



Safeguarding Newsletter



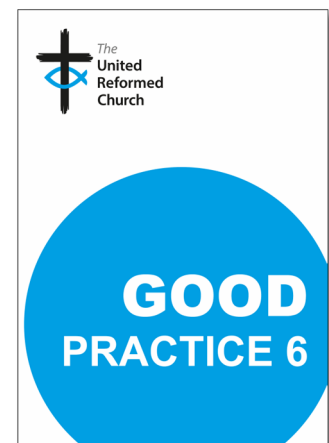
The
United
Reformed
Church
Safeguarding

April 2024

An early Easter hastened in springtime. The safeguarding team has been busy supporting churches with their Annual Safeguarding Return and in March the team supported the World Council for Churches initiative 'Thursdays in Black' which highlights the hope of a world without rape and violence around the world.

Annual Safeguarding Returns

Throughout January and February churches worked hard to complete their Annual Safeguarding Returns. We thank you. Over the coming months Synod Safeguarding Officers across the denomination will be examining the returns to extract data which helps us see where we, as a denomination, are at and what, if any, gaps there are to help us better support you. It also assists us in identifying individual churches that may want a little more support. A decent 80% of returns have been submitted and we would expect quite a few more to be completed on paper and submitted to the relevant synod.



Good Practice 6 (GP6)

We are gradually adding more resources to support the implementation of Good Practice 6 at <https://urc.org.uk/safeguarding/safeguarding-good-practice/>

Recent additions include Word files for many of the resources, a revised self-declaration form and updated guidance on bullying and harassment.

Forthcoming resources will include additional guidance on adult safeguarding, domestic abuse and managing risk.

Training Update

Training Review Group - the group met in February to discuss all aspects of safeguarding training, from participation and publicity, to monitoring training attendance and course content. This is ever evolving within the safeguarding training framework . At each meeting of Training Review Group we welcome a member of a local church to join us. If you are interested in joining a meeting to give any feedback on safeguarding training then please contact carrie.kaunda@urc.org.uk



Upcoming Specialist Safeguarding Courses via Zoom:

- Adult Safeguarding 18 April 6.30-8.30
- Spiritual Abuse 8 May 1.30-3.30
- Elders as Trustees 14 May 7.00-9.00
- DDC Verifier and Safer Recruitment 30 May 6.30-8.30
- Domestic Abuse 4 June 6.30-8.30

The full list of dates and times for 2024 is available on the Safeguarding pages on the URC [website](#) under 'Training Dates for the Whole Denomination'. To book, please email emma.pearce@urc.org.uk with your name/church/role and your course(s) and dates.

For mandatory safeguarding courses please contact your [Synod Safeguarding Officer](#).

The Safeguarding Foundation E-Learning is now available on the [URC Learning Hub](#). This means you can do the course in your own time. Each month we take a list of participants from the previous and create a training record to show that you have completed the module.

Advanced Safeguarding Training - It has been wonderful to see so many people taking up the opportunities across synods to do advanced safeguarding training. The training focuses on unpicking our unconscious bias and gaining a better understanding of how grooming can take place across organisations including churches as well as targeting individual people. There is also a deep dive into risk management and responding to allegations.

We have had children's and youth leaders, Ministers, Elders and Church Safeguarding coordinators attending and one participant commented "This is the first time I've done safeguarding training that hasn't felt like teaching Grandma to suck eggs! There was a lot of new things in this that were really useful'.



If you have any responsibility for decision making in your church or any oversight of safeguarding we would encourage you to contact your SSO and book onto this training course. It is recommended that at least one person in every church is trained to this level to support safeguarding.

We are continually working to ensure churches are safe places where everyone is protected from harm and training goes a long way to ensuring this happens.

As of October 2023, Wales has a new National safeguarding training, learning and development framework. [National safeguarding training, learning and... | Social Care Wales](#)

The framework applies to all statutory, voluntary and third sector agencies working in Wales, including faith-based organisations. The URC Wales Synod is in the process of working with the United Reformed Church and the Welsh Council of Voluntary Agencies to ensure that by September 2024, all URC safeguarding training delivered in Wales fully aligns with the National safeguarding training, learning and development framework.



Why has a national safeguarding framework been developed in Wales?

The framework has been developed to help employees and volunteers in Wales apply the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, Children Act 1989 legislation, the Wales Safeguarding Procedures and statutory safeguarding guidance, and written to promote a shared understanding of safeguarding principles, roles and responsibilities, promote a consistent culture of learning and development, and share learning from Safeguarding Reviews.

The framework will help make organisations more efficient and maximise commitments to collaborative working across agencies.

The Wales Synod will need to use the framework to make sure there's a consistent approach to training, learning and development, ensure people get the right training, learning and development at the right time and develop a consistent way of delivering training and checking how effective safeguarding has been.

Safeguarding practice in Wales will benefit from having national standards for safeguarding training, learning and development that will apply to all organisations, both statutory and voluntary. One benefit is that for people who volunteer or work in several organisations within Wales, the safeguarding training done at a particular level in one context will be valid in the other contexts they volunteer or work in. This will avoid the need to repeat or duplicate training.

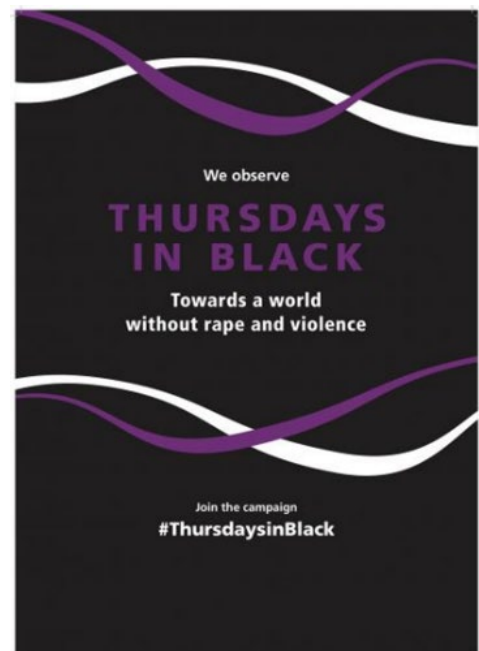
Watch this space for further developments.

Thursdays in Black

Throughout the month of March members of the safeguarding team across the denomination have been taking part in Thursdays in Black.

This is an ecumenical campaign led by the World Council of Churches, to encourage people to speak out against all forms of gender-based violence. People participate by wearing black on Thursdays as a symbol of strength and resistance.

In every country, gender-based violence is a tragic reality. This violence is frequently hidden, and victims are often silent, fearing stigma and further violence.





We all have a responsibility to speak out against violence, to ensure that women and men, boys and girls, are safe from rape and violence in homes, schools, work, streets – in all places in our societies.

The campaign is simple but profound. Wear black on Thursdays. Wear a pin to declare you are part of the global movement resisting attitudes and practices that permit rape and violence.

Show your respect for women who are resilient in the face of injustice and violence. Encourage others to join you.

We hope that by wearing black we can encourage conversations which will promote this important topic and raise awareness.

More information about this can be found at

<https://www.oikoumene.org/what-we-do/thursdays-in-black>

