



Job Description

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Job Title | Head of Governance Services |
| Area/Department | Governance & Legal |
| Reporting to | General Secretary |
| Direct Reports | Personal Assistant (Governance and Legal) |
| Location | Church House, 86 Tavistock Place, London, WC1H 9RT |
| Travel | Occasional travel in UK |
| Working Hours | 35 hours per week |

Job Summary: The Head of Governance Services is a senior strategic role to ensure effective governance and compliance during a time of significant change within the denomination, but to do so in a way which enables the mission of the church. The role is pivotal in horizon scanning as the Councils of the Church and the Church House team (as the Office of General Assembly) seek to manage risk and ensure sound governance whilst enabling and supporting the flourishing of synods and local churches.

It is anticipated that the Head of Governance Services will be a member of the General Secretariat (the decision of General Assembly in this regard awaits its next meeting). The General Secretariat provides delegated leadership on behalf of the whole Church in establishing the Christian ethos throughout, and managing the work of, the Offices of Assembly. This ethos is derived from the theology of the Church while also providing and developing effective and efficient ways of working. This, along with the fact that once a formal member of the General secretariat, the post-holder is a member of the General Assembly of the Church and its Executive body (the highest governing bodies of the United Reformed Church, in which the Church discerns the mind of Christ as to its vocation) means the post therefore attracts a Genuine Occupational Requirement for the post-holder to be a practising Christian.

The governance of the United Reformed Church tells the story of the denomination's history and the commitment to achieving the union in 1972. While it has continued to evolve, it is apparent that there is a need for significant development in our structures and systems. This journey has begun but this role will be key in building the momentum and supporting a journey of change. As well as establishing sound governance for the future there is also an element of capturing the past effectively to underpin and support the work of the future. The nature and scale of the change within the denomination is such that this role is equally likely to evolve over the coming years.

This role will work closely with the Head of Legal Services such that the Head of Legal Services will advise on all relevant matters in the lead up and preparation for decisions to ensure the Church makes sound decisions on the areas of strategic governance and legal change. This will be done in collaboration with the Head of Governance Services so that decisions are taken in a way which

enables efficient and effective implementation. The Head of Governance Services will lead and oversee the implementation phase to affect the governance changes required but will do so in collaboration with the Head of Legal Services to ensure that the implementation holds to the principles and parameters of the original decisions.

Background:

The General Secretariat provides delegated leadership on behalf of the whole Church in establishing the Christian ethos throughout, and managing the work of, Church House. This ethos is derived from the theology of the Church while also providing and developing effective and efficient ways of working.

Church House is the central administrative office of the United Reformed Church (URC) and is owned by the URC Trust. The General Assembly of the United Reformed Church is its ultimate decision-making body. The overall aim of the team which works from Church House is to serve General Assembly (and its committees) and implement its decisions. The General Assembly has several committees which look after a range of specialist areas which together cover the life of the Church.

The URC Trust holds the assets and funds on behalf of the Church. The Trust is also on a journey of change, exploring a move from being a charitable company to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

The URC is a non-hierarchical denomination and has 13 synods: the national Synods of Scotland and Wales and 11 regional synods across England. Each provides oversight of approximately 100 churches and is overseen by a Synod Moderator. Each Synod has its own trust company; therefore, synods and their trust companies are legally distinct from each other and from the Church House and the URC Trust. But together we are the United Reformed Church.

In 2020 the URC set out on a journey of change and began the Church Life Review. As well as making changes to the committees of General Assembly, we are investing new ways of working in three key areas: financial resource sharing, employment of lay workers, and shared support services. The aim is to bring a set of recommendations to an extraordinary session of General Assembly in November 2025. The outcome of that will lead into an implementation phase. The Governance and Legal Officer will play a key role in this work.

Principal responsibilities and duties

Leadership & Line Management

1. Lead the change programme in relation to church governance.
2. Undertake all responsibilities and duties of line management as required under the Church's/URC Trust's policies and procedures.
3. Ensure the supervision, training and development of all direct reports.

Relationship between the General Assembly and associated charitable entities

1. Create clarity in the relationship between the General Assembly and the legal entities which hold its charitable assets, and that these relationships are appropriately overseen.
2. Ensure that there is clarity around the terms of the Trusts on which funds are held by the United Reformed Church Trust Company and that any necessary charity commission schemes are sought to manage those funds effectively.

