

The United Reformed Church URC Safeguarding Training Framework

Guidance

The requirements for Safeguarding training in Scotland and Wales are different to those in England and therefore there are distinct elements to the framework for churches in England, Wales and Scotland and further details will be found below.

If you are in Synod of Wales, please go to pg. 20 of this document where you will find the guidelines for Wales along with the training matrix for this Synod.

If you are in Synod of Scotland, please go to pg.25 of this document where you find the guidelines and matrix for the Synod of Scotland.

1. Introduction

The United Reformed Church recognises that it is everyone's responsibility to safeguard others and thus needs to ensure that people holding certain roles and responsibilities are specifically equipped to protect vulnerable groups including both children and adults.

2. URC's Safeguarding Training Framework

In order to achieve this goal, the URC offers regular safeguarding training for all those working with children and adults at risk as well as those they support. They need to know how to promote the welfare of those they support, reduce the likelihood of harm, abuse or neglect, and respond effectively to concerns or allegations of abuse which arise.

The Safeguarding Training Framework details a tiered structure of training; Foundation, Intermediate and Advanced. There is also a combined course which comprises Foundation and Intermediate and at the proper time this will replace the need to do two separate training courses. Those who currently need both training

courses and have not yet done Foundation can access this instead. There is also an introductory course to assist those who have had equivalent external training and the details of this can be found below. There are Bespoke Modules which are highly recommended in certain roles.

The General Assembly have made it mandatory for some role holders in the life of the church, paid or voluntary, to undertake safeguarding training: for these individuals that will be either at Foundation, Intermediate or Advanced level. The aim of all training is that we become a safer church for all.

3. Safeguarding Training Structure

The URC safeguarding training programme has been structured into three distinct but related modules; Foundation, Intermediate and Advanced training. There is also a combined module which combines Foundation and Intermediate to assist with the roll out of this training. Training is designed not just to be informative but based on case examples. Some training will be available as online learning which will enable more participants to engage in safeguarding training. The Foundation module can be accessed by anyone within the URC. Members of the church who have no requirement to do safeguarding training can undertake this training if they wish and there is no log in or registration requirements for this. This training can be found [here](#)

The table at Appendix Two illustrates the recommended level of training for individuals in various roles.

Training should be renewed every three years. Training will be renewed at the highest level needed and therefore those who need Intermediate would ONLY complete the Intermediate refresher and would not need to repeat Foundation training. Those who have completed Advanced training will only need to refresh at this level and will not repeat Foundation or Intermediate training.

The flowchart below illustrates where equivalent training may be accepted by the Synod to fulfil the requirements of the URC's training framework. Where external training is accepted the introductory e-learning course MUST be completed. This can be found [here](#).

4. Recording of Training

Completion of attendance at all Foundation, Intermediate, Advanced and Bespoke level training delivered by the Synod must be recorded onto the URC's National Database by the Synod. Completion of Bespoke modules delivered by the Central Safeguarding Team will be recorded on the database by the Central Team Administrator. It is the responsibility of the Church Safeguarding Coordinator to ensure that training is up to date for local churches, and they are required to liaise with their Church Secretary to ensure all role holders are listed on the database and that this information is up to date. The database can be updated with role holders when the Annual Returns are due and there is an expectation that Church Safeguarding Coordinators will monitor training compliance as part of the Annual Safeguarding Return. This is a pertinent time to encourage role holders to book onto training courses. Where there is no Church Secretary the Church Safeguarding Coordinator must liaise with the Elders to ascertain who has responsibility for the returns. Any questions about this can be directed to the Synod Safeguarding Officer.

The Ministries team at Church House will have oversight of whether Ministers' training is up to date and will run reports, accordingly, sharing with Moderators and SSOs as relevant.

For Synod roles and Assembly roles, Line Managers and the relevant Committees will need to be in conversation to ensure training is completed and up to date.

5. Compliance

All office holders are required to complete the necessary level of training to ensure their church is compliant with requirements set out by General Assembly, the Charity Commission, and their insurance (and the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator¹ for those in Scotland).

Office Holders should aim to complete the first level of necessary training within six months of starting in role. If no training is available to them in this time they should book on the next available training as soon as possible. Anyone in a current role where changes have been made should complete training within 1 year. Where role

holders cannot complete it in 1 year, they should reach out to their SSO to discuss why this is a problem

Failure to complete the required training may result in the Ministerial Discipline or Disciplinary for Office Holders Policy procedures being evoked. Where learners are unable to complete the required training, the reasons will be discussed and steps taken to ensure training is accessible. Synods will endeavour to offer training via a range of methods where resources allow but churches should support learners to access training online and look at ways that role holders can be supported to do this.

