

Towards A Safer Church

The PCC and Church Wardens' Guide

What is Safeguarding?

Safeguarding means the action the Church takes to promote a safer culture promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults. It is about working to prevent abuse from occurring, seeking to protect those that are at risk of being abused and responding well to those that have been abused.

Our Foundation—the Gospel

The Church is called to share the good news of God's salvation through Jesus Christ. The life of our communities and institutions is integral to how we address this task. The good news speaks of welcome for all, with a particular regard for those who are most vulnerable, into a community where the value and dignity of every human being is affirmed and those in positions of responsibility and authority are truly trustworthy. Being faithful to our call to share the gospel therefore compels us to take with the utmost seriousness the challenge of preventing abuse from happening and responding well where it has.

And More ...

The Church recognises the personal dignity and rights of all children, young people and adults, as enshrined in the Human Rights Act 1998 and the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Safeguarding work is undertaken within a legislative framework supported by government guidance which sets out a range of safeguarding duties, responsibilities and best practice.

The PCC

The PCC is the main decision maker of a parish. Its members are clergy, churchwardens and others elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) of the parish. Its powers and duties are defined by legislation and can principally be found in the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956.

All PCCs are charities, whether they are registered or not. Therefore, every member of a PCC is also a charity trustee. If a PCC is a charity it must comply with the Charity Commission guidance and legislation in relation to charities.

All PCCs are expected to

- Promote a safer church for all in the church community, and ensure there is a plan in place to raise awareness of safeguarding, promote training and ensure that safeguarding is taken seriously by all those in the church community.
- Adopt and implement the House of Bishops' Policy called Promoting a Safer Church. This should also become the parish safeguarding policy. Multi parish benefices may adopt one policy and procedure for the benefice but responsibility continues to rest with the individual parish. The policy should be displayed on all church premises alongside contact details for the Parish Safeguarding Officer. The policy should also appear on the Parish/Benefice website if there is one.
- Appoint at least one appropriately experienced designated parish safeguarding officer to work with the incumbent and PCC. This PSO should be a lay person. The PSO may also be the Parish Manager for DBS applications for church officers who work with children or adults who may be at risk.
- Safely Recruit, Support and Train all church officers who work with children, young people and/or adults who may be at risk and ensure that all new paid staff or volunteers are provided with a copy of the parish safeguarding policy.
- Ensure attendance at safeguarding training for those whose role require it. Training is mandatory for clergy, churchwardens and those holding the Bishop's licence, authorisation or commission. For all other roles including PCC members it is good practice. Working Together to Safeguard Children, the Statutory Guidance from the Government makes it a requirement on all organisations, including faith organisations that provide services to children that they provide at least a one hour induction on Safeguarding for all volunteers. This is met by the C0 online training course. Anyone working with children or adults who may be at risk in a role that is occasional, supervised etc needs an Enhanced DBS check and also a C1 level training course (this will include Messy Church helpers and the like). Anyone in a leadership role with children or vulnerable adults, because they work unsupervised or because they supervise others who have a DBS check needs C2 level training. For all new appointees to a role, a three month period in which they can undertake the C0 online training is permissible. After this a further 12 months is allowable to attend other training as it becomes available.

Please note: All trustees of charities are eligible for a DBS check. However, the Diocese of Salisbury has decided that it will not require PCC members to apply for DBS clearance. If the PCC decides it wishes to do this then it must also agree to pick up the cost. PCC members are, however, required to complete the Fit and Proper Person Declaration (Appendix 1) each year upon re-election.

All PSO's should be DBS checked due to the nature of their role.

- Provide appropriate insurance to cover for all activities undertaken in the name of the PCC which involve children and/or adults who may be at risk.

Please note: Ecclesiastical Insurance Group (EIG) have made clear that Diocesan procedures for training are to be followed, and that all people working with children or adults who may

be at risk should have training, otherwise the insurance may be invalidated should an incident arise or an allegation be made involving a person who has not been trained and should have been.

