

**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**

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| **URC Strategic Objective** | **Key Tasks** | **Action for implementation** | **Deadlines** | **Key People** | **Review of 2022** |
| 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 | Completed for 2021 |
| SSO to promote training for CSC to attend | Ongoing | SSO | On website, targeting CSC that need this as out of date |
| SSO to lead annual gathering of CSC | January 2022 | SSO | SSO to organise for 2022 with funding application |
| 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 | Completed via Annual Safeguarding Return |
| Synod team to add details to directory of CSC | January 2022 | Synod Secretary | Will happen in next directory 2023 |
| SSO to promote sharing details within local churches on noticeboards, website etc | Ongoing | SSO | Encouraged at training, in GP5, will cover in CSC events. |
| 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 | SSO to organise for 2022 with funding application |
| Keep Synod Website up to date | Ongoing | SSO and Development Team Administrator | SSO checks regularly and makes suggested amends |
| Quarterly Newsletter | Ongoing | Church House Team and SSO & Development Team Administrator | Due to changes at CH this is currently on hold however there is now a section in Sharing the Vision for safeguarding |
| Training | Ongoing | SSO/CYDO’s | On line courses running virtually termly by CYDOS and SSO. Ad hoc courses as needed at other times. |

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| **URC Strategic Objective** | **Key Tasks** | **Action for implementation** | **Deadlines** | **Key People** | **Review** |
| 1. Instil a safeguarding ethos of care and service within all local congregations, synods and bodies of the URC. | 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 | On line courses running virtually termly by CYDOS and SSO. Ad hoc courses as needed at other times. |
| Newsletter | Quarterly | CH Team/SSO | Due to changes at CH this is currently on hold however there is now a section in Sharing the Vision for safeguarding |
| SSO/CSC annual gathering | Annually from 2022 | SSO/CSC | SSO to organise for 2022 with funding application |
| 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 organise for 2022 with funding application |
| SSO to attend SSPG meeting | Quarterly | SSO | Attending all meetings |
| SSO to attend Synod/area gathering to raise awareness of role | On going | SSO | Attending as requested or identified as needing to |

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| **URC Strategic Objective** | **Key Tasks** | **Action for implementation** | **Deadlines** | **Key People** | **Review** |
| 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 | This is covered in training |
| Synod Safeguarding Policy to include supporting survivors | On going | SSO/SRG | Needs to be included at next review June 2022 |
| Support to be available as identified by SSO for any survivors identified in the Synod | Ongoing | SSO | Support details issued as needed |
| 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 | Due to be launched summer 2022 |
| 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 | None currently identified |

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| 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 | Attended |
| SRG to consider support for ministers | August 2021 | SRG | Ministers now have pastoral supervision |
| SSO to investigate internal and external support services. | January 2022 | SSO | SSO will look as and when needed |

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| **URC Strategic Objective** | **Key Tasks** | **Action for implementation** | | **Deadlines** | | **Key People** | **Review** |
| 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 | Due to be launched summer 2022 |
| 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 | To be added to the CSC section of the Wessex website |
| Churches to completed annual return and SSO to support those churches that don’t engage | | Ongoing | SSO | Completed for 2020 |
| 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 | Completed for 2020 |
| 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 | Paused due to staffing with CH team, to be picked up in 2022 |
| **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 | Annual report complete for 2020, report for 2021 to be shared with SRG for analysis |
| SSO to be part of GP reviews, reporting to Church House team any interim concerns | | Annually | SSO/Church House Team | Completed and on going |

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| 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 | Due and involved for 2022 review |
| SSO to support local churches as identified through the annual returns that need a church safeguarding policy or a review of. | Annually | SSO/CSC | Completed for 2020 return |
| 4.2 Review current safer recruitment practice of the URC and develop a Good Practice Guidance for all parts of the Church | Share guidance in GP5, discuss in general training and SSO to support development of specific safer recruitment training | Ongoing | SSO/CYDO’s/key synod staff involved in recruitment/CSC | Completed and ongoing |

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| 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 | Completed |
| SSO to deliver training to synod and local churches around offender management | January 2022 | SSO | Training development was paused due to staff changes at CH, deadline set to Jan 2023 |
| 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 | Policy almost completed by Ministries team at CH |
| 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 | Completed |

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| 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 | Training Framework agreed at GA 2021 and synod using training devised through Training Review Group |
| 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 | Training Framework agreed at GA 2021 and synod using training devised through Training Review Group |
| 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 | Booked for 2022 |
| 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 | Completed for all training to date |
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| 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 | Completed for all training/guidance to date |
| Wessex Trust to appoint a trustee responsible for safeguarding | 2022 | SSO/Exec/Trust | Completed and in place from summer 2021 |
| 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 | Completed to date, will also include in CSC event |
| 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 | Completed for 2021-22, due for 2022-23 |
| 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 |  |  |  |  |
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| 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 | Completed as needed |
| 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 | Guidance in GP5 and on website. SSO to talk to CH team about including in Advanced Training |
| 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 | Completed |
| SSO to attend ecumenical safeguarding meetings | Ongoing | SSO | None currently running SSO enquiring into them |
| 6. 3 Develop and share guidance on safeguarding when churches hire out their premises or providing space to groups/ organisations whose work involves children | |  |  |  | CH legal advisor looking into this, SSO to chase |
| 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 | None currently running SSO enquiring into them |

# 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

**GA** General Assembly

**GP** Good Practice (then number of guidance eg GP5)

**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