6. Training Pathways

Volunteers and office holders who have completed equivalent training in a relevant external role and are competent in recognising signs and symptoms of abuse and responding correctly may use this prior learning to bypass the Foundation training and proceed to the Intermediate Level if this training has been completed in the past year. When this situation arises, the person must complete the Introductory module to ensure they understand the specific considerations within the Church as well as the specific guidance and policies within the URC. Intermediate training must then be completed with the URC if the role requires this level.

A mapping exercise has been conducted to ensure that training from Ecumenical partners in the Church of England and the Methodist Church matches with the requirements laid out by the URC.

Those who have completed Advanced Level training in the Methodist Church are trained to the equivalent level of our Intermediate training and may therefore proceed straight to Advanced training if they have completed this within the last three years and their role requires. They must also complete our Introductory module.

Those who have completed Leadership Level training in the Church of England are trained to the equivalent level of our Intermediate training and may therefore proceed straight to Advanced training if they have completed this within the last

three years and their role requires. They must also complete our Introductory module.

Any person coming from other denominations can discuss their training and the learning outcomes with the Training and Development Coordinator (Safeguarding) if they wish to progress up a pathway without completing Foundation or Intermediate training.

Those who have completed training elsewhere must present their certificate to the Church Safeguarding Coordinator and the Church Safeguarding Coordinator must liaise with the Church Secretary (or Elders where there is no secretary) to ensure this is recorded on the database. Synod Safeguarding Officers must also be consulted to ratify this decision and can also be contacted to update the database if necessary. Ministers and CRCWs must still complete URC training to ensure they can work across churches that follow our safeguarding.

7. Requirements for those under the age of eighteen

Where the roles in the matrix are held by those who are under the age of eighteen, foundation training will still need to be completed. Consultation has taken place with the Children and Youth team in regards to this to ensure that training is suitable for anyone who is under the age of eighteen and whilst the subject matter is sensitive there is still a need for those in role to understand expectations and to be able to recognise and respond to any concerns. In these circumstances the e-learning should be completed alongside a trusted adult and the Children and Youth Development Officer should be informed.

Introductory Module

This module is available as e-learning and focuses on the specifics of safeguarding within a church context and safeguarding within the URC. This course contains vital information that would not be found in external training. This course can only be taken in lieu of Foundation training by individuals who demonstrate comprehensive

knowledge of the signs and symptoms of abuse and an understanding of the 4 Rs (Recognising, Responding, Recording and Reporting Abuse).

The introductory module will contain the following material

- An introduction to the importance of safeguarding and the specific risks associated with safeguarding in a church context.
- Legislation, policy, and guidance including Good Practice 6 (and its successors) and its appendices.
- The barriers to the 4Rs including an overview of how the 4Rs can be addressed in line with the concept of Forgiveness in the Christian Faith.
- The role of local church Safeguarding Coordinators and Synod Safeguarding Officers and how they can support local churches to be as safe as possible.
- An overview of what is required in each church including policies and a safeguarding coordinator.
- A basic overview of legal obligations placed upon faith-based organisations including the role of Trustees and Elders as stipulated by the Charity Commission. (Elders will be directed to additional information on this when undertaking E-learning).
- Basic knowledge around what Spiritual abuse is and the signs and symptoms to look out for in the Church.

The introductory course usual takes 45 minutes to complete

Foundation Safeguarding Training

The Foundation module is available as e-learning but may also be delivered online or face to face where necessary. The training will contain the following

- An introduction to the importance of safeguarding and the specific risk associated with safeguarding in a church context.
- Legislation, policy, and guidance including Good Practice document and its appendices.

- The types of abuse and an awareness of the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect.
- The 4Rs and how to effectively use these in a church context.
- The barriers to the 4Rs including an overview of how the 4Rs can be addressed in line with the concept of Forgiveness in the Christian Faith.
- The role of local church Safeguarding Coordinators and Synod Safeguarding Officers and how they can support local churches to be as safe as possible.
- An overview of what is required in each church including policies and a safeguarding coordinator.
- A basic overview of legal obligations placed upon faith-based organisations including the role of Trustees and Elders as stipulated by the Charity Commission. (Elders will be directed to additional information on this when undertaking E-learning)
- Online safety.
- Basic knowledge around what Spiritual abuse is and the signs and symptoms to look out for in the Church.

Foundation training is 90 minutes – 2 hours dependant on the mode of delivery.

