

Advanced Safeguarding Training

Safeguarding is a permanent and necessary part of the Church of Scotland. The Church of Scotland has invested in establishing a robust safeguarding system for all congregations (in Scotland, England and internationally), Church departments and councils including more than 70 CrossReach services. The aim of the Introductory Safeguarding course which you will already have attended is to raise awareness of the key Public Protection & Safeguarding procedures and policies applicable to all staff and volunteers.¹

Aim

The aim of this training is to deepen your understanding of your role and specifically the responsibilities that lie within this, for example recruitment, training, referrals¹. Role descriptions for Safeguarding Coordinators, Safeguarding Panel Members and the role of the Minister in Safeguarding are all detailed in the Safeguarding Handbook, which can be found on the website. The training also seeks to raise further awareness of the Church of Scotland Safeguarding Policies and the support available to you in your role. As stated above, for further detail on the roles and job descriptions please refer to the Safeguarding Publications on the website.

Health Warning

The subject of harm, abuse and neglect can be sensitive and distressing both personally, and professionally. If you have any difficulty in continuing with this training please speak with your safeguarding coordinator or line manager.

Safer Recruitment

Please refer to the Safeguarding Handbook on the website and make yourself familiar with the steps of the Safer Recruitment process, guidance on PVG, the application process, and Basic Disclosure.

Two key documents to make yourself familiar with before the training:

SG7 Safeguarding Congregational Register – this is essentially a tool for safe recruitment. It allows Safeguarding Coordinators to clearly record volunteers/workers details in terms of PVG, training and whether they have received the pocket guide etc.

SG11 Safeguarding Audit Checklist – this is ‘health checklist’ for safeguarding in your congregation and is undertaken every year. There is a guidance note that accompany the form.

The forms can be found [here](#) under Safeguarding Forms.

¹ The Church of Scotland has congregations in England and internationally to which the key messages in relation to Safeguarding also consistently apply. For further guidance on any specific legislation applicable in other countries, please don't hesitate to contact the Safeguarding Service.

The forms and guidance note can be found on the Safeguarding Service section of the website, under 'Safeguarding Publications'.

Both of these documents are inspected by the presbytery annually. Note any questions you have about these documents.

TRAINING EXERCISE - CASE STUDIES

Please read through these case studies before the training course

Case study 1

David is a longstanding member of your congregation. You learn that he has recently been convicted of a non-contact sexual offence where the victims were children. He received a non-custodial sentence and has been placed on the Sex Offenders Register, the conditions of which are managed by a Police Officer and by a Criminal Justice Social Worker. David approaches you and admits that he is struggling with a guilty conscience as he had committed a contact sexual offence against another child some years ago. The child is now an adult and David had met her in the town centre recently. David spoke to the woman and apologised for his actions those years ago. The person stated that she did not want to speak about it ever again and that she was never going to tell anyone.

What is the concern in this scenario? / What are the potential risks or problems that may arise?

What should happen next? / What needs to be done and by whom?

Case study 2

The congregation is advertising for volunteers to help out with the Church's summer holiday club and in the Sunday School. James' family helped out last year, but he was studying in Germany so was unable to join them. James' family are members of the congregation and James regularly attends church when home from university. He has now returned to Scotland after 18 months and is keen to volunteer for the summer holiday club this year. The Safeguarding Coordinator meets with James to complete all the tasks required for the safer recruitment process including James applying for PVG Scheme membership and an overseas criminal record/police check.

As he has been interviewed by the Safeguarding Coordinator and completed all the forms, James starts working in the summer holiday club. A few days into the holiday club, James receives an email from the Safeguarding Service asking for further details regarding information on their PVG Scheme Certificate relating to their time in Germany to enable a risk assessment to be undertaken by the Recruitment Sub-Committee. The applicant shows the letter to the Safeguarding Coordinator.

What are the potential risks or problems that may arise?

What options are available to resolve this situation?

What needs to be done and by whom?

Case Study 3

The minister of the congregation is approached by the Session Clerk, Cecilia, to discuss a confidential matter. Cecilia discloses that she is being investigated in relation to alleged child abuse. She is also the Sunday School Teacher and BB captain. During the conversation, Cecilia finally admits that she has been charged with sexual offences relating to her step-children, who also attend Sunday School and Church with their father. She has three step-children aged 7, 10 and 13. Her husband (the children's father) is also a member of the congregation, but she states that they have separated as a result of the investigation and charges. Cecilia states that she is feeling helpless and depressed.

What is the concern in this scenario?

What should you do? What should happen next?

Any other considerations and next steps?

Case Study 4

Meline is an 8-year-old girl who was born in the UK. Both her parents are from Gambia. She has been attending Sunday School at her local Church for a number of months and has always presented as a bubbly, happy young girl.

Recently the Sunday School teachers have noticed a change in Meline's demeanour, including a change in interactions with her parents.

Last week, Meline informed the Sunday School teacher that she is being taken out of school next week - returning to Gambia for a holiday. She describes that she has a pretty dress to wear at grand ceremony. Although this sounds exciting, Meline is upset when she describes the trip. When asked why she is sad, she states that she is scared about what is going to happen to her 'down below'. She then points to her genital area.

What is the concern in this scenario? / What are the potential risks or problems that may arise?

Is this a situation where harm may be occurring; if so what type of harm?

