

# Guide to using URC Church Update



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### Introduction to URC Church Update

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URC Church Update (Portal) is a web-based system whereby churches can view the information we hold about them and notify us of any changes *at any time of the year*.

The system is **also** used to enable churches to complete their Annual Return *once a year*. If you have not reviewed the two sections Church Information and People, you will not be able to submit your annual return.

To access URC Church Update please use the link <http://churchupdate.urc.org.uk>

We recommend using Mozilla, Firefox or Google Chrome as your browser, as we have noted people experiencing difficulties with Microsoft Edge.

An **email address** is used to gain access and needs to be registered with the URC Church Update portal and the URC Database. If you are unsure of the email address to use (Church or personal) please contact your Synod office who will advise you. If you do change your email address at any time you will need to re-register. Do not forward the 'Getting Started' email to another person if you are no longer the person whose responsibility is to use the portal. Please contact your Synod to make any of these changes.

If you are a new user, click on **Register** and you will receive an email to continue registration and set your password.

The screenshot shows the 'Welcome to the United Reformed Church Church Update Portal' page. It features two main sections: 'Register as a: New User' and 'Log in as an: Existing User'. The 'New User' section includes a 'Register' button and a note: 'You will need to create an account before continuing.' The 'Existing User' section includes input fields for 'Email address' and 'Password', and a 'Sign in' button. There is also a 'Forgotten your password?' section with a 'Reset your password' button.

Having registered and as an existing user, to access the system you will need to enter your email address and your password and then click **Sign in**. If you have forgotten your password click on **Reset your password** and follow the on screen prompts

If you are no longer the person updating your Church information, please contact your synod. Never share your email address and password with anyone.

*If you still experience problems, please email your Synod.*

Once you have logged in you will see EITHER the list of churches you have access to and the level of access (select the church and click on **Continue**) OR you will be automatically taken to your church. If either the church or level of access is incorrect, please contact your Synod.

You can also change your password, return to the Welcome page or log out – use the link on the left-hand side of the screen.

You can also link to the Guide to Church Update, Contact Us and the Privacy policy.

## How to edit the information we hold about your church

- Having selected a church you will be taken to the **Church Information** section which will look something like this. We ask that you review this information at least once a year especially while the Annual Return period is open, but it is available throughout the year. You will not be able to submit your Annual Return unless you have reviewed this information.

- If you would like to print the Church Information, click on the

Print form

button.

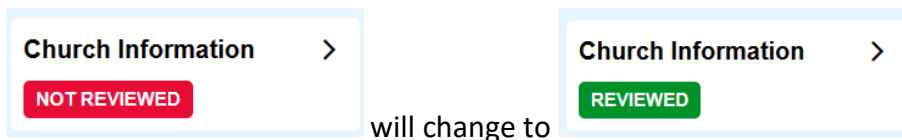
- Use the relevant down arrow on the right to open each section. If anything needs amending here click on **'Edit section'** button on the right, make the change and click **Save** (or **Cancel** to exit without making any changes).
- Please note that you are unable to edit the name of your church, church address, church group, formal ecumenical partnerships and founding year. If any of these are incorrect, please email your Synod to let them know.

Comments

- If you would like to leave any comments, please use the

- When you have reviewed the Church Information please tick the box and click **Confirm**

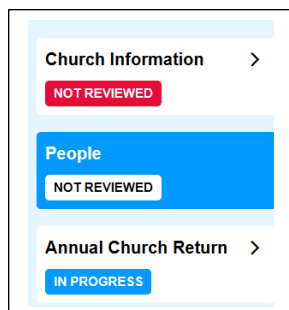
This will be today's date

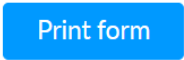



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## How to edit the information we hold about people in key roles in your church

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- Now move to the **People** section using the link on the left-hand side. We ask that you review this information at least once a year especially while the Annual Return period is open, but it is available throughout the year. You will not be able to submit your Annual Return unless you have reviewed this information.
- If you are using a tablet or phone this may appear as a menu icon on the top right next to your church name. When you click on the item it may / will be highlighted.
- If you would like a list of the People currently listed in key roles in your church, click on the  button.
- This section is where you tell us about changes to people in key roles.  
The roles we need to know about are as follows:
  - Secretary (can have more than one) \*
  - Assistant Secretary
  - Treasurer \*
  - Assistant Treasurer
  - Church Elder [Serving Elders only] \*
  - Safeguarding Co-Ordinator – Primary Contact \*
  - Safeguarding Co-Ordinator – Deputy/Joint
  - DBS Verifier
  - Children and Youth contact – Primary Contact
  - Children and Youth contact - Deputy/Joint
  - Children & Youth employed worker – Church NEW for 2025**
  - Synod representative (1) \*
  - Synod representative (2) (NB a church can have two representatives if it has more than 200 members)
  - Administrator
  - Church lettings contact
  - Commitment for Life Link person
  - Minute Secretary
  - Property Contact
  - Pulpit Secretary
  - Church Eco Friend NEW for 2025**