Intermediate Safeguarding training

Intermediate training is complementary to the Foundation module and enhances the knowledge that participants gained, whilst also introducing new topics and focusing on safer practices:

- Safer Culture building on the information in Good Practice 6 document.
- Safer Working Practices building on the information in Good Practice document including hiring of the building, ratios, lone working, and social media in line with codes of conducts.
- Safer recruitment principles and the need for a consistent approach across the denomination. This includes an understanding of the common barriers to recruiting paid staff and volunteers safely.

- The principles of safeguarding adults at risk, including issues of capacity and when to override consent in an adult's best interests.
- Confidential record keeping and the importance of seeking and recording consent in relation to church activities.
- A review of the 4Rs and how to challenge inappropriate behaviours.

Intermediate training is estimated to last 2.5 hours.

Combined Foundation and Intermediate Module

The combined module will combine both Foundation and Intermediate modules for those that need an Intermediate level of training. Those that need an Intermediate level can therefore do this course as one training instead of completing the e-learning and the Intermediate level.

- The importance of safeguarding and the specific risk associated with safeguarding in a church context.
- Legislation, policy, and guidance including Good Practice document and its appendices. This will include a look at safer culture and safer working practices.
- The types of abuse and an awareness of the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect.
- The 4Rs and how to effectively use these in a church context.
- The barriers to the 4Rs including an overview of how the 4Rs can be addressed in line with the concept of Forgiveness in the Christian Faith.
- The role of local church Safeguarding Coordinators and Synod Safeguarding Officers and how they can support local churches to be as safe as possible.
- An overview of what is required in each church including policies and a safeguarding coordinator.
- A basic overview of legal obligations placed upon faith-based organisations including the role of Trustees and Elders as stipulated by the Charity Commission. (Elders will be directed to additional information on this when undertaking E-learning)

- Online safety.
- Basic knowledge around what Spiritual abuse is and the signs and symptoms to look out for in the Church.
- Safer recruitment principles and the need for a consistent approach across the denomination. This includes an understanding of the common barriers to recruiting paid staff and volunteers safely.
- The principles of safeguarding adults at risk, including issues of capacity and when to override consent in an adult's best interests.
- Confidential record keeping and the importance of seeking and recording consent in relation to church activities.

Combined training is estimated to last 2.5 - 3 hours.

Advanced Safeguarding Training

Advanced training is to support those who have leadership roles in which they support, manage, and oversee safeguarding arrangements and practice.

The Advanced module contains the following content:

- The attitudes and values of the individual and how these can impact safeguarding decision-making. This includes how to recognise personal prejudices and biases.
- Systemic grooming, and the impact on the entire denomination. This includes how to have safe relationships with appropriate boundaries in place.
- Handling allegations against those involved in the church whether paid or voluntary, lay or ordained.
- Supporting those who may pose a risk to children or adults, whilst maintaining policies that place safeguarding at the heart of the church.
- Referrals to external partners including the role of the Charity Commission during an allegation, and the role of the Designated Officer (DO).

- An Advanced understanding of how to recognise, respond, record and report safeguarding concerns, deal with allegations, complaints, and disciplinary procedures, and how to support others in the Church.

The Advanced module is estimated to last approximately four hours.

Matrix for England Levels of mandatory training

	Foundation	Intermediate or combined.	Advanced	Recommended Bespoke Modules
Synod Safeguarding Officers	✓	✓	✓	All
Line Managers of Synod Safeguarding Officers	✓			Line Manager training
Church Safeguarding Coordinators	✓	✓	✓	Spiritual Abuse Domestic Abuse Online Safety Safeguarding Children and Young People Safeguarding Adults Verifiers and Safer Recruitment Church safeguarding Coordinators E-learning this can be found here

Deputy Safeguarding Coordinators	✓	✓		Spiritual Abuse Domestic Abuse Online Safety Safeguarding Children and Young People Safeguarding Adults
Members of the General Assembly Safeguarding Committee	✓			
Synod Safeguarding Committees and Reference Groups	✓			
Active Ministers and CRCWs including retired ministers who meet the	✓	✓	✓	Spiritual Abuse Domestic Abuse Online Safety Safeguarding Children and Young People Safeguarding Adults Supporting Survivors

requirements of active ministry)				
Synod Moderators	✓	✓	✓	All
Synod Clerks	✓			<p>Safer Recruitment</p> <p>As directed by line management – please consider which bespoke modules are most relevant in your own Synod.</p>
Synod Staff	✓			
Church House staff	✓	As directed by line management	As directed by line management	
Children's and Youth Workers including lead volunteers	✓	✓		<p>Safeguarding Children and Young People</p> <p>Online Safety</p>
Regular children's and youth work helpers (working under supervision)	✓	✓		<p>Safeguarding Children and Young People</p> <p>Online Safety</p>
One-off or occasional children's and youth work helpers (working	✓			

