



URC's Safeguarding Strategic Plan 2020-2025 Adapted to become Wessex Synod Action Plan For Implementation

Safeguarding people is a core part of the URC's mission.
We safeguard the integrity of creation, and we all go together as one Church and one body to ensure the Church is a sustained community of care where everyone – particularly the most vulnerable – find a place of love, pastoral care and support.

Outline of six strategic objectives: charting the way forward

URC Strategic Objective	Key Tasks	Action for implementation	Deadlines	Key People
1. Instil a safeguarding ethos of care and service within all local congregations, synods and bodies of the URC.	1.1. Ensure that each local church and community have safeguarding designated persons committed to protecting children and adults who are or might be at risk of experience abuse or neglect	SSO to contact local churches without CSC and support to recruit and cover the role.	September 2021	SSO
		SSO to promote training for CSC to attend	Ongoing	SSO
		SSO to lead annual gathering of CSC	January 2022	SSO
	1.2. Contact details of safeguarding designated persons are added and updated in databases and shared through relevant media and communication materials, including church posters and noticeboards, URC Yearbook and Synod Directories and websites (depending on role and part of the church).	Ruth Heine to share details with National Safeguarding Team of CSC	Annually	Development Team Administrator
		Synod team to add details to directory of CSC	January 2022	Synod Secretary
		SSO to promote sharing details within local churches on noticeboards, website etc	Ongoing	SSO
	1.3 Raise awareness of child protection and safeguarding adults at risk with guidance, resources and material within the worship, care and life of the URC	SSO to lead annual gathering of CSC	January 2022	SSO
		Keep Synod Website up to date	Ongoing	SSO and Development Team Administrator

URC Strategic Objective	Key Tasks	Action for implementation	Deadlines	Key People
1. Instil a safeguarding ethos of care and service within all local congregations, synods and bodies of the URC.		Quarterly Newsletter	Ongoing	Church House Team and SSO & Development Team Administrator
		Training	Ongoing	SSO/CYDO's
	1.4 Develop shared awareness of safeguarding, and what counts as a safeguarding concern across the denomination in alignment with legislation and internal ethos	Training	Ongoing	SSO/CYDO's
		Newsletter	Quarterly	CH Team/SSO
		SSO/CSC annual gathering	Annually from 2022	SSO/CSC
	1.5. Improve safeguarding communications between Church House, synods, local churches and URC safeguarding designated persons	SSO/CSC annual gathering	Annually from 2022	SSO/CSC
		SSO to attend SSPG meeting	Quarterly	SSO
		SSO to attend Synod/area gathering to raise awareness of role	On going	SSO

URC Strategic Objective	Key Tasks	Action for implementation	Deadlines	Key People
2. Ensure initial and appropriate pastoral care and support to those who are impacted by safeguarding incidents and concerns	2.1 Establish ways of support that contribute to a lasting healing process for survivors and those affected by abuse, harm or neglect from the time of disclosure	Training to include supporting survivors	Ongoing	SSO/CYDO's
		Synod Safeguarding Policy to include supporting survivors	On going	SSO/SRG
		Support to be available as identified by SSO for any survivors identified in the Synod	Ongoing	SSO
	2.2. Co-produce with synods an appropriate case management system that provides prompt and proportionate support to those children, young people and adults in greatest need	SSO to work with the CH team to access a fit for purpose case management system	2021	SSO/CH Team
	2.3. Consult and engage with survivors and relevant groups and organisations in all safeguarding developments	SSO to share with CH Team any survivors from Wessex	Ongoing	SSO

URC Strategic Objective	Key Tasks	Action for implementation	Deadlines	Key People
2. Ensure initial and appropriate pastoral care and support to those who are impacted by safeguarding incidents and concerns	2.4 Use internal or external specialists to support local congregations affected by serious incidents of abuse	SSO to attend Tragedies in Congregations training	January 2021	SSO
		SRG to consider support for ministers	August 2021	SRG
		SSO to investigate internal and external support services.	January 2022	SSO

URC Strategic Objective	Key Tasks	Action for implementation	Deadlines	Key People
3. Set up secure and appropriate systems and processes of data and information handling and reporting safeguarding	3.1 Develop and implement a centralised, standardised electronic system to record and follow up safeguarding cases and concerns from the beginning of the process to resolution	SSO to work with CH Team to sources a case management system	2021	SSO/CH Team
	3.2 Ensure there are clear lines of accountability by use of standard reporting forms and procedures on a regular and annual basis	Churches to be encouraged to use template appendix to GP5 for reporting shared in newsletter, training and annual get togethers	Ongoing	SSO/CYDO/CSC
		Churches to completed annual return and SSO to support those churches that don't engage	Ongoing	SSO
	3.3. Each URC synod provides safeguarding data and information annually in a consistent format	SSO to complete annual return to Church House following data collection by synod team	Annually	SSO/Admin
	3.4 Co-produce with synods minimum standards of compliance with legislation and internal procedures and obtain benchmark progress for each synod	SSO to work with Church House team	On going	SSO/Church House Team

URC Strategic Objective	Key Tasks	Action for implementation	Deadlines	Key People
3. Set up secure and appropriate systems and processes of data and information handling and reporting safeguarding	3.5. Establish tools to measure change and review adequacy and robustness of procedures and policies	SSO to compile annual return and identify effectiveness of procedures.	Annually	SSO
		SSO to be part of GP reviews, reporting to Church House team any interim concerns	Annually	SSO/Church House Team

