



SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER

URC YORKSHIRE SYNOD

OCT 2018

WELCOME to the Newsletter for Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk

I hope the summer has been a time for enjoying amazing weather and taking a well- earned break. Judging by the number of calls and emails I've received over the last four weeks, I think many of you are very busy now, developing new projects, recruiting new volunteers and considering how best to make your churches as safe as possible.

Everyone who participates in the life of the Church has a role to play in safeguarding children and adults, and there is evidence of lots of good practice across the Synod.

Safer Recruitment

The starting point when seeking to safeguarding children and adults is to recruit people safely, thus ensuring we engage suitable people to work with those who are vulnerable. This includes how we recruit people to undertake voluntary roles in our churches. Please make sure you follow this ***simple set of principles***:

- Asking applicants to complete an application form
- Providing workers with role/job descriptions and person specifications
- Completion of Self Declaration forms
- Obtaining Disclosure and Barring checks where legally entitled to do so
- Taking up two references (not family) and
- Interviewing candidates

Some excellent resources to support safe recruitment can be found in the URC Safeguarding Good Practice Guidelines section 6. This can be found here:

<https://www.urch.org.uk/images/safeguarding/GP4-Safeguarding-Pack-2015w.pdf>

Code of Conduct

Another useful tool to use when taking on staff or volunteers to work with children and young people especially, is a code of conduct which they are expected to comply with. The URC has one which newly appointed staff and volunteers can be asked to sign up to. This is set out on the next page:

Safeguarding Training

There are basically two types of safeguarding courses available to churches in the Synod:

Foundation training which should be undertaken every three years by all those who work with children and adults at risk in local churches. This aims to give an awareness of safeguarding and how to keep local churches as safe as possible, to recognise safeguarding concerns and know who to discuss them with in church.

Leadership training is an additional course aimed at Ministers and Church Safeguarding Co-ordinators. It is also relevant to those who have very significant roles in church in relation to children, young people or adults at risk. It should be undertaken every three years and it builds on the foundation training by helping participants to feel confident about leading a safeguarding response in church, should a safeguarding incident occur. It also gives an understanding of how to manage safeguarding risk effectively, such as where a known sex offender is part of the congregation.

Dates of course will be circulated by the synod office and by Christmas we hope to have them uploaded on the synod website. For urgent training needs, please contact local safeguarding boards until a course is available.

Code of conduct for working with children and young people

- Do treat all people with dignity and respect.
 - Don't abuse the power and responsibility of your role. Don't belittle, scapegoat, put down, or ridicule a young person (even in 'fun') and don't use language or behaviour with sexual connotations (e.g. flirting or innuendo).
 - Do act inclusively, seeking to make all people feel welcome and valued.
 - Don't exclude other children or workers from conversations and activities unless there is a good reason.
 - Do treat people with equal care and concern.
 - Don't show favouritism (e.g. in selection for activities, in giving rewards, etc.) or encourage excessive attention from a particular child (e.g. gifts).
 - Do encourage everyone to follow any behaviour agreement or ground rules and apply sanctions consistently.
 - Don't threaten or use sanctions which have not been agreed or make empty threats.
 - Do refer to a more senior worker if a child does not respond to your instructions despite encouragement and warning of possible consequences.
 - Don't feel you have to deal with every problem on your own.
 - Do seek to diffuse aggressive or threatening behaviour without the use of physical contact.
 - Don't use physical restraint except as a last resort to prevent injury. This should be the use of minimum force.
 - Do relate to children in public. If a child wants to talk one-to-one about an issue, tell another worker and find somewhere quieter, but still public, to talk.
 - Don't spend time alone with children out of the sight of other people and without the knowledge of someone in leadership.
 - Do make sure that any electronic communication is done with parental consent, and in a way which is transparent, accountable and noted / recorded and adheres to safeguarding policies.
 - Don't keep communication with children secret, while still respecting appropriate confidences.
 - Do allow the designated photographer to take and share photos of event activities, in line with parental consent and URC good practice guidelines.
 - Don't take photos and video of young people at the event if you are not the designated photographer.
 - Do use physical contact wisely - it should be:
 - in public
 - appropriate to the situation and to the age, gender and culture of the child.
 - in response to the needs of the child, not the adult.
 - respectful of the child's privacy, feelings and dignity.
 - Don't use physical contact which could be misconstrued as aggressive (e.g. rough games) or sexual.
 - Do respect children's privacy.
 - Don't assume that children should tell you anything you ask just because you are a worker.
 - Do respect the right of children to wash, change and use the toilet in private.
 - Don't walk in unnecessarily or unannounced
 - Do listen to children and do tell the safeguarding officer if you have any concerns about a child's welfare.
 - Don't promise to keep something secret if it is about a child at risk of harm, but only tell those who need to know.
 - Do respect and promote the rights of children to make their own decisions and choices.
 - Don't work in ways that put your needs and interests before those of the children you work with.
 - Do respect and encourage respect for difference, diversity, beliefs and culture.
 - Don't discriminate or leave discrimination or bullying unchallenged.
- I agree to abide by the above code of conduct when working with children and young people in xxx church

Name:

Signed:

Date:

DBS Checks

Please do make use of the helpful resources on the national URC website and the Due Diligence Checking website before raising queries with me about DBS checks. Both have excellent resources and Due Diligence Checking, the company we use to carry out our checks, even have a 'micro site' for the URC. They are the experts to contact for any technical issues around undertaking a check, particularly in relation to the online checking process. The micro site is here:

<https://www.ddc.uk.net/urc/>. The contact number to use to speak to one of their very helpful staff team is: **0845 644 3298**.

The URC website pages cover issues such as eligibility for DBS check and can be found here :<https://urc.org.uk/disclosure-and-barring-service-checks-england-wales.html>

A few pointers that I am often asked about and therefore may be useful:

-
- All churches initially had their secretaries registered as a verifier for the online checking system. If your church secretary has recently changed or did not want to carry out this role, and you feel you do not have a verifier, you need to identify a suitable candidate and register them for this role. A form to enable this can be found through the URC website link above.
 - You do not need to be DBS checked to be a verifier and there are instructions on how to undertake this simple role on the **DDC URC microsite** (link given above).
 - All ministers, even retired ministers who your church engages to preach, must be DBS checked. If you engage a minister to occasionally preach, you have a responsibility to ask if (s)he has a current check and to liaise with Church House to initiate this if necessary. Church House verifies for the checks on ministers. (safeguarding@urc.org.uk tel 0207 5202729)

That's all for now!

Thank you all for working so hard on this important agenda,



Synod Safeguarding Advisor

SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS:

Any safeguarding concerns, referrals that have been made to our statutory partners (e.g. police, social services) and any allegations of crimes that have been committed, must be brought to the attention of the Synod Safeguarding Advisor.

WHO DO I CONTACT:

Geraldine Sands,
Synod Safeguarding Advisor, email: gsands.safeguardingurc@outlook.com

Tel: 07427857495

I am available during my working hours to provide advice regarding safeguarding concerns.

At other times, free advice can be sought from CCPAS 24-hour helpline. This organisation has recently changed its name to thirtyone:eight.

Thirtyone:eight helpline number:

Tel: 0303 003 1111