



July 2026

Happy summertime to all.

The Safeguarding Team has been focused on analysing the data from the Annual Safeguarding Returns. This is vital to identifying strategic priorities. Also we have some policy and statutory updates for you all.



Deuteronomy 10:17-19 *“For the Lord your God is the God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, mighty, and awe-inspiring God, showing no partiality and taking no bribe. He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the resident alien, giving him food and clothing.*

Synod safeguarding reviews

In response to recommendations made by the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), the URC has been looking at ways to strengthen quality assurance of safeguarding practice across the denomination. One way that we are doing this is through the

introduction of Synod safeguarding reviews. This involves Synods completing a self-assessment and providing copies of policies and other relevant documentation. There are online questionnaires for Church Safeguarding Coordinators and Ministers/CRCWs to provide feedback. Two members of the Offices of General Assembly Safeguarding Team then visit the Synod for a discussion based on all the information collected. A sample of cases are also reviewed. The process is intended to be collaborative and to highlight examples of good practice as well as to highlight areas where further work is needed. Following two very helpful 'pilot' reviews in East Midlands and South-Western Synods, the process is now being extended to all Synods. A resolution was passed at General Assembly 2026 confirming that all Synods will be expected to participate in a safeguarding review once every 3 years.

New safeguarding strategic plan

The URC's Safeguarding Committee has published its new strategic plan for 2026-2028. This focuses on 4 key areas: Culture and Leadership, Engagement, Training, and Practice Development. The plan relates to the work of the Safeguarding Committee and does not specify any additional tasks for local churches. However, Synods can use it to inform their own plans to develop safeguarding over the next three years.

<https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/Safeguarding-Committee-Strategic-Plan.pdf>

Important – change to the definition of Regulated Activity in England and Wales

The Crime and Policing Act 2026 has introduced a change to the definition of Regulated Activity for those working and volunteering with children in England and Wales. The new measures come into effect on 1st September 2026 and will affect the level of DBS checks that some church workers and volunteers need.



Previously, the ‘supervision exemption’ meant that some people working with children did not need a Barred List check if they were working under supervision (e.g. a helper who was never alone with children and always worked under the guidance of the group leader). The Act removes that exemption.

The amended definition means that a worker/volunteer is engaged in Regulated Activity if:

- They are involved in teaching, training, instructing, caring for, or supervising children; or providing advice/guidance on wellbeing
- This takes place frequently, which is defined as on more than 3 days within a 30-day period

This now applies regardless of whether an individual is working under supervision or not. Where a person volunteers in multiple

settings or with different groups, each instance of teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising a child counts towards the 'on more than 3 days in a 30-day period' period condition.

Anyone engaged in Regulated Activity needs an Enhanced with Barred List DBS check.

The main impact on churches will be in relation those involved with children's groups, youth groups and activities such as Messy Church. Churches will need to:

- Review roles to see whether there are any which may not previously have involved Regulated Activity but would fall under the new definition
- Identify anyone who may have been working under supervision previously whose role would now involve Regulated Activity
- Ensure all those involved in Regulated Activity (including existing volunteers) have an Enhanced with Barred List DBS check

Good Practice guidance will be updated to reflect these changes.

If you have any questions please contact [safeguarding](mailto:safeguarding@urc.org.uk)

LEPs and Safeguarding

For those churches in an LEP, did you know that we now have a document entitled [G1](#) to support you navigate safeguarding in your Church. Please do give it read.



Training Update

The URC Safeguarding Training matrixes approved at General Assembly in 2025 are available [here](#) and are an excellent resource for churches to more readily check that colleagues are accessing the correct level of safeguarding training across England, Scotland and Wales.



Mandatory safeguarding training, namely Foundation, Intermediate and Advanced, is organised and delivered by individual Synods in England and Wales and training in Scotland is provided by the Church of Scotland. Please do visit the safeguarding section of your Synod's website for availability.

In addition, the denomination offers short (two hour) Zoom courses on specialist topics that may be of interest to you personally or your church and these are open to anyone, regardless of Synod or role.

A list of the options for the rest of 2026 is available [here](#) along with details of how to register.

New Training Collaboration with Children and Youth! We are thrilled to present a series of sessions entitled '*Training Workshops for Supporting Intergenerational Communities*'. Developed and delivered jointly by the Children and Youth and Safeguarding Teams, this is a series of three 1.5 hour workshops on Zoom and is open to anyone with an interest in working with young people or looking to expand their ministries. You can attend any of the three sessions (or all of them!). For further details and how to book a place please see the [promotional flyer](#).