What should happen next? / What options are available to resolve this situation?

Who, if anyone, should you be telling? / What needs to be done and by whom?

Any other considerations?

Case study 5

On Friday evening, the session clerk contacts you in response to some young people approaching him with concerns about a Congregational Youth Worker, Tina.

The young people have raised concerns about Tina, the youth worker, sending messages over social media to some young people in the Church youth group over the past year. The young people involved are around 14 or 15.

Tina, 23 has been a Congregational Youth worker for over two and a half years. The session clerk tells you that he doesn't know whether Tina is aware of her responsibilities in relation to social media however she does work with children in other settings beyond the Church too. The minister had said it is "over the top" to ask her to attend training again as she has done in in other places.

The young people have advised the session clerk that Tina contacted them online seeking to be friends but that she has also set up a fake account calling herself Leah Parsons. She contacted one of the boys saying that he was handsome and then sending him pictures of men and women in swimsuits. Some of the young people have told their parent/carer and some have blocked Tina on social media.

Tina is leading the next youth group on Sunday afternoon and is managed locally by the Minister.

What is the concern in this scenario?

What should happen next?

Any other considerations?

Case study 6

Laura, 39 has been a member of the Church for a year and has really enjoyed the fellowship it has given her. She discloses to you that her partner has said that she should stop coming to Church as it is keeping her away from her duties at home and it's a waste of time. He has taken away her bank cards so it is difficult for her to pay for the bus journey to come to Church.

She says that he has a history of violent behaviour and has spent time in prison. Laura has a two-month old son. She says her husband is a good Dad and would never hit her son.

What is the concern in this scenario?

What should happen next?

Any other considerations?

Case Study 7

A couple of months ago, the Minister received a complaint about an Elder, David, 74, who also works as a part time hall keeper in the Church. The complaint was reporting that David has been using inappropriate sexualised language towards female members of the congregation before and after some Church services. The females who had made the reports did not wish to make a formal complaint to any external agency.

Previous to this report to the Minister, another elder Jenny, who runs the weekly dementia cafe advised the Safeguarding Coordinator that David had kissed her. Jenny did not want anything 'official' done about the report as she has been friends with him and his wife for a long time and said it was 'really unlike him' but he has been behaving differently recently.

David's daughter is also an elder and more recently had spoken to the Safeguarding Coordinator about her father becoming more forgetful.

Subsequent to these complaints a member of the Safeguarding Panel did try to speak to David after a Kirk Session meeting, explaining to him that his actions were not appropriate and was making the females in question feel uncomfortable.

However, since then, another member of the congregation has complained about him putting his hand on her knee. There is a concern that his behaviour is getting worse, and that David may have health issues that is leading to this disinhibited behavior.

David is an elder and so undertakes district visits to people's homes.

What is the concern in this scenario?

What should happen next?

Any other considerations?

Case Study 8

Tom is 24 and is a volunteer in youth ministry in the Church. One evening, he asks to speak to you about something very sensitive. You arrange to meet him at the post worship coffee get together for members on Sunday. He looks uncomfortable but discloses to you that he was sexually abused for three years when he was 9. The harm occurred in his parental family home. The alleged perpetrator was his uncle and he discloses that he has recently been back in contact with the family. He has a ten-year old sister who is still living in the parental home. When he says his name, you recognize him from a Church in the area and are aware that he helped out occasionally with the Sunday school. It was just an informal thing though and not regularly as far as you can remember.

What is the concern in this scenario?

What should happen next?

Any other considerations?

Important Resources and Additional Reading

On completion of this course, you should also make yourself familiar with the Safeguarding Handbook and key documents on the Safeguarding Service section of the Church of Scotland website.

[Safeguarding handbook](#)

Chapter 1: Safeguarding values, policy and roles within the Church

Chapter 2: Protecting children and adults at risk of harm

Chapter 3: The safe recruitment, selection and management of volunteers and paid staff

Chapter 4: Safeguarding Training—what is available, who it's for, and how to access it

Chapter 5: Safeguarding in practice

Chapter 6: Managing those who 'pose a risk'

Chapter 7: Responding to domestic abuse

Appendix 1: Code of Good Safeguarding Practice

Appendix 2: Historical (non-recent) abuse policy and procedure

Appendix 3: Job description for a Safeguarding Coordinator

Appendix 4: Legislation and further guidance

Appendix 5: Fact-finding investigation – model structure

Appendix 6: International Presbytery and Presbytery of Jerusalem recruitment and police checks

Appendix 7: Covenant of Responsibilities template for worship

Safeguarding Act and Guidance (can be found on the Safeguarding Service section of the website under '[Safeguarding Publications](#)')
Safeguarding in Practice

You will also find pro forma such as consent forms for children's activities, media consent forms and guidance on the Safeguarding Service section of the website, under Safeguarding Forms.

Social media guidance

Guidance on the use of social media and online safety can be found in Chapter 5 of the Safeguarding Handbook, under 'social media information and guidelines'.

National guidance

Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-guidance-child-protection-scotland-2021/>

How to contact the Safeguarding Service

The service is available 9.00am-5.00pm, Monday to Friday. You can leave a telephone or email message outwith this time.

The Church of Scotland Safeguarding Service
The Church of Scotland
121 George Street
Edinburgh
EH2 4YN
Tel: 0131 240 2256
Email: safeguarding@churchofscotland.org.uk