under supervision)				
Managers of children's, youth and Adult' workers	✓	✓		Safeguarding Children and Young People Online Safety
Adult Workers including regular volunteer helpers and Leaders.	✓	✓		Safeguarding Adults Modern Slavery Drug and Alcohol Abuse and the links to Safeguarding Refugees and Asylum Seekers
Volunteers for one-off events (Adult groups)	✓			
Pastoral Visitors	✓	✓	Where visits include offenders managed by the church	Domestic Abuse Safeguarding Adults Modern Slavery Supporting Survivors
Worship Leaders and Assembly	✓	✓		Domestic Abuse Safeguarding Adults Supporting Survivors

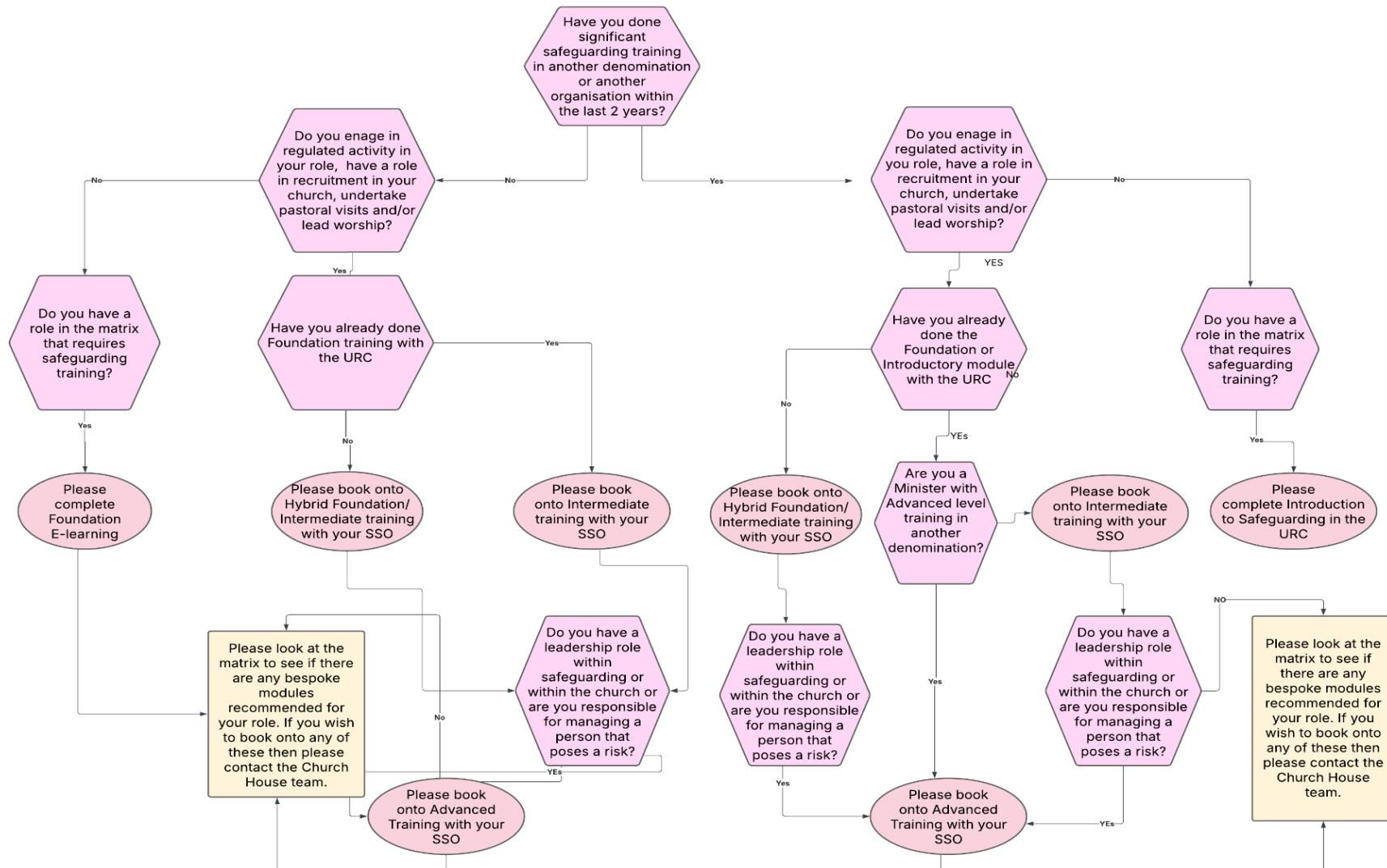
Accredited Lay Preachers				
URC Trustees and Synod Trustees	✓			
Elders as Trustees	✓	✓	Where there is no Minister and if there is a managed offender in the church at least one Elder must undertake this level.	Elders as Trustees Domestic Abuse Supporting Survivors Safeguarding Adults
Church Secretary	✓	✓		Verifier and Safer Recruitment
Chaplains and Ministers on the Roll in other roles	✓	✓		