***[For an explanation of what we mean by these roles please see [Appendix 1](#)].***

Asterix \* denotes a mandatory role and a contact must be entered otherwise you will not be able to proceed. ***Please refer to [Appendix 1](#) on how to add a non-named person to a mandatory role.***

- To view the people listed at a role, click on the down arrow to the right of the role name.

**People** Print form

View, edit and add contact information for all the roles that apply to your church.  
Each person contact information will only need to be added or amended once. Each role will need to be added or amended individually.

\*These roles are mandatory. They must have a contact assigned to them at all times.

Secretary\* ▼

- To view the information, we hold about each person click View contact info → next to their name.

Secretary\* + Add a new contact

Another Person View contact info → No longer in this role →

New Test Person View contact info → No longer in this role →

- To view the address and contact information, click on the down arrow to the right of their name.
  - To edit their address or other contact details please click on the relevant sections down arrow and use the 'Edit' button on the right, make the change and click **Save** (or **Cancel** to exit without making any changes).
  - To let us know that any of these people are no longer in the role listed  
Click No longer in this role →. You will be asked to provide the date when the role ended. If the exact date is not known please use today's date.
  - You can also let us know that they are fulfilling another role by following the on-screen prompts.
- For Church Secretaries and Treasurers lets us know of their permissions to print their information in the URC Yearbook and Synod Yearbook, please click on the permission section down arrow and use the 'Edit' button on the right, make the change and click **Save** (or **Cancel** to exit without making any changes).

Please ensure you give **permission to print to at least one** phone number and/or email for URC Yearbook and Synod Yearbook / Handbook

- To let us know that a new person is in a role listed, scroll to the relevant Role section and click **Add a new contact for this role**

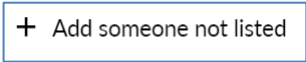
+ Add a new contact

Choose the appropriate person from the Dropdown list and give their start-date, click **Save**


- If you are adding a new Church Safeguarding Coordinator (Primary or Deputy/Joint), let us know of their safeguarding group

Click on Change safeguarding group →, chose from the drop down list, click **Continue** and click **Save** (or **Cancel** to exit without making any changes).

OR

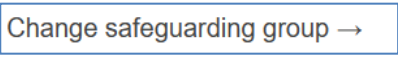
- To add someone who is not currently listed click  fill in the relevant fields, click **Add** and make sure you add their start date and click **Save** (or **Cancel** to exit without making any changes).

- If you are adding a new Church Secretary or Treasurer, let us know of their permissions to print their information in the URC yearbook and Synod Yearbook.

Click on , click on the permission section down arrow and use the 'Edit' button on the right, make the change and click **Save** (or **Cancel** to exit without making any changes).

Please ensure you give **permission to print to at least one** phone number and/or email for URC Yearbook and Synod Yearbook / Handbook

- If you are adding a new Church Safeguarding Coordinator (Primary or Deputy/Joint), let us know of their safeguarding group

Click on , chose from the drop down list, click **Continue** and click **Save** (or **Cancel** to exit without making any changes).

- If you see this error message, click **OK** and contact your Synod and they will be able to add the person, their role and start date to the URC database for you.

#### Something went wrong

A record was not created because a duplicate record is already on the URC database, please contact your Synod Office for help.

OK

- At **Confirm** you will asked to consent and confirm data protection statements.

You will not be able to confirm your changes if you do not have someone listed in one of the mandatory roles. This means that the system will not allow you **not** to have someone listed in these roles.

- When you have reviewed the People please tick the box and click **Confirm**

People >

NOT REVIEWED

will change to

People >

REVIEWED

Have you reviewed your People for this year?

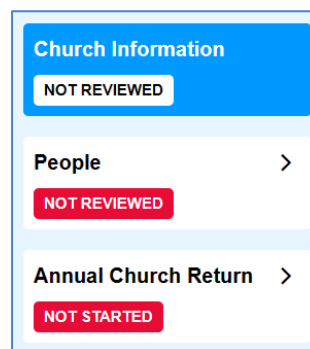
☒ Yes I've reviewed People as of 20/11/2023

Confirm

This will be today's date

## Completing your Annual Return

- During the “Annual Returns” period (normally January and February) the option to complete your Annual Return will be visible. Access this from the menu on the left-hand side.

