

Guidance note for form SG11 (2017): Safeguarding Audit Checklist for Congregations, the Annual Inspection of Records and Local Church review.

1. Background

Safeguarding cases in the Church, where harm or abuse is disclosed, are regularly reported to the Safeguarding Service. We are reminded that when people 'step outside' safeguarding policies and procedures the likelihood of harm and abuse increases. For example the failure to recognise actual or suspected harm and to report it through the established lines of communication; failure to ensure that all volunteers and paid staff attend awareness raising safeguarding training; or departing from safe recruitment practice by starting a person in a post before they join the PVG Scheme.

The Church's safeguarding system operates on the basis of trust. We trust that systems and people are working well to protect people. But increasingly we are required to demonstrate that our safeguarding policies, procedures, training, safe recruitment and managing those who pose a risk really are effective and protect people.

The form SG11, used by congregations and Presbytery helps with this. It does involve form-filling. But if this can help you to identify that one person has not been safely recruited or there is an indication that there is a person who poses a risk in the congregation who has not been reported to the Safeguarding Service then your work really makes a difference.

Thank you for working in partnership with the Safeguarding Committee and the Safeguarding Service to ensure a safer Church for all.

2. What to do

Form SG11 is to be used for three purposes:

- **To enable Congregations to self-assess how well they are complying with Church Safeguarding standards.** These standards (what the Church expect to see in place) come from General Assembly Deliverances. A summary can be found at [Deliverances](#)

Once the initial self-assessment has been undertaken, using the instructions on page one of the [Checklist](#) the Safeguarding Coordinator and the Safeguarding Panel should keep the document under constant review. They need to be satisfied that the document submitted for the Annual Inspection of Records is up-to-date and accurate.

- **To be submitted, for the Annual Inspection of Records** together with the *Safeguarding Congregational Register*, form SG7 (2015) [Register](#) to show Presbytery how well a congregation is complying with safeguarding best practice. This is a form of external audit, i.e. an independent check of safeguarding arrangements in the congregation.

Some of the items on the checklist will be straightforward to evidence e.g. is there a Safeguarding Panel in place? But it is more difficult to evidence other standards e.g. no. 16: '...do all volunteers and paid staff know the procedure to follow if harm or abuse is suspected, witnessed or reported to them...'. The evidence for this would be demonstrating that all volunteers have attended congregational safeguarding training and have a copy of the pocket guide '*Safeguarding children and adults at risk: key information for volunteers and staff, 2014*'.

- **To be submitted as part of the documentation for the Local Church Review.** Follow the same procedure for the Annual Inspection of Records.