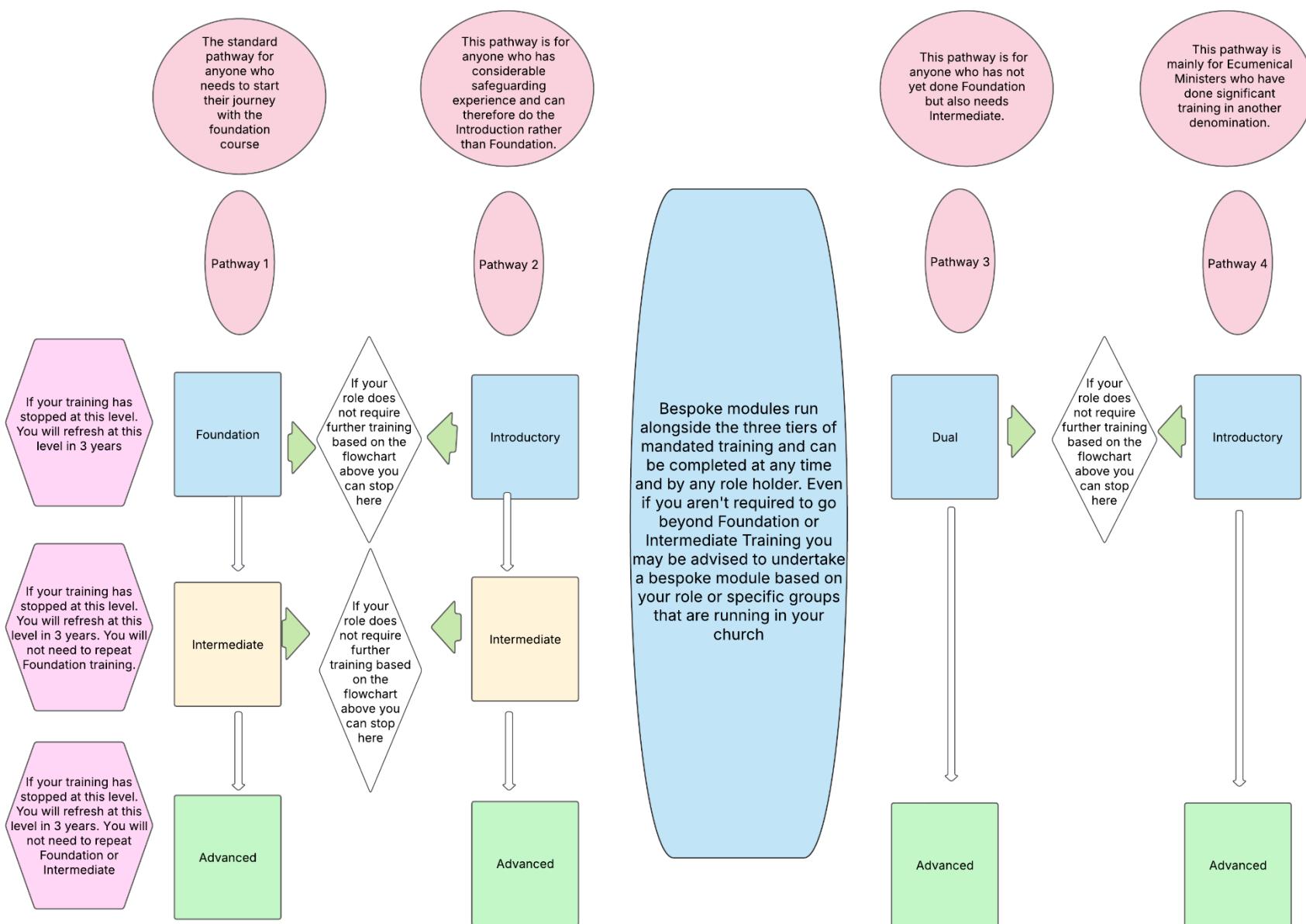
Assembly Accredited Lay Pioneers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Domestic Abuse Supporting Survivors
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If a role is not mentioned, then the role holder must speak to their SSO for clarification on the level of training needed. Further clarification can be found in the flow chart. Please answer the questions regarding your responsibilities to determine the level needed.

