

Chapter 8: Safeguarding Training

Aim of the chapter

- i. To outline the roles and responsibilities for safeguarding training
- ii. To outline the training requirements
- iii. To outline the administration of training
- iv. To outline how to access training in the denomination
- v. To outline issues regarding non-compliance with training

Understanding the importance of safeguarding training is critical because it is a major feature in the prevention of abuse and the protection and care for children, adults and our local communities.

It promotes early intervention to prevent harm, manages risks, fosters a safe environment and ensures ethical and legal compliance.

It is not to be regarded as a simple matter of compliance, but rather as a shared responsibility, a demonstration of our deep love and care for those to whom we are ministering.

Context

The requirement for safeguarding training has changed significantly over the past few years.

The need for up-to-date training is critical for Joymount Presbyterian Church; but there is also a need for training that remains relevant and is attuned to the often-complex dynamics of safeguarding.

Training must be both accessible and trackable.

Safeguarding training is important because:

- safeguarding is at the heart of our denomination – we genuinely aspire to do this well
- it simply helps keep children and adults safe
- it will support you in how to maintain a child focus
- it reassures families and members that Joymount Presbyterian Church is a safe place
- it supports communities to have confidence in Joymount Presbyterian Church
- it will teach you the different forms of abuse
- it will teach you the signs and indicators of abuse and neglect
- it will make you more confident when reporting concerns

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- it will empower individual leaders and Joymount Kirk Session and give reassurance in decision-making
- it will make you aware of the laws relevant to your setting
- it is a best practice requirement to have it
- there is a possibility of inspection on your safeguarding training, via Charity Commission or Statutory Services, if there has been any issue
- it is the most important training you will receive

Roles and Responsibilities

Joymount Kirk Session

- Each member of Kirk Session must maintain their own individual training and seek further input if there is an area they have not understood fully
- Kirk Session overall must ensure that all those operating as leaders in its congregation have maintained their training
- Kirk Session must ensure that no one is operating within its congregation whose training (or criminal vetting) has either lapsed or has not been engaged with
- Each Kirk Session must ensure that it has kept up to date with the relevant changes in safeguarding, and ensure that this is disseminated across its leadership teams
- When asked, each Kirk Session must be able to demonstrate an accurate list of leaders and the date of their last safeguarding training, or the date they stepped down from leadership
- Kirk Session must take all reasonable steps to ensure that its broad church leadership team has the opportunity of a training session at least once every three years
- Kirk Session must ensure that any individual who has lapsed in their training (or vetting) are stepped aside from any further engagement in leadership until this has been resolved

Ministers

- Each Minister must maintain his/her own individual training
- Each Minister must agree to engaging fully in the training and taking responsibility for any area in which they identify that more training or further input is needed
- Each Minister must ensure that they are keeping their Kirk Session apprised of any changes in safeguarding that is communicated to it, in a timely manner

Clerk of Session

- Each Clerk of Session must maintain his/her own individual training and seek further input if there is an area they have not understood fully

- Each Clerk of Session must support the Kirk Session, Minister and Designated Person by ensuring that there is a robust tracking system in place for maintaining all safeguarding training records

Designated Persons

- Must maintain their own individual training and seek further input if there is an area they have not understood fully
- Are usually delegated the task of overseeing the active leaders list; they are therefore accountable to Kirk Session to ensure that the list is maintained with the names of all leaders and the dates of their last criminal vetting check and relevant safeguarding training
- Must be able to demonstrate the final date of any active leader who has stepped down
- Must advise Kirk Session immediately when leaders' safeguarding training (or criminal vetting) has lapsed; Kirk Session must ensure that those individuals are stepped aside from any further engagement in leadership until this has been resolved

Please note that any individual members of session, including the Minister or Clerk, and the Designated Persons, all have a personal responsibility in safeguarding.

If there is a situation in which Joymount Kirk Session is not meeting the requirements for training and vetting adequately, any individual can raise this with their Clerk of Presbytery, who must investigate this and act. (See *below*)

Presbytery (via the Clerk of Presbytery)

- Each Clerk of Presbytery must have an active list of when each Kirk Session in their Presbytery last engaged in their safeguarding training
- Each Clerk of Presbytery must engage with any church whose Kirk Session safeguarding training has lapsed or who have not engaged in their training, setting expected timescales for compliance (no more than six weeks from date of concern raised)
- After six weeks this should be escalated to the Clerk of General Assembly for discussion with the Safeguarding Team in regard to immediate protective measures
- Each Clerk of Presbytery must ensure that they are addressing in a timely manner any concern raised in relation to local safeguarding training compliance. This includes giving direction to have individuals stepped aside if they are not compliant in their training and vetting, and escalating to the Clerk of General Assembly any congregational Kirk Session that has an endemic failure with regard to training (and vetting)
- Each Clerk of Presbytery must ensure, if a congregation is vacant, that the Convenor of the congregation is engaging in their training with Kirk Session

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- Each Clerk of Presbytery must be knowledgeable in safeguarding, given their position in leadership and oversight of their Presbytery – if they are not an aligned Elder in a local congregation, they should attend a Kirk Session training session in their Presbytery at least once every three years

PCI Safeguarding team

- Must ensure that training presentations are kept up to date, in line with regional legislation and good practice guidance
- Must ensure that all volunteer trainers are adequately trained and informed and are using the correct materials
- Must ensure that all volunteer trainers are supervised appropriately
- Must ensure that there is a robust and easy to access system for local congregations to access their training
- Must provide relevant guidance to the denomination with regard to both the mandatory expectations and general good practices in safeguarding

Applicable training at least once every three years is PCI requirement for all roles engaging with children in our denomination.

