



The Church of Scotland

Safeguarding Service

Kirk Session Meetings-Safeguarding as an Agenda Item

As you may be aware, Safeguarding matters ought to be a standing item on the agenda of Kirk Session meetings.

This paper is intended to provide some general advice and guidance about the type of information that Safeguarding Co-ordinators might want to consider when they are giving a verbal or written report to the Kirk Session. It is not intended to be prescriptive or exhaustive in nature, but more a starting point for those that need it. The contents will also depend on whether the Safeguarding Co-ordinator is providing a regular verbal report or a quarterly or yearly written report.

The Safeguarding Co-ordinator might want to consider reporting on:-

Reports of harm or abuse or children or protected adults

You might want to provide the Kirk Session with general information about how this role is fulfilled and refer to any concerns or barriers that you may have in undertaking the role and with which the Kirk Session can assist to resolve.

If doing a quarterly or yearly report you may want to provide statistical information to the Kirk Session e.g. how many safeguarding referrals have been made to the Safeguarding Service over the course of the year. ***Please do not share confidential information about individuals.***

Promoting and facilitating safe working practices

The Kirk Session might be interested to know what is in place in your congregation to ensure that safe working practices are being utilised. Handbook 4 might assist you with this part of your report.

Handbook 4 –Safeguarding in Practice is available to view on the Church of Scotland's public website. This Handbook is specifically designed to assist volunteers and paid staff in their day to day work with children and protected adults. For example, it provides helpful advice on working with children and adults with additional support needs, advice on providing transport for them, ensuring a safe environment to carry out activities, camps, and residential holidays. It provides advice on managing social media, undertaking risk assessments and letting out church premises to non-church groups.

Groups/Activities

The Kirk Session might want to hear about the groups or activities that are currently provided by the congregation and to be reassured that safe working practices (as above) are implemented.

Safe Recruitment

The Safeguarding Co-ordinator ensures that all individuals undertaking regulated work are safely recruited and recorded in the Congregational register and that appointments are ratified by the Kirk Session and are recorded in the Congregational Register.

You might want to refer to the number of paid staff/volunteers that have been safely recruited since your last report and provide reassurance that all staff undertaking regulated work have been PVG checked.

Secure storage of confidential information

Safeguarding Co-ordinators may want to report on the arrangements for the safe storage of confidential information held in the congregation. For example, if the congregation doesn't have a suitable lock fast place to store information on Church premises bring this to the attention of the Kirk Session with a view to seeking assistance to resolve.

Training

An essential part of the Safeguarding Co-ordinators role is to promote training opportunities for those doing regulated work with children and protected adults. The Kirk Session may want to know how many people have received Safeguarding training, how many people are still to be trained and how many may need refresher training. Remind the Kirk Session that information about those volunteer and Kirk Session members who still require training has to be reported on annually to presbytery during the Annual Attestation of Records. Please bring to the attention of the Kirk Session any difficulties you may have in the provision of training.

Good Safeguarding Practice

Let the Kirk Session know of any changes to legislation, instructions or safeguarding practices. Update or provide the Kirk Session with the Safeguarding Service Newsletter.

Let's and hires of Church premises to non-Church of Scotland Groups

Report to the Kirk Session on any Safeguarding issues/concerns that might be raised by a let or hire of church premises and remind the Kirk Session that non Church of Scotland groups should be able to provide evidence of a safeguarding policy that is consistent with that of the Church of Scotland.