Please note that there may be other bespoke modules relevant to your role so please consider what is appropriate in your own church. This will vary from church dependent on what groups you run or communities you may be involved with.

Flowchart





Bespoke Modules

These are available to ANY member of the church or role holder. Bespoke modules can be completed at any stage of a learner's journey once they have completed Foundation training and can be undertaken prior to other levels (i.e. Intermediate and Advanced) within the mandated framework.

The Modules are currently:

- Domestic Abuse
- Supporting Survivors
- Spiritual Abuse
- Drug and Alcohol Abuse and the links to Safeguarding
- Refugees and Asylum Seekers
- Safer Recruitment
- DDC Verifier training
- Modern Slavery
- Online Safety
- Protecting Children and Young People
- Safeguarding Adults
- Elders as Trustees

Dates for this training are circulated by the Central Team and each training will be available on Zoom. Bookings for this training can be made via the Church House Safeguarding Administrator. New modules will still be developed in line with feedback from the annual returns and in response to legislation or topical issues. All bespoke training will be reviewed regularly to reflect the current climate surround each topic.

Wales

All training delivered in the URC National Synod of Wales is designed to align with the National Safeguarding Training, Learning and Development Standards - [National safeguarding training, learning and... | Social Care Wales](#) and the framework set out by the URC.

Group A Social Care Wales training and **An Introduction to Safeguarding in the URC** are recommended to members of the Church congregation. These are both available as e-Learning modules.

Group B/Intermediate training will cover the topics set out in the framework for Intermediate training alongside the requirements set for Group B training in Wales. Group B/Intermediate training takes 5 hours to complete and comprises either an entire day face to face training, or combined training delivered via 3 modules, two online learning modules and one 2 hours zoom module.

Group C training will cover the topics set out in the framework for Advanced training alongside the requirements set out in the framework for Group C training in Wales. The Welsh B and C training courses provided by the URC are specific to the URC, and learners must ensure they complete these within this church if their role requires. However, if they have previously completed Group B or Group C training with external providers, they will only need to do an additional top up module to ensure they have been trained in line with the URC framework as well as Welsh requirements. The extra module should take no more than 90 minutes.

There are some roles which require Advanced URC training but do not require Group C training, and this is defined in the training matrix below.

Matrix for Wales – Level of mandatory training

Roles requiring mandatory training:	Group A Social Care Wales Training And the URC Introductory Module	Group B Intermediate URC Wales Training	Group C Advanced URC Wales Training	Recommended Bespoke Modules
Synod Safeguarding Officers/Advisors	✓	✓	✓	All
Managers of Synod Safeguarding Officers/Advisors	✓	✓	✓	Line Manager training
Church Safeguarding Coordinators	✓	✓	Required to do URC advanced training	Spiritual Abuse Domestic Abuse Online Safety

				<p>Safeguarding Children and Young People</p> <p>Safeguarding Adults</p> <p>Verifiers and Safer Recruitment</p> <p>Church safeguarding Coordinators E-learning this can be found here</p>
Deputy Church Safeguarding Coordinator	✓	✓		<p>Spiritual Abuse</p> <p>Domestic Abuse</p> <p>Online Safety</p> <p>Safeguarding Children and Young People</p> <p>Safeguarding Adults</p>
Members of the Safeguarding Advisory Group (or its successor), Synod Safeguarding Committees and Reference Groups	✓	✓		
Active Ministers and CRCWs (including retired ministers who meet	✓	✓	Required to do URC Advanced	<p>Spiritual Abuse</p> <p>Domestic Abuse</p>

the requirements of active ministry)			level training	Online Safety Safeguarding Children and Young People Safeguarding Adults Supporting Survivors
Synod Moderators	✓	✓	✓	All
Children's and Youth Workers including lead volunteers	✓	✓		Safeguarding Children and Young People Online Safety
Regular children's and youth work helpers (working under supervision)	✓	✓		Safeguarding Children and Young People Online Safety
One-off or occasional children's and youth work helpers (working under supervision)	✓			
Managers of children's, Youth and Adult workers	✓	✓		Safeguarding Children and Young People Online Safety
Adult Workers including regular volunteer helpers and leaders.	✓	✓		Safeguarding Adults Modern Slavery Drug and Alcohol Abuse and the links to Safeguarding Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Volunteers for one-off events (Adult groups)	✓			
Adult workers including volunteer leaders	✓	✓		Safeguarding Adults Modern Slavery Drug and Alcohol Abuse and the links to Safeguarding Refugees and Asylum Seekers
Pastoral workers/visitors	✓	✓		Safeguarding Adults Domestic Abuse
Synod Clerks	✓	✓		Safer Recruitment As directed by line management – please consider which bespoke modules are most relevant in your own Synod.
Section O Investigation, Commission and Appeal Panel Members	✓	✓		Spiritual Abuse
Worship Leaders and Assembly Accredited Lay Preachers	✓	✓		Spiritual Abuse Supporting Survivors