- Respond to all concerns raised openly, promptly and consistently. Reporting all safeguarding concerns or allegations against clergy or church officers to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, usually via the PSO.
- Ensure that known offenders or others who may pose a threat to children and young people or adults who may be at risk are effectively managed and monitored in consultation with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.

Churchwardens

Churchwardens are the senior lay representatives of the parish. They are the foremost in representing the laity and in co-operating with the incumbent. In relation to safeguarding, the churchwardens work with the incumbent, PCC and parish safeguarding officer to:

- Ensure that in the period of a vacancy (during an interregnum), that the incumbent's safeguarding roles and responsibilities are fulfilled, in consultation with the PCC, parish safeguarding officer and the Rural Dean.
- Pay attention to the specific needs of children and adults who may be at risk when undertaking health and safety inspections and risk assessment.
- Ensure that all parish activities with children and adults who may be at risk are adequately supervised and insured.
- Ensure that the parish has procedures for responding to complaints and grievances.
- Answer questions regarding safeguarding as they arise in the Archdeacon's visitation or articles of enquiry and respond to any specific safeguarding advice, which may be given from the Archdeacon.

Churchwardens are not required to have DBS clearance but are required to attend safeguarding training by completing the C0 online module and attend C1 and C2 courses.

Appendix One

Declaration that Parish Officers comply with the 'Fit and Proper Persons' legislation

(To be signed by all members of the PCC on their election or, where a member serves *ex officio* or by virtue of membership of a relevant synod, from the date on which their time in office commences)

Name of PCC

Name of individual

I, the undersigned, declare that:

- I am not disqualified from acting as a charity trustee. (see note overleaf)
- I have not knowingly been involved in tax fraud.
- (Those responsible for spending money:) I will at all times seek to ensure the PCC's funds, and charity tax reliefs received by the PCC, for which I am responsible are used only for charitable purposes.
- (Those responsible for claiming Gift Aid relief on behalf of the PCC:) I will seek to ensure that the PCC claims only the Gift Aid relief to which it is entitled.

Signed.....

Date.....

Home address.....

..... Postcode

Previous address if moved in past 12 months.....

..... Postcode

Under the Charities Act 2011 (as amended), you are disqualified from serving as a charity trustee in the following circumstances (unless there is a relevant waiver in place):

- You have been convicted of an offence involving deception or dishonesty (unless any such conviction is legally regarded as spent).
- You are an undischarged bankrupt.
- You have made compositions or arrangements with any creditors from which you have not been discharged.
- You have been disqualified from serving as a company director.
- You have been disqualified as a charity trustee by order of the Charity Commission (unless the order is limited to specific charities or a class of charities which does not include the PCC named above, or is spent).
- You have been removed as a trustee, charity trustee, officer, agent or employee by an order of the Charity Commission.
- You have been suspended by the Charity Commission.
- You have been found in contempt under the Civil Procedure Rules for having made a false disclosure statement or for having made a false statement which was confirmed by a statement of truth (unless any such conviction is legally regarded as spent).
- You have been convicted of a relevant offence (or a related offence such as attempting to commit, or aiding and abetting or procuring the commission of, such an offence): (i) under certain anti-terrorism legislation, (ii) of money laundering, (iii) under the Bribery Act 2010, (iv) of disobeying or contravening an order of the Charity Commission, (v) of misconduct in public office, (vi) of perjury or, (vii) of perverting the course of justice.
- You are subject to a notification requirement under Part II of the Sexual Offences Act 2003.
- You are a designated person for the purpose of Part I of the Terrorist Asset-Freezing etc Act 2010 or the Al-Qaida (Asset-Freezing) Regulations 2011.

If you are in any doubt as to whether any of the above conditions applies you should seek clarification from your Diocesan Registrar.

This declaration needs to be signed after each election.