



2 January 2024

To: all UEC Ministers
From: the UEC office

Dear Friends,

ANNUAL RETURN 2024

Following a review by the Finance Committee, I can now send you the Annual Return for 2023. Please complete the details below and return the form to the UEC office with your payment. **Note the amount per person has increased from £20 to £22 - the first increase for five years.**

From: _____ Church

Number of Members / Regular Worshippers: _____

Contribution of £22.00 per Member **and** Regular Worshipper: £ _____

Accident Record book: confirm this is up to date and kept in an obvious but secure place: Yes / No

Child Protection Officer: _____

Data Controller: _____

DBS checks: please confirm you hold an up-to-date list: Yes / No / In progress

Fire Risk Assessment (FRA): **Please ensure you complete this document and return it to the UEC office with your Annual Return 2024.** Yes / No / In progress

Health & Safety Officer: _____

Health & Safety Checklist: have you completed or updated this? Yes / No / In progress
Please ensure you complete this document and return it to the UEC office with your Annual Return 2024. In particular, the electrical safety – see page 4.4.7 item 4.

Key holders: please confirm you hold an up-to-date list: Yes / No / In progress

Marriages: is your Church registered for the performance of marriages? Yes / No

If you have any queries regarding the above, please contact me at the UEC office. Kindly complete the information above (even if it is the same as for 2023) and send this form with your payment and FRA to reach the UEC office by **28th February 2024.**

Explanatory Notes

The amount of "compliance" work has risen enormously in recent years because Churches are required to "comply" with guidelines, regulations and laws in the same way as for other organisations. We hope the following information assists you, but if you need more details or explanations, please contact the UEC office.

Number of Members / Regular Worshippers: the view of the Ministerial Committee is that this number is based on the number of people who consider your Church to be their "spiritual home". If you have a specific membership list, you could use that; but consider that regular worshippers include people who may have not made an obvious commitment to follow Jesus but are nevertheless supporting what your Church does and feel part of the worshipping community. It is sometimes difficult to tell when such a person "crosses the line" into the kingdom, but we are sure you would always encourage them in their walk with the Lord.

Contribution of £22: this is the figure the Finance Committee reviews each year. Although the UEC has investments from which it derives some income, there are many expenses to pay for, such as office costs, reimbursement of travel expenses, insurances that member Churches do not pay for (such as accident insurance for your Minister(s)), financial support for people attending training courses, financial support for Church building projects (currently a major cost), subsidizing some events, utility costs, printing and advertising, and the PP Burial Ground at Daws Heath, etc.

Accident Record Book: this can be just an exercise book kept in a cupboard in your kitchen. It must record all the details of events that can be described as an "accident" and how it was dealt with.

Child Protection Officer: this is the new name for Child Safety Officer, and includes the "protection" of vulnerable adults too. The appointed person needs to be familiar with the relevant pages in the *UEC Handbook* (pages 4.1.1 to 4.1.5).

Data Controller: this post is required by the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) requirements, which come into force on 25 May 2018. The appointed person will have to register your Church with the Information Commissioner's Office (this is done once), and then monitor how data (names, postal and email addresses, phone numbers, permissions obtained all held on computers) is stored, used and deleted. We have issued guidelines to help your Data Controller manage this.

DBS Checks: for all people over 16 who work with children and/or vulnerable adults, this is a requirement. Please contact the UEC office for applications forms. These are now permanent (not limited to three years) unless circumstances change, and existing DBS Certificates can be valid in your Church by mutual agreement. You do not need to tell us who the DBS-checked people are, but you do need to keep it up to date. See pages 4.7 to 4.9 in the *UEC Handbook*.

Fire Risk Assessment: please refer to the *UEC Handbook* (pages 4.4.1 to 4.4.3) for what is required. Each church is a building used by the public, and the leadership has a duty of care to everyone who enters it. If your building is not compliant, please contact the UEC office for further advice.

Health & Safety Officer: this person (preferably not your Minister or Leader) is appointed to oversee the compliance of your Church activities, equipment and building in respect of the duty of care towards all visitors and users of the equipment and building.

Health & Safety Guidance: pages 4.2.1 to 4.2.4 in the *UEC Handbook* describe the requirements for the general use of your buildings. Some of the guidance is plain common sense, but you need to keep your records up to date.

Key holders: an up-to-date list of keyholders is required to avoid keys going astray or being passed on to others who shouldn't have access to your buildings. This has insurance implications too, in the event of an accident, damage, use by unauthorised persons, etc.

Marriages: your church may be licensed to perform marriages. If so, and you have a Marriage Register(s), it must be stored in a locked safe on the premises - it is a legal document.