



Safeguarding Newsletter



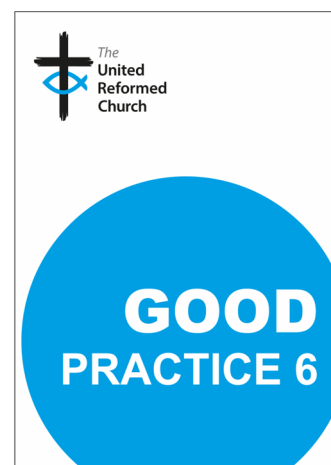
The
United
Reformed
Church
Safeguarding

January 2025

We hope you feel refreshed after the break and can look forward positively to a safe 2025.

The last few months have been busy time for the Safeguarding team with updating policies and delivering training.

SSOs met with their Children and Youth Development Officer counterparts, and in March will have their annual meeting with Moderators to further grow professional connections.



Annual Safeguarding Returns

The Annual Safeguarding Return (ASR) portal is open and ready to access!

ASRs provide the denomination with important information that helps us to better help you. It is not a test but rather it provides a snapshot of where the denomination is at, and it helps the safeguarding team identify gaps in knowledge and delivery and where we can offer assistance. It also gives us an opportunity to celebrate best practice in our churches.

We thank you in advance for completing the ASR as we do appreciate how busy you all are.

If you do not have your log in details for the portal, please do contact your synod. Similarly, if there are questions on the online form that you find tricky, please contact your [Synod Safeguarding Officer](#) for guidance. There are useful contacts, guides and downloadable forms on the [URC Website](#).

Please note that the portal is will close for ASRs on Friday 28 February.

Training Update

Mandatory Training

The United Reformed Church offers mandatory training - that is Foundation, Intermediate and Advanced which is organised, bookable and delivered by your Synod.

What level of training you need very much depends on your role and you will find [this chart](#) helpful. Please do get in touch with your [Synod](#) for further details and to book a course.



The Safeguarding Foundation course is available as an E-Learning package which can be taken at your own pace and in your own time. It is available on the [URC Learning Hub](#).

Each month we take the list of those who have taken the e-learning package and create a training record on the URC's database to demonstrate completion of the course.

Specialist/Supplementary Training

Additionally, the URC runs two hour Zoom sessions open to everyone on a variety of topics which may complement your current safeguarding knowledge and these can be booked via Emma Pearce emma.pearce@urc.org.uk

Upcoming Specialist Safeguarding Courses via Zoom:

- 11 February 7.00pm Modern Day Slavery
- 13 February 1.30pm Elders as Trustees
- 04 March 7.00pm Substance Abuse
- 18 March 1.30pm Refugees & Asylum Seekers
- 27 March 7.00pm Adult Safeguarding

The full list of dates and times for the first half of 2025 is available on the Safeguarding pages on the URC [website](#).

Due Diligence Checking (DDC) News

Price Increase for DBS Checks

DDC has increased its prices as follows:



DBS Check	Old Fee	New Fee
Basic DBS check	£18.00	£21.50
Standard DBS check	£18.00	£21.50
Enhanced DBS check	£38.00	£49.50

The denomination absorbs the fees for Standard and Enhanced checks and applicants are not charged. Basic checks, however, are subject to payment by the applicant (this is set by the Disclosure and Barring Service and not by DDC or the URC).

Where an applicant requiring a Basic check has agreement from their church (or Synod) to reimburse them the fee, please do so.

Setting up DBS Applications

DDC has informed us that an unprecedented amount of DBS applications for England and Wales were withdrawn in 2024. We are keen to reduce this number as we pay for each application we set up regardless of whether it is completed or withdrawn.

When setting up applications, here are some pointers that may help you:

- ❖ Incorrect name- where you set up an application and you have entered the incorrect name, the applicant can correct their name directly onto the online application.
- ❖ Multiple roles requiring a DBS - where an individual has multiple roles we would encourage you to use the role that aligns to the highest level of check. Eg. if you have a Church Treasurer who is also a Church Elder, they do not need two disclosures but rather you would pick the role that has the higher level of check (in this case, Church Elder).
- ❖ Paid or Voluntary role - Before picking the role for the application, be clear whether the role is paid (PAID) or voluntary (VOL) so that you can pick the correct one. You can refer to the current DBS/PVG check matrix on the [URC website](#).

Seeing an application through to completion - DDC will chase the applicant and so can you. If the process is incomplete DDC will delete the application after 6 months so please do feel free to gently chase applicants and assist them where necessary. DDC is a wonderful resource of assistance so please do feel to [contact them](#) for advice.

DDC Verifier Training

We thank for your continued efforts to ensure that any person with a role at your church that requires a DBS/PVG check has one.

For those of you who are administering DBS checks for your church in England and Wales we offer some short training sessions on DBS verifying and Safer Recruitment on Zoom.

These are two hour sessions, the first hour is with a representative of DDC who goes through the mechanics of a DBS check and the second hour is with our Training and Development Coordinator who puts DBS checks in the context of wider safer recruitment.

The dates for 2025 are as follows:

- ~~Thursday 6 February 10.30am-12.30pm~~ (fully booked!)
- Thursday 8 May 7.00-9.00pm
- Wednesday 10 September 1.00-3.00pm
- Thursday 20 November 7.00-9.00pm

If you wish to book on any of these sessions, please email emma.pearce@urc.org.uk with your name, role, church and preferred session date.



GP6 resources in other languages

We are planning to make some key resources - such as the safeguarding poster and policy template – available in a range of languages.

If you have any suggestions for languages that would be particularly helpful in your setting, please email our Policy Development Coordinator kerry.baker@urc.org.uk

Behaviours in Church life

Just a reminder that as well as Good Practice 6 and your Churches or Synods Safeguarding Policy there are also other guidance documents to support you if you experience behaviour from someone in church life that is not acceptable and makes you feel uncomfortable.

Your Synod Safeguarding Officer can support you to raise this type of concern. For more information read Section 2.10 (Pg39) of [Good Practice 6](#) and Resource G5.

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.