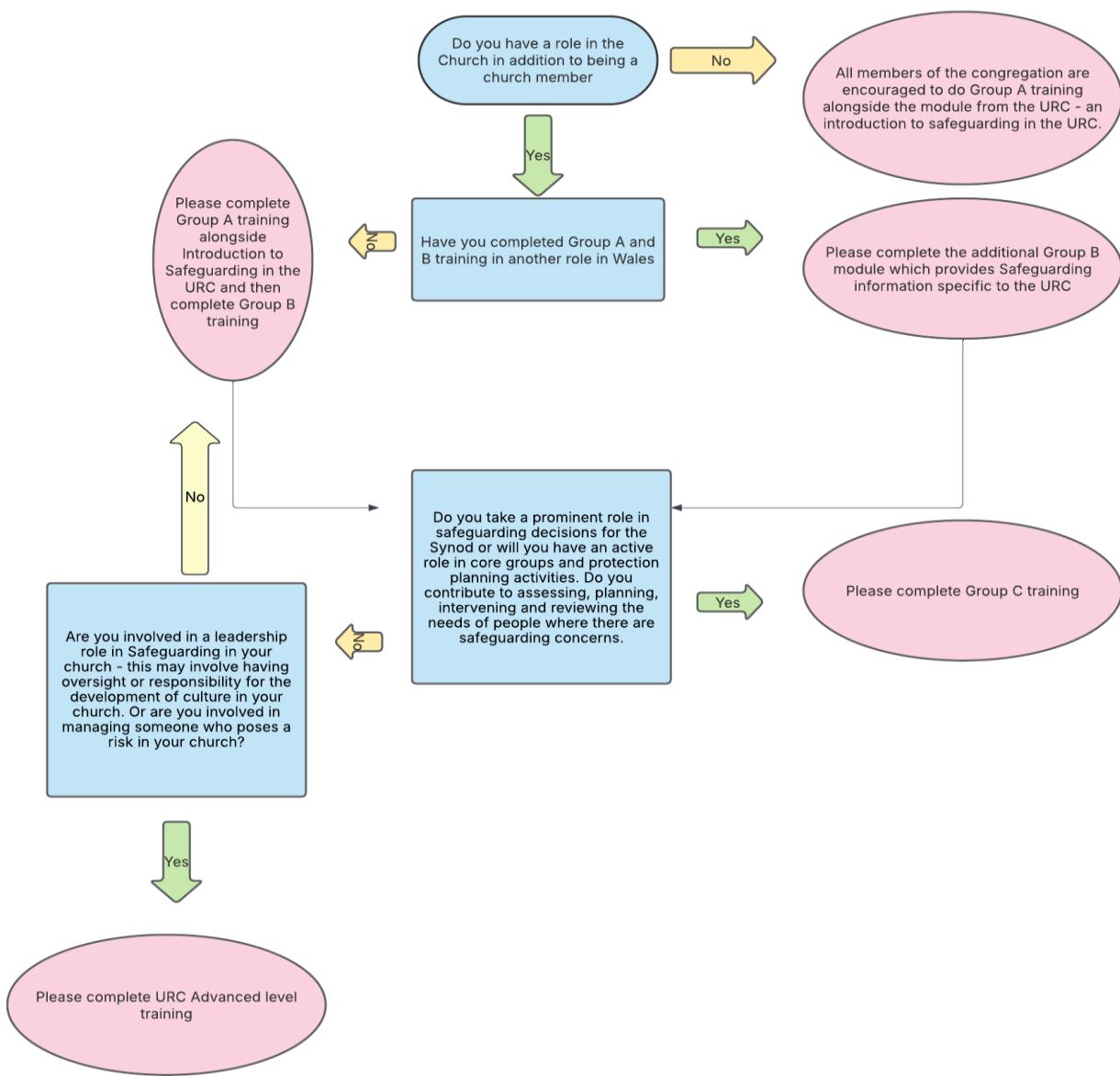
				Domestic Abuse Safeguarding adults
URC Trustees and Synod Trustees Lead Synod Trustee for Safeguarding	✓	✓	✓	
Elders as local church trustees	✓	✓		Elders as Trustees Spiritual Abuse Supporting Survivors Domestic Abuse Safeguarding adults
Chaplains and Ministers on the Roll in other roles	✓	✓		

If a role is not mentioned, then the role holder must speak to their SSO for clarification on the level of training needed. Further clarification can be found in the flow chart. Please answer the questions regarding your responsibilities to determine the level needed.