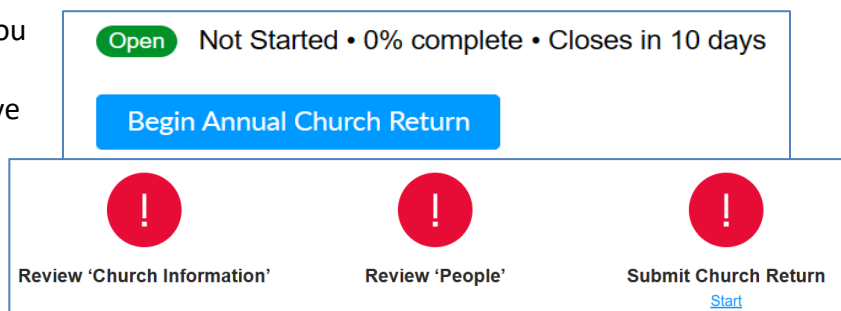


Church Information  
NOT REVIEWED

People  
NOT REVIEWED

Annual Church Return  
NOT STARTED

On the Annual Return page you can see how much you have completed, how long you have before the system closes and whether you have reviewed Church Information and People sections of the portal.



Open Not Started • 0% complete • Closes in 10 days

Begin Annual Church Return

Review 'Church Information'

Review 'People'

Submit Church Return [Start](#)


Also on this page you are able to view the statistics we hold from previous years. Click on [Previous Years](#)

- If you want to print a blank copy of the return, click [Print Form](#)
- Click [Begin Annual Church Return](#) to get started!

[Continue Annual Church Return](#)

*If you have started and saved this, the box will say*

- There are 8 sections which you can work through in **any** order. You should be able to view on the right hand side of the screen the last set of figures you entered. Please note that if you have not completed an Annual Return for some time these figures may be out-of-date. There are pop-up boxes which explain what we are looking for, click on the question mark

 About this figure

- Follow the instructions on the pages and you can enter the information in any order and move on by clicking

[Save & Continue](#)




- The minus sign means that the section is incomplete. **The returns cannot be submitted until all fields have been completed. “0” is a valid numerical entry.**

[Save & Exit](#)

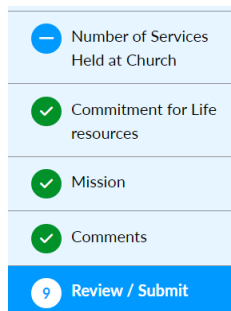
- You can at any time during your entering of the information

## Comments




-  **Comments** If you would like to leave us a comment about the information you have entered please use the comment section

## Review


- The final stage is the 'Review' stage which gives you the opportunity to review (and edit if necessary) all the information we hold for your church.



### Key to symbols

-  Further information is required in this section
-  Section complete
-  Section not started

 Print

- You are able to print or save a copy of your entries by clicking  and changing the destination to your local printer OR Save as PDF in the Print screen, as below. Note that once you have submitted your Annual Church Return you will not be able to print or save a copy of the completed return.

Destination



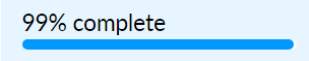
Discipleship HP Laserj ▼

OR

Destination



Save as PDF ▼

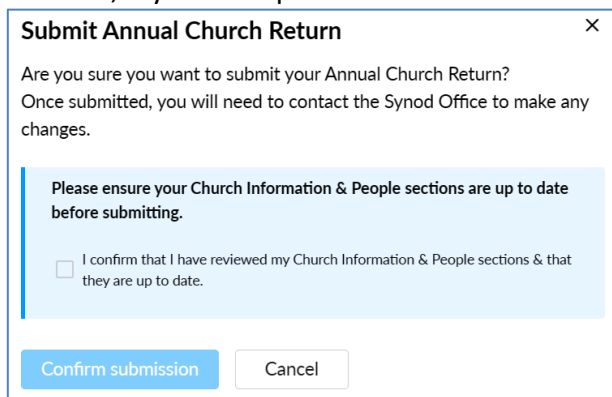
- Your Return will remain at  until you click the submit button
- You may see this message:

Please ensure you have taken a copy of the annual church return information before submitting by clicking the print button at the top of the page. **You have not checked your Church Information or People sections this year. Please visit these sections to ensure that the information is correct before submitting the Annual Church Return.**

Click **Save and Exit**. Please return to Church Information and People sections to ensure that the information is correct. When you have you will be able to submit your annual church return for this year.