URC Strategic Objective	Key Tasks	Action for implementation	Deadlines	Key People
4. Ensure the safeguarding policies and procedures are updated, reviewed and implemented in practice throughout the URC	4.1 Update URC's safeguarding policy every two years following the publication of Good Practice 5 (annually for each local church)	SSO to support Church House team and other SSO's in reviewing GP guidance	Jan 2022 & 2024	SSO
		SSO to support local churches as identified through the annual returns that need a church safeguarding policy or a review of.	Annually	SSO/CSC
	4.2 Review current safer recruitment practice of the URC and develop a Good Practice Guidance for all parts of the Church			

URC Strategic Objective	Key Tasks	Action for implementation	Deadlines	Key People
4. Ensure the safeguarding policies and procedures are updated, reviewed and implemented in practice throughout the URC	4.3 Develop the capacity of safeguarding designated persons to conduct thorough safeguarding risk assessments and support offenders, alleged offenders and perpetrators of abuse across the URC	SSO to attend any relevant training provided by the URC	On going	SSO
		SSO to deliver training to synod and local churches around offender management	January 2022	SSO
	4.4 Connect safeguarding policy and procedures with URC's disciplinary processes, especially those related to ministers/CRCWs	SSO to support Church House Team in creating this process	2022	SSO/Church House Team
	4.5 Ensure people in positions of leadership and accountability are aware of any changes to safeguarding policy and practice	Updates to be given via Synod website, email, newsletter and training sessions	On going	SSO/CYDO/Admin

URC Strategic Objective	Key Tasks	Action for implementation	Deadlines	Key People
5. Provide appropriate and accessible safeguarding training for all those who are accountable for and working with children, young people and adults	5.1. Benchmark and coproduce with synods URC's standardised safeguarding training programme for all roles and positions within the URC expected to undertake regular and mandatory safeguarding training	SSO's and CYDO's to deliver the training programme in line with the training plan agreed at Missions Council/General Assembly	From 2021	SSO/CYDO's
	5.2. Ensure robust guidance on delivering mandatory training in both areas of safeguarding (children and adults at risk) for all identified groups involved in regulated activities	Follow training guidance agreed at MC/GA when delivering in synod	From 2021	SSO/CYDO's
	5.3. Develop and maintain quality standards of regular safeguarding training and professional development across the URC	SSO/CYDO's to completed refresher train the trainer training	2021 and 2024	SSO/CYDO's
		SSO to highlight local churches not accessing training and encourage engagement	2021and ongoing	SSO/Admin
		Synod administrator role to monitor training attendance, keep logs and send reminds for training.	Ongoing	Admin

URC Strategic Objective	Key Tasks	Action for implementation	Deadlines	Key People
5. Provide appropriate and accessible safeguarding training for all those who are accountable for and working with children, young people and adults	5.4 Develop and update a comprehensive guidance and package of support resources to make serving elders and trustees (URC and synod) aware of their legal responsibilities	SSO to support in the development of any URC guidance	2023	Church House staff/SSO
		Wessex Trust to appoint a trustee responsible for safeguarding	2022	SSO/Exec/Trust
		SSO to support synod and local churches in this via synod website, newsletter, training and annual gatherings with CSC.	On going	SSO/CSC/CYDO/Admin
	5.5 Value the expertise of and contribute to continuous development of Synod Safeguarding Officers	SSO to identify through appraisal areas for professional development	Ongoing	SSO/Line manager
5.6 Ensure safeguarding is part of the induction of any newly appointed persons to URC roles (particularly trustees, children's and youth workers and those in regulated activities with adults) alongside the specific role induction				

URC Strategic Objective	Key Tasks	Action for implementation	Deadlines	Key People
6. Encourage and build constructive partnerships with statutory, non-statutory bodies, other denomination and faith-based communities	6.1 Provide clear guidance about referring and reporting serious incidents and cases to statutory authorities	SSO to offer support to synod and local churches	Ongoing	SSO
		All churches to have copy of GP5, GP5 to be on synod website, referring and reporting to be covered in training	Ongoing	SSO/CYDO's/Admin
	6.2 Improve public awareness of URC's good practice in safeguarding across denominational, cross-denominational and ecumenical settings	GP guidance to be on synod website	Ongoing	SSO/Admin
		SSO to attend ecumenical safeguarding meetings	Ongoing	SSO
	6.3 Develop and share guidance on safeguarding when churches hire out their premises or providing space to groups/organisations whose work involves children			
	6.4 Endorse close partnership and knowledge exchange of best practice with other denominations to support LEP's and church communities	SSO to attend ecumenical safeguarding meetings	Ongoing	SSO

GLOSSARY

CC Charity Commission

CFS Churches Forum for Safeguarding

CH Church House

CCW Church-related Community Workers

CSC Church Safeguarding Coordinator

CYDO Children's and Youth Development Officer

DBS Disclosure and Barring Service

DDC Due Diligence Check Ltd

GP4 Good Practice 4

GP5 Good Practice 5

LEP Local Ecumenical Partnership

LADO Local Authority Designated Officer

MC Mission Council

MIND Ministerial Incapacity and Discipline Advisory Group

PVG Protecting Vulnerable Groups (Scotland Scheme)

SAG Safeguarding Advisory Group

S/G Safeguarding