

Lothian and Borders Presbytery Safeguarding update 2024

Full details can be found here:

<https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about-us/safeguarding-service/training>

Safeguarding training 2024 (Jan – June)

Date	Level	Type of training	Venue	
Tue, Jan 16th	Trustee	zoom		Fully booked
Sat, Feb 3rd	Introductory	Face to face (max 30)	North Berwick Abbey Church Hall	9.30 – noon (registration from 9am)
Sat, Feb 3rd	Trustee	Zoom		9.30am – 12.30pm
Sat, March 2nd	Advanced	Zoom		9.30am – 12.30pm
Tue, March 5th	Trustee	Zoom		6.30pm – 9.30pm
Sat, March 9th	Introductory	Face to face (max 30)	Peebles Old Church (Hall)	9.30 – 12.30 (registration till 9.45)
April 27 th	Introductory	Face to face (max 30)	Eyemouth Church	9.30 – 12.30 (registration till 9.45)
Tue 7 th May	Introductory	Zoom		6.45 – 9.15 (sign in from 6.30)
Sat 11 th May	Advanced	Zoom		9.30am – 12.30pm

The last two years have been very busy for our team, trying to help congregations catch up on safeguarding requirements after Covid, when many things ground to a halt. The change in church legislation, making training for both volunteers and trustees mandatory, has put enormous pressure on our limited resources.

We are aware that many people prefer face to face training – as do we, in many ways. However, we are now a very large Presbytery, with presently only two trainers, Fred Harrison and Sheila Anderson (plus one in training: Yvette Hennessey). All of these have other commitments: Yvette is in full time employment, Fred is an Ordained Local Minister and as such kept pretty busy. Sheila, like myself, has a number of other church based commitments. On top of this we all have fairly demanding family lives. All of these factors, combined with the very wide geographic area which the Presbytery now covers, mean that the most effective way of carrying out training is online. Therefore, while we will provide some opportunities for face to face training, these will be limited, and located in venues which are reasonably central to a number of congregations– past, and indeed recent, experience shows that people are not willing to travel any distance for training: however, we hope that uptake on the part of those who are unhappy with online training will be good. Online training will continue to be the norm.

There is still some confusion about the various training levels and who they are for: details are clearly set out in the training section of the Safeguarding Service website; in brief:

Introductory training is for all volunteers (people in roles which require PVG). It should be undertaken as soon as possible after a volunteer is approved, and refreshed every three/four years.

This is also the first stage of training for all whose role requires them to do Advanced training (see website for full details)

Advanced training is for all coordinators and panel members and must also be refreshed every three/four years. ***Note however that if you are in this category, you need not refresh the Introductory training, having once completed it.***

Trustee training must be undertaken by all Trustees, in line with Charities law. All elders should have completed a Trustee training session by the end of June last year. We know that this has not happened, and would hope that this can be rectified in the next few months, without the need for disciplinary procedures to be put in place.

Training is also required for **ministers**, as defined here:

‘Ministers’ for the purposes of the Safeguarding Training Learning Pathway means parish ministers, Interim Ministers, Transition Ministers, auxiliary ministers, probationers, OLM, readers, locums and Armed Forces chaplains. The Learning Pathway for Deacons and MDS will be identified through their job descriptions; advice should be sought from the Safeguarding Service.

People in these categories should undertake the Introductory Training and the Advanced training, before proceeding to a newly introduced “Leadership training” module. They will then be required to refresh only the Leadership module. The latter will be administered centrally by the Safeguarding Service.

Training dates

The table above shows the training dates available. The June dates will be released nearer the time.

Please note the following:

Timings

We have adjusted some of the timings so as to allow for a little more time for discussion. We will start our evening courses at 6.30pm rather than 7pm to allow for this. I’ll be glad to have feedback on how this works for you.

Face to face courses

will be limited to 30 participants. Priority will be given to people from the host church but we expect others within reasonable travelling distance to make use of these, otherwise they may not be viable. These sessions will only run if there is sufficient uptake.

On line courses

We realise that a number of you find those difficult: please bear in mind that the courses we deliver are as directed by Church of Scotland Safeguarding Office. The material is identical to that used in the face to face sessions. However, we are aware that the online experience is very different, especially in that during the presentation, the screen is filled with the slides and the trainer therefore becomes almost a disembodied voice simply giving a commentary. Not sure how we can improve this – but we may come up with something. If anyone out there has any suggestions, I’d be happy to receive them.