- Confirmation of Submission

You will be asked to confirm that you have reviewed the Church Information and People sections, if you have please tick the box and [Confirm submission](#)



The screenshot shows a modal dialog box titled "Submit Annual Church Return" with a close button (X) in the top right corner. The main text asks, "Are you sure you want to submit your Annual Church Return? Once submitted, you will need to contact the Synod Office to make any changes." Below this is a light blue box containing the instruction: "Please ensure your Church Information & People sections are up to date before submitting." Underneath the instruction is a checkbox followed by the text: "I confirm that I have reviewed my Church Information & People sections & that they are up to date." At the bottom of the dialog are two buttons: "Confirm submission" (highlighted in blue) and "Cancel".

- At the bottom of the page is the [Submit Annual Return](#) button which you need to click in order to submit the return to us.

Please do not forget to click the **Submit Annual Return** button.

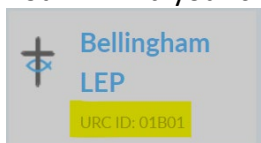


## Appendix 1: Roles in Church Update

### Church Secretary - mandatory

A church secretary is also the primary contact for the church. A church may have joint church secretaries and you can add both names to this section. You **must** have someone listed in this role in order to submit your return. If there is no named person undertaking this role, please enter a new person with the following information:

Title: Mx  
Name: The Church  
Surname: Secretary (URC ID) e.g. **Secretary (01A01)**.  
You will find your church URC ID in the top left-hand corner of your screen



Address: c/o the church name and address  
Telephone: enter the church phone number where available if no number is available add your Synod Office phone number  
Email: enter the generic church email address where available

### Church Treasurer - mandatory

The key person to contact regarding church finances. You **must** have someone listed in this role in order to submit your return. If there is no named person undertaking this role, please enter a new person with the following information:

Name: The Church  
Surname: Treasurer (URC ID) e.g. **Treasurer (01A01)**  
You will find your church URC ID in the top left-hand corner of your screen



Address: c/o the church name and address  
Telephone: enter the church phone number where available if no number is available add your Synod Office phone number  
Email: enter the generic church email address where available

### Safeguarding Coordinator - Lead / Primary Contact - mandatory

The person appointed by the Church Meeting to oversee safeguarding at the church. You **must** have someone listed in this role in order to submit your return. If there is no named person undertaking this role, please enter a new person with the following information:

Name: The Church  
Surname: Safeguarding Coordinator (URC ID) e.g. **Safeguarding Coordinator (01A01)**  
You will find your church URC ID in the top left-hand corner of your screen



Address: c/o the church name and address  
Telephone: enter the church phone number where available if no number is available add your Synod Office phone number  
Email: enter the generic church email address where available

**Church Elder (Serving) - mandatory**

The person appointed by the Church Meeting to serve as an Elder. You **must** have at least one named person in the role to submit your return.

**Synod representative (1) - mandatory** – The church representative that can attend Synod meetings. There **must** be a named person in the role to submit your return

***Synod representative (2) a church can have two representatives if it has more than 200 members***

**Safeguarding Coordinator - Deputy/Joint**

The person appointed by the Church Meeting to assist with overseeing safeguarding at the church

**Assistant Secretary**

The person who deputises/assists the Church Secretary

**Assistant Treasurer**

The person who deputises/assists the Church Treasurer

**DBS/PVG local church verifier**

The person(s) appointed by the Church Meeting to carry disclosure checks

**Children and Youth Work Elder/contact – primary contact**

The key person to contact regarding Children and Youth work

**Children and Youth Work contact - deputy/joint**

Where there is a second person involved in Children and Youth work

**Children & Youth employed worker - Church**

All children and/or youth workers employed by the church should be listed here, including community workers (not CRCWs), family workers

**Administrator**

The person who carries out most of the administrative tasks

**Commitment for Life Link person**

The person who is the main contact for Commitment for Life

**Lettings contact**

The person with responsibility for letting accommodation on behalf of the church

**Minute Secretary**

The person who takes minutes at the church and Elders' meetings

**Property Contact**

The person in charge of the church property

**Church Pulpit Supply Secretary**

The person fulfilling the pulpit supply role

**Church Eco Friend**

The person to receive and spread news on this subject within the church and to join a Synod network of church eco friends for mutual support/sharing