Please note that there may be other bespoke modules relevant to your role so please consider what is appropriate in your own church. This will vary from church dependent on what groups you run or communities you may be involved with.

Welsh Framework

What Training Do I Need?



Scotland

The United Reformed church has a service level agreement with the Church of Scotland regarding safeguarding training and therefore everyone in Scotland is required to complete training in line with the requirements set out in the [Church of Scotland training framework](#). As our churches differ slightly, we require at least one Elder/Deacon to complete the Leadership level if they are in leadership in a church where there is no Minister and no plan for there to be a Minister imminently. This should ideally be the Elder/Deacon who sits on the safeguarding panel for the church. This training will be delivered specifically for those Elders/Deacons and will be co-facilitated by the URC Training and Development Coordinator.

Any queries regarding this can be addressed to the Moderator.

Scottish Synod Moderators are encouraged to complete both the Scottish training and the URC training.

Those with a role in a church in Scotland may access bespoke training courses if they so wish and there is guidance in the matrix regarding the courses which may be relevant to each role.

The matrix below details the roles in line with the Scottish framework. Please note if you have more than one role then you must complete training at the highest level required.

Matrix for Scotland – Levels of Mandatory Training

	Introductory	Advanced	Trustee	Leadership	Recommended Bespoke Modules
Synod Safeguarding Administrator.			✓		All
Managers of Synod Safeguarding Administrator.			✓		Line Manager training
Moderator	✓	✓	✓	✓	All
Church Safeguarding Coordinators	✓	✓			Spiritual Abuse Domestic Abuse Online Safety Safeguarding Children and Young People Safeguarding Adults Verifiers and Safer Recruitment Church safeguarding Coordinators E-learning this can be found here
Deputy Safeguarding Coordinators	✓	✓			Spiritual Abuse Domestic Abuse

					Online Safety Safeguarding Children and Young People Safeguarding Adults
Synod Safeguarding Committees and Reference Groups	✓				
Active Ministers and CRCWs including retired ministers who meet the requirements of active ministry)	✓	✓	As required (if they also act as a trustee)	✓	Spiritual Abuse Domestic Abuse Online Safety Safeguarding Children and Young People Safeguarding Adults Supporting Survivors
Children's and Youth Workers including lead volunteers	✓	✓			Safeguarding Children and Young People Online Safety
Regular children's and youth work helpers (working under supervision)	✓	✓			Safeguarding Children and Young People Online Safety
One-off or occasional children's and youth work helpers (working under supervision)	✓				
Managers of children's, youth and Adult' workers	✓	✓			Safeguarding Children and Young People Online Safety

Adult Workers including regular volunteer helpers and Leaders.	✓	✓			Safeguarding Adults Modern Slavery Drug and Alcohol Abuse and the links to Safeguarding Refugees and Asylum Seekers
Volunteers for one-off events (Adult groups)	✓				
Adult Workers including volunteer leaders	✓				Safeguarding Adults Modern Slavery Drug and Alcohol Abuse and the links to Safeguarding Refugees and Asylum Seekers
Pastoral Visitors	✓				Domestic Abuse Safeguarding Adults Modern Slavery Supporting Survivors

Worship Leaders and Assembly Accredited Lay Preachers	✓				Domestic Abuse Safeguarding Adults Supporting Survivors
URC Trustees and Synod Trustees			✓		
Elders/Deacons as Trustees			✓		Elders as Trustees Domestic Abuse Safeguarding Adults Supporting Survivors
Church Secretary	✓				Verifier and Safer Recruitment
Serving Elders/Deacons	✓	✓		✓ where there is no Minister and as required by the church.	Domestic Abuse Safeguarding Adults Supporting Survivors
Synod Clerk			✓		Safer Recruitment

					Any others as directed by line management and relevant to your role.
Chaplains and Ministers on the Roll in other roles	✓	✓			

If a role is not mentioned, then the role holder must speak to their SSO for clarification on the level of training needed. Further clarification can be found in the flow chart. Please answer the questions regarding your responsibilities to determine the level needed.

Please note that there may be other bespoke modules relevant to your role so please consider what is appropriate in your own church. This will vary from church dependent on what groups you run or communities you may be involved with.

Training Pathways for Other Church Roles in Scotland