Ministers Advanced Safeguarding Training – Ministers are expected to participate in Advanced Safeguarding Training. To open up the opportunities for training dates the national team organised a series of Zoom led training open to ministers from all synods. There has been good take up. The last scheduled one for this is year is:

- Monday 5th October 1-3pm and Monday 12th October 1-3.30pm – **October booking form** (please click on October booking form to register)

Please also check your Synod's Advanced Safeguarding training offering to maximise your options.



Synod of Scotland Update from Vici Royle, Synod of Scotland Safeguarding Coordinator provides an (humorous) update on her work to date.

The Nightmare Before June, a Scottish Safeguarding Story

You know when you've smugly hung the washing outside because the weather is finally clear, and then you hear the clouds rumble, the wind picks up, and the sky turns grey, so you have to sprint to get everything back in before it rains? That's what it was like when Scotland changed its law on Disclosures.

Between 2011 and 2025, volunteers who needed a criminal record check were asked to get a PVG (or 'Enhanced, with updates', for those south of Gretna) because that level of check is free for volunteers (as opposed to the lesser check that costs £25 for the pleasure), and it covers all the bases. It's a 'just in case' scenario: umbrella, sunglasses, and a big coat. But after a seriously lengthy discussion at Law Makers R Us, and several iterations of 'NewDisclosureLaw_version4_part2_withupdates_USETHIS.doc', charities and companies were given a two-week-before-go-time announcement that it would no longer be lawful to hold a PVG if your role didn't require regulated activity. Yes. Two weeks. A grace period was given, too, so that safeguarding professionals could

extend their participation in the national panic parade until June 2025. And the definition of regulated activity changed, too!

Don't get me started on attempting to apply the new definition to the types of activities our Church volunteers carry out.

Do you know when I started working at the URC, as the Synod of Scotland's Safeguarding Administrator? April 2025.

I emailed all our Church Secretaries and Church Safeguarding Coordinators with a list of the people who, according to the data on the DDC app, had applied for a PVG. I explained the changes in the law, and the implications of keeping needless active PVGs, and a warning that no response would result in 100% withdrawal of PVG memberships within their Church. Better to be safe than prosecuted! With a short but fair response deadline, and a clear request for a more speedy answer, it became apparent that the majority of PVG-holders could loosen their grip on their certificates. Thankfully that's a very straight-forward process in DDC.

The next chunky task is a glamorous Tour of Scotland during which the headline act (me) plays the classic hits (Level 1 Disclosure applications). The Tour could be coming to you! Just send a message to my agent (me, but wearing sunglasses) to book a date.

With endless gratitude to Synod of Scotland's Moderator, Lindsey Sanderson, for flying the Safeguarding Flag before I took up post, the new-and-improved guidance for criminal record checks can now be found on the URC Scotland website within the new Safeguarding section.



Safeguarding Sunday – 15 November

Led by the independent Christian Safeguarding Charity, [Thirtyone:Eight](#) they are now taking registrations for

Safeguarding Sunday resources with the theme of Love Protects.

(Of course, you can choose an alternative Sunday to reflect on the spiritual importance of safeguarding in our churches where it suits you better)

Good News Stories

A warm congratulations to Carrie Kaunda (Safeguarding Training Officer and Synod Safeguarding Officer for Yorkshire Synod) who has recently got married.

Carrie married Mr Solomon, and chose to adopt his surname which means she has a new spangly name - **Carrie Solomon** – and has two new spangly email addresses for you to note:

Training Officer: carrie.solomon@urc.org.uk

Yorkshire Safeguarding: carriesolomon.yorkshire@urc.org.uk

Safeguarding Residential

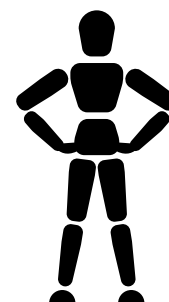
The Safeguarding Team annual conference in Birmingham is a vital element of the safeguarding diary where the team meet up in person and receive training and



team build. There were three excellent training sessions and this year's team building exercise was focussed around the board game version of the hit TV series 'Traitors' (thank you Vici Royle).

Opportunity – Convenor of the United Reformed Church Safeguarding Committee

We continue to seek applications for the role Convenor of the United Reformed Church Safeguarding Committee.



You will have a commitment to helping improve and strengthen safeguarding practice across the URC. You must be a member of the URC.

As the convenor of the committee, you will be instrumental in overseeing the implementation of the URC's safeguarding policies and the strategic management of safeguarding across the

denomination. You will support the Head of Safeguarding in their role as Secretary to the committee and you will Chair the committee.

Terms of Reference are downloadable [here](#) and please see the [job description and person specification](#). More information on the role of a General Assembly Committee convenor can be found [here](#).

Interested?

If you want to find out more, please contact:

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