INFORMATION FOR POTENTIAL NEW MEMBERS IN 2027

NAME OF STANDING COMMITTEE/AGENCY:
Safeguarding Committee

CONVENER/CHAIR:	Rev Dr Sonia Blakesley
VICE-CONVENER(S):	Judy Wilson
SECRETARY:	Deborah Blackhurst (Head of Safeguarding)

REMIT:

- To agree and ensure the implementation of safeguarding policies and procedures to secure the protection of Church communities, including volunteers, paid office holders, employees and members of the public
- To oversee the Safeguarding Service to ensure satisfactory performance and service delivery
- To provide information and advice about good safeguarding practice to all agencies of the Church including congregations, Presbyteries, General Assembly standing committees and statutory corporations and to individuals within these bodies
- Working with Kirk Sessions and Presbyteries, to ensure that all agencies of the Church work within the parameters of, and comply with, the Safeguarding Act 2025
- To ensure that safer recruitment practices are implemented across the Church, including appropriate overseas checks
- To carry out risk assessments as required in relation to conviction and vetting information for those applying for a Regulated Role (paid or voluntary)
- To carry out risk assessments as required in relation to Safeguarding Concerns for those in Regulated Roles
- Work with Responsible Authorities to risk assess those deemed to pose a risk to others and ensure that Covenants of Responsibilities are in place for managing those who pose a risk
- To ensure that the Safeguarding Service has sufficient resources in place for efficient and effective running of the service
- To ensure that suitable safeguarding training is provided in line with the Safeguarding Training Pathways to all 'workers' as defined by the Safeguarding Act 2025 section 1(32)
- To ensure Service Level Agreements are monitored and fulfilled effectively
- To provide safeguarding services to connected third party organisations as may be determined from time to time by the Committee
- To liaise with internal and external stakeholders on safeguarding matters

SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE SOUGHT AT THIS TIME:
Nominees would benefit from having professional or voluntary experience in the fields of social work/social care, health, education, housing, police, criminal justice services or similar and have a good understanding of safeguarding issues e.g. child protection and wellbeing, adult support & protection, public protection, domestic abuse and criminal justice systems.

Related areas of experience could include academic expertise in the field.

Knowledge of human resource management and safer recruitment practices would be welcome as would the skills and experience of those who deliver child or adult protection training.

It would also be helpful for members to understand strategies to prevent harm and the process of risk assessment and risk management.

In undertaking the duties set out within the Safeguarding Committee remit, especially when serving on the Recruitment & Risk Sub-Committee, Committee Members are involved in taking decisions that can have a

significant impact on an person's life. Members will also be exposed to information that may be distressing and can cause the triggering of personal traumas and life experiences. It is important that members have good personal resilience.

EXPECTATIONS OF MEMBERS:
Members are expected to attend the Safeguarding Committee on a regular basis and be able to contribute to informed discussion on safeguarding matters. Members are also expected to undertake training as appropriate to the role and to support the development and delivery of an efficient and effective safeguarding service across the Church.

MEMBERSHIP AND ANTICIPATED VACANCIES:
Convener, Vice-Convener and 6 members appointed by the General Assembly, 1 representative (voting member) from and appointed by each of the Faith Action Leadership Team and the Social Care Council, the Solicitor of the Church, the National Adviser (Head of Safeguarding) as Secretary to the Committee, the Chief Officer and up to 4 members co-opted by the Committee for their expertise. For the avoidance of doubt it is declared that only the following persons will be entitled to vote: Convener, Vice-Convener, the six Assembly appointed members and the two representatives from each of the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team and the Social Care Council.

It is anticipated that there will be a Vice-Convener vacancy to be filled with a start date of June 2027. There may also be a further member vacancy, therefore the Committee would welcome all applications.

FREQUENCY, TIMING AND VENUE OF MEETINGS:
Meetings are usually held eight times a year. A proportion of the meetings are held in person at 121 George Street, Edinburgh and the rest are held online using Microsoft Teams. Meetings are scheduled for 11am on a Tuesday and usually last for approximately 2 hours.

DETAILS OF SUB-COMMITTEES/GROUPS:
include frequency, timings, venue and any particular day(s) of the week when meetings would fall:

Recruitment & Risk Sub-Committee (RRSC) **-**
The RRSC is responsible for the risk assessment of information in relation to a person's suitability to undertake a Regulated Role as defined by the Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020. This includes:

1. Information obtained through the 'safer recruitment' processes such as criminal convictions on PVG Scheme membership certificate and equivalents in countries outwith Scotland, employment references and self-declarations
2. Notifications from statutory agencies such as an 'Under Consideration for Listing' letter from Disclosure Scotland
3. Safeguarding concern referrals submitted to the Safeguarding Service in relation to someone currently undertaking a Regulated Role in any capacity within the Church.

It also considers additional employment information that suggests that vulnerable groups may be at risk of harm, and/or, matters of reputational risk.

In undertaking their duties, RRSC members are involved in taking decisions that can have a significant impact on a person's life.

The RRSC takes place as and when required. The meetings are normally held online using Microsoft Teams. The individual subject to risk assessment is entitled to attend these meetings.

Training Sub Committee - This sub-committee is responsible for the development of an annual Safeguarding Training Strategy for the Church. It meets every two months or so. A proportion of the meetings may take place at 121 George Street, Edinburgh or online using Microsoft teams.

Managing those who pose a risk Subcommittee - This sub-committee advises the Safeguarding Committee about relevant matters pertinent to the ongoing area of Managing Those Who Pose a Risk and, where appropriate, in the development of future policy. The group meets as and when required and included in its membership are external professionals co-opted for their expertise in this area e.g. police etc.

FURTHER DETAILS:

National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 (www.gov.scot)
Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007: Code of Practice (www.gov.scot)
Scottish Government Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA): National Guidance (www.gov.scot)
National Safer Recruitment Guidance | Care Inspectorate Hub
Scotland Works For You Guidance (mygov.scot)
Disclosure Scotland Code of Practice (mygov.scot)
Revised Code of Practice for Disclosure and Barring Service Registered Persons (publishing.service.gov.uk)