Training	For whom?	Timescales
Basic Child Safeguarding and Basic Adult Safeguarding	All children's leaders and youth leaders or anyone giving children/young people pastoral support All involved in pastoral care, visitation of older, ill, disabled or frail people, all leaders of targeted organisations (e.g. groups for adults with disabilities or older people)	Prior to commencement of role and once every three years
Designated Persons	All who hold the role of Designated Person or Deputy Designated Person	Prior to commencement of role and once every three years
Kirk Session	All members of Kirk Session, including the Minister (or Convener if vacant)	Prior to commencement of role and once every three years

Other requirements:

- It is possible that one individual may sit in all of these roles. If that is the case, all training should be attended
- It is also appropriate if some members of Kirk Session attend all of the courses, even if they do not occupy all of the roles; this can provide useful understanding for Kirk Session, which remains responsible for the safe running of the church's activities
- Kirk Session training is **ONLY** for members of Kirk Session and the Minister/Convener

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- Face to face training is preferable in all circumstances; however, online training resources will be available
- Anyone participating in online training will be expected to keep their camera on at all times
- Anyone who arrives late (after the first five minutes of start) or leaves early (at any stage) will not be assessed as having completed the training sufficiently
- Training must be delivered by a currently recognised PCI-appointed trainer

Training administration responsibilities

Core principles

- It is the responsibility of Joymount Kirk Session to ensure that it and its Minister/Convener have participated actively in the training and raised any queries they have with regard to safeguarding with the trainer at the end of the session
- Joymount Kirk Session is responsible for the training of its leaders and should ensure that it has set up a training session for its leaders to access
- Joymount Kirk Session should hold a list of all operational leaders, the date on which they were recruited, the date they last had a criminal vetting check and the date they last engaged in their relevant training
- Joymount Kirk Session is responsible for ensuring that leaders who are around their three-year renewal date are signed up for their training and that the dates, on completion, are recorded
- A clear date should be recorded if any leader ceases in their post and no longer requires training or vetting
- It is the responsibility of Kirk Session to be assured that the training was actually attended and was understood
- Most Kirk Sessions delegate these administrative tasks to the Designated Person; however, it remains the responsibility of Joymount Kirk Session to ensure that there is oversight of these tasks
- It is absolutely critical that Designated Personnel keep their training up to date
- Any Designated Person in any NI Presbytery can attend any training within the NI region – it is not specific to Presbytery

Please note that there is no central denominational record of individuals engaging in training; this remains the responsibility of Joymount Kirk Session.

It is therefore not the responsibility of PCI centrally to trigger churches as to when they are in need of their training; this responsibility remains with Joymount Kirk Session.

How to access your training

Training	How to access	Need to know
Basic Child Safeguarding and Basic Adult Safeguarding	Please look online and book in to one of the pre-arranged sessions being held in your area.	There will be 'mop-up' sessions both online and in Assembly Buildings scattered throughout the year; these will be advertised on the website.
Designated Persons	Please look online and book in to one of the pre-arranged sessions being held in your area.	There will additionally be 'mop-up' sessions for new DPs, which will be conducted on MS Teams scattered throughout the year; please keep an eye on the website for these dates.
Kirk Session	Contact the central Safeguarding Office to book your Kirk Session training.	If you are a small Kirk Session, consider training with other Kirk Sessions in your area. However, some Kirk Sessions have particular safeguarding issues and may therefore require a single session to maintain confidentiality.

Non-compliance with training requirements

Please note that no one may commence in any leadership role without first engaging in their safeguarding training. After that, the training should be renewed at least once every three years.

If anyone in a leadership role is unable or refuses to maintain their safeguarding training in a timely manner the Designated Person with an appointed member of Kirk Session should first investigate the reason why. There may be practical, personal or health related issues prevented the individual from attending allotted training slots and this will need to be considered by the Joymount Kirk Session Safeguarding team.

In the event that an individual leader or elder has failed to maintain their safeguarding training:

1. They should engage in their training within six weeks of their lapsed date. It is likely that they will need to join another congregation in order to do so, and they should contact the central Safeguarding Office to find out what training is available in that timescale

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2. If the six weeks pass, the individual must step aside from leadership until such time that their training can be implemented
3. The Designated Person should keep an active record of this and ensure that this situation has been rectified before the individual returns to leadership. Joymount Kirk Session should be appraised

In the event that a minister has failed to maintain their safeguarding training:

This will be brought to the attention of the Moderator and Clerk of the local Presbytery. Safeguarding training must be part of local governance arrangements.

In the event that the Designated Person has failed to maintain its members' safeguarding training:

1. They must engage in the specific PCI DP training within six weeks of their lapsed date, as above
2. If the six weeks pass, the individual must not continue to operate as a DP
3. Kirk Session need to be aware that a named lead for safeguarding (the DP) is a mandatory role required by legislation and regional guidance in both NI and ROI; in the event of a DP having to step aside due to a lapse in training, the Kirk Session must have a contingency plan

In the event that a Joymount Kirk Session has failed to maintain its members' safeguarding training:

1. The Clerk of Presbytery should review their records regularly and if this is the case, they should address the issue directly with the local church leadership
2. An immediate plan should be put in place to rectify this situation within six weeks
3. Any ongoing disruption to Kirk Session training should be escalated to Clerk of General Assembly for discussion with the Safeguarding Team for implementation of protective measures

CHAPTER END