26   How many of these concerns/ allegations (relating to Ministers, elders etc..) were referred to the Designated Officer (D.0.) for the Local Authority?

[   ]

4.0 Risk management *- Every field must be completed.*

4.1   Does your church have any known offenders **and/or those that pose a risk** involved with any aspects of the church?
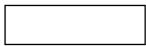
☐ Yes   ☐ No   **If no, please go to section 5**

4.2   If yes, please state how many?

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┌──────────────┐
│              │
│              │
└──────────────┘
```
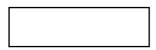
4.3   How many safeguarding agreements/contracts with offenders **and/or those that pose a risk** to children or adults at risk are currently in place as of 31st December?

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┌──────────────┐
│              │
│              │
└──────────────┘
```

4.4   How many safeguarding agreements/ contracts were started in the accounting period 01/01/2024 to 31/12/2024?

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┌──────────────┐
│              │
│              │
└──────────────┘
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4.0   How many safeguarding agreements/ contracts were terminated i in the accounting period 01/01/2024 to 31/12/2024?

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┌──────────────┐
│              │
│              │
└──────────────┘
```

5.0 Safeguarding support to alleged victim, survivor of abuse *-Every field must be completed*

5.1 Has any support/help/guidance been given to any alleged victim, survivor of abuse and/ or to the congregation in the in the accounting period 01/01/2024 to 31/12/2024?

☐ Yes ☐ No **If no, please go to section 6**

5.2 If yes, please outline the situation:

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[blank text box]
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6.0 Local church best practice

Please complete this section, if you have no comments to make enter "N/A"

6.1 Please provide details of any examples of best practice in Safeguarding you have initiated or observed in your role in the in the accounting period 01/01/2024 to 31/12/2024? (including partnerships with other denominations or agencies):

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[blank text box]
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7.0 Safeguarding challenges

Please complete this section, if you have no comments to make enter "N/A"

7.1 Please provide details of any challenges you have experienced in fulfilling your safeguarding role in the in the accounting period 01/01/2024 to 31/12/2024?.

8.0 Support from the URC church's safeguarding team

Please complete this section if you have no comments to make enter "N/A"

8.1 Please indicate how your Synod Safeguarding Officer can help you further in fulfilling your safeguarding role:

9.0 Training

Every field must be completed
The training matrix can be found here: [Paper T5 - SAG - Safeguarding Training Framework (urc.org.uk)](#)

Required Training

9.1   How many people in total in your church are required to do **Introductory** training which is equivalent to URC Foundation training level based on the matrix set by General Assembly?

9.2   How many people in total in your church are required to do **Advanced** training which is equivalent to URC Intermediate training level based on the matrix set by General Assembly?

Completed Training

9.3   Of the total number of people in your church required to do **Introductory** training which is equivalent to URC Foundation training level based on the matrix set by General Assembly, how many of these people's **Introductory** training is up to date? (i.e. completed within the past 3 years).

9.4   Of the total number of people in your church required to do **Advanced** training which is equivalent to URC Intermediate training level based on the matrix set by General Assembly, how many of these people's **Advanced** training is up to date? (i.e. completed within the past 3 years).

10.0 Submission Declaration

Name of person completing this return: …………………………………………………………………………

Role of the person completing this return: …………………………………………………………………

Date: ……