Complaints and Disciplinary Advisory Group

1. Lead the implementation of a new Ministerial Disciplinary Process (with attendant incapacity and competency elements as appropriate) once developed by the Legal adviser.
2. Take operational responsibility for handling complaints at General Assembly level.
3. Act as Clerk to the Assembly Commission for Discipline and Assembly Standing Panels for Discipline.

Safeguarding

1. Maintain strategic oversight of denominational Safeguarding policies ensuring they are compatible with the URC's structures and governance.
2. Ensure, through the Safeguarding Committee and the Designated Safeguarding Lead, that procedures and guidance are up to date and readily available.

Governance in the Councils of the Church

1. Support the Clerk to the General Assembly offering governance advice and support in serving the wider denomination.
2. Ensure that there is an effective system for logging all necessary governance decisions across the work of the General Assembly and its committees, ensuring that processes are in place to keep this up to date.
3. Ensure that there is a current and up to date log of all delegated authorities from the General Assembly to its committees and decisions taken under such authorities.
4. Be available to Officers of the General Assembly and Senior Staff to advise on matters of governance.

General

1. Seek Counsel's opinion on issues as necessary.

Working with Committees and Volunteers

This section lists the type and level of interaction that this role has with committees and other groups. It will vary from time to time and as directed by the General Secretariat.

1. General Assembly: *meets annually residentially; in attendance until formally made a voting member*
2. Assembly Executive: *meets twice per year, once online and once residentially; in attendance until formally made a voting member*
3. General Secretariat: *meets six times per year*
4. Senior Leadership Team: *meets six times per year; member.*
5. Business Committee: *meets 6 per year; in attendance as required.*
6. Complaints and Disciplinary Advisory Group: *meets twice per year; Executive Secretary.*
7. General Assembly Disciplinary Commissions: *meets 6 per year; Secretary.*
8. Law & Polity Advisory Group: *meets three times per year; Secretary.*
9. Safeguarding Committee: *meets four times per year; member.*

Expected Standards

This section refers to the way in which the job is done rather than the duties/responsibilities.

1. Promote a culture of open and effective communication to enable constructive relationships with colleagues and internal and external customers. (E)
2. Actively foster an environment which nurtures equality and cherishes diversity (E).
3. Act in ways that protect own and others' health safety and security (C)
4. Work collaboratively to develop a customer service culture which fosters continuous improvement (E)
5. Take responsibility for own personal development and support the development of others to enhance their skills and knowledge (E).
6. Promote, monitor and maintain best practice in data protection principles and practice (E).
7. Actively promote, manage and maintain best practice in Safeguarding (E).

This job description reflects the overall scope and responsibilities of the role. However, it is not an exhaustive list, and the job holder is expected to undertake any other reasonable duties that might be requested. All jobs change or evolve over time to meet organisational or departmental needs and this job description will therefore be subject to periodic review and change if required.

Created September 2024

Person Specification

Job Title: Head of Governance Services

| Requirements | Essential | Desirable | Measurement |
|------------------------------|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| Education and qualifications | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Law Degree or equivalent law conversion 2. On the Roll of Solicitors and able to apply for a current practicing certificate. | | Application Form |
| Experience | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Working in a Charity context 4. Working in complex governance structures 5. Line Management 6. Risk Management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ecumenical working • safeguarding • change management | Application Form /Interview/Test |
| Knowledge | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The United Reformed Church and its structures • United Reformed Church Acts | Application Form |
| Skills and Abilities | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. MS Office suite, specifically Outlook, Word, Excel, PowerPoint 8. Excellent interpersonal and communication skills 9. Proven organisational ability 10. Able to think strategically and formulate short and long- term plans 11. Able to develop a broad overview of the organisation's governance and its risk profile 12. Ability to design and run complex processes 13. Proven ability to persuade and advise senior leaders on areas in need of development | | Application Form /Interview /Test |

| | | | |
|-------|---|--|--|
| | 14. Confident working in a changing and evolving environment | | |
| Other | 15. Member of the United Reformed Church or member of a Church which belongs to one or more of World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC), Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council (DECC), the Council for World Mission (CWM) Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS), Churches Together in England (CTE), Churches together in Wales (Cytun), Free Churches Group (FCG) or Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI)* | | |

* Occupational requirement for the post-holder to be a practising Christian in accordance with the Equality Act 2010: Part 1, Schedule 9