

A new year and we're already very busy. The Annual Safeguarding Returns are now open for completion, we have a new schedule of Zoom based training open to everyone, a new colleague and a best practice example from **GoB** (**GoB**).

Annual Safeguarding Returns

The online Annual Safeguarding Returns (ASR) are open for completion. We would kindly ask you to complete the return by 29 February, 2024 as it gives a fulsome picture of safeguarding in the denomination and how the safeguarding team can better support our churches in terms of training and guidance. We also ask that Local Ecumenical Partnerships

A long time in the making and following a number of high-profile cases, the Online Safety Bill received Royal Assent on 26 October 2023. This piece of legislation covers broadly three areas protecting children online, shielding users from illicit content and helping adult users avoid harmful (but not illegal) content. This will be overseen by the Communication Ombudsman Ofcom. The legislation is complex and so the NSPCC has produced guidance on online safety which is available on their website: bit.ly/NSPCC-online-safety

North Western Synod

We welcome Yvette Robinson as the new Synod Safeguarding Officer for North Western Synod.

Yvette brings to her role decades of experience as a Senior Leader in Further Education, with a notable focus on safeguarding and training

Ruth Goold 1960-2023

We pay tribute to our dear colleague, Ruth Goold who sadly died in November, 2023. Ruth was the Synod Safeguarding Officer for the Synod of Scotland for many years. Experienced and compassionate she gave a level of commitment that enriched the Safeguarding Team and supported the churches in Scotland. She will be much missed both by our team and the Synod

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themselves that the GP had instigated a process to ensure someone did a follow up welfare check.

The Church Safeguarding Officer, having contacted the Synod Safeguarding Officer, was advised on further follow up and suggested that when the Pastoral Visitor attempted to make contact it should be recorded, even if no contact was made. The SSO also advised checking with the church member what type of support was wanted and the frequency they