

External Health and Safety Advisors appointment proposal – 29TH August 2026

As an ongoing reminder this proposal paper is issued acknowledging **the Charity Trustees of a congregation (i.e. members of the Kirk Session and Office Bearers) are collectively responsible** for ensuring that all premises under their control, whether or not they are workplaces, **are kept as safe as is reasonably practicable and that employees, the minister, members of the congregation and members of the public generally are not exposed to avoidable risks.** This responsibility exists irrespective of any requirement arising out of the 1974 Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

1.Proposal for adoption

Proposal
1. Kirk Session agrees to appoint an external company to act as our Health and Safety advisors with effect from a date to be confirmed. This should be before 1 st October 2026
2. Kirk Session agree term of this appointment will be for a period of 2 years from date of instruction and acceptance by H&S external consultants
3. With effect from date of appointment, Kirk Session agree external company will act as our competent person.
4. With effect from date of appointment, Kirk Session agree that Dave McLaren should continue as the congregation appointed H&S person until 31 st December 2027 at which time the position will be reviewed
5. For the period from 1 st September 2026 until date of appointment of external company Kirk Session agree that Dave McLaren will continue as appointed and competent person

2.Why now?

Current position – Very important point of note
With effect from 1 st September, as things stand, the position of H&S appointed and component person will revert to a default. The default will be the <u>MOST SENIOR PERSON in the congregation will be held responsible by HSE for Health and Safety</u> . In other words, HSE will not consider the position to be vacant in the event of an accident. This stance was confirmed by all 3 companies approached to tender as consultants

3. What is the cost?

Cost for 2 year period has already been approved by the Finance Team during their meeting on 10th August 2026

3 companies were approached to tender, Peninsula, Citation and Croner. The cost has therefore been checked for competitiveness

The total cost is in the region of £4,750.00 over 24 months however this will be paid by monthly instalment during financial years, 2026, 2027 and 2028. Last payment should be August 2028. The final cost is still to be confirmed at time of writing

As a point of note all 3 companies approached have C of S congregations as current clients. Names of the congregations are not available.

4. What are the benefits?

A copy of the quotation provided by Croner is attached to provide more details of the services provided. The key pages to review are pages 10,11,15 and 16

5. What are examples of some of the specific immediate benefits to our congregation?

Some benefits are listed below – the list is not exhaustive and is in no order of importance. All the advantages are not available in our current situation.

- 1. We immediately have an appointed company as our competent person. They will sign the H&S poster currently on display in the church office**
- 2. We have access to a 24/7 helpline for advice on H&S matters**
- 3. We will be kept informed of updates to existing and new legislation e.g. do we need to do anything to comply with Martyn's law?**
- 4. We will receive an audit visit to carry out a gap analysis of our current arrangements. With any gaps highlighted for action.**
- 5. We will have access to a bespoke IT system which can be used to digitally record all our H&S information, to set up reminders when work is due to be carried out and many more benefits.**
- 6. We will get assistance to upgrade our current H&S policy which is overdue for review.**
- 7. We will get face to face meeting to review our Risk Assessments and update them, again which is overdue for review**
- 8. A comprehensive training suite of learning sessions are available which can be allocated to trustees and members of the congregation**
- 9. We can get assistance with writing more unusual risk assessments should we need to prepare them to comply with any unusual activities declared and accepted by insurers.**
- 10. It will be a demonstration to Aviva Insurance Ltd/Howden of our commitment to Health & Safety**

11. In the event of an incident which requires to be reported to HSE, we will get assistance and advice in what, how and when to report. THIS IS A HUGE BENEFIT to have.

12. We would have access to webinars on topics of interest e.g. Fire Safety, and invitations to in person seminars

6. Should we be aware of anything that cannot be provided?

The company selected will act as our competent person. However, they **WILL NOT act as authorised person**. We still need someone carrying out this role within the congregation.

7. What are examples of some of the training which would be helpful for the appointed person/trustee and wider congregation?

Examples are listed below. Training is really needed in several areas however the most important is Fire Warden and First Aid awareness.

1. Fire Warden training is essential - we can allocate spaces for 6 to 8 people to attend on-line training
2. First Aid Awareness training – again this is essential to have some folks trained in this subject. It would not be the level of training provided by for example St Andrew's Ambulance but would cover basic requirements
3. Multiple topics would be of help to the congregation appointed person.

8. Have we learnt anything from discussions already?

There have been several learnings already. 3 are noted below

1. In the event of an accident HSE will consider that we are guilty unless we can prove we are innocent. Only 4% of Companies last year moved from innocent to guilty.
2. It became apparent that our current Fire Risk Assessment is out of date. Last completed in November 2023. It should be updated every 2 years. After tender a contractor, subject to Finance team approval has been chosen. Hopefully this new FRA will be completed by end of September
3. The Fire Brigade can carry out a spot-check of our premises. If there are items outstanding from our last assessment, they can take enforcement action

9.How do you select company to appoint?

The obvious starting point is cost however it is also important to consider the services being provided. A Tender Weighting framework has been adopted, which is detailed below. A % weighting is allocated to each category. All the contractors approached are aware that we are using this method.

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| 1. Cost – 50 % |
| 2. Length of agreement – 5% |
| 3. Quotation Presentation availability/ delivery method – 10% |
| 4. Services offered especially Audit/IT system/Training topics/H&S and Risk assessment – 15% |
| 5. Local service/response times – 5% |
| 6. Unique added value to proposition – 5% |
| 7. Evidence of Insurance – Public/Products Liability and Professional Indemnity – 5% |
| 8. Personal connection – 5% |

10.What happens if we do not go ahead?

If Kirk Session do not go ahead, with effect from 1st September 2026 we will revert to the H&S default position mentioned in item 2 previously in this Report.

Dave McLaren has agreed to ensure that all legal visits e,g PAT, Emergency Lighting etc and routine service visits will be carried out until 31st December 2026, with any remedial work completed however will not be the appointed or authorised person, .

10.Any further questions?

Hopefully questions answered in this paper will provide enough information to Kirk Session. However any further questions should be advised to Dave McLaren in advance of the meeting on Saturday 29th August.