

Keeping us Safe

Safeguarding: PCCs and DBS

There is a new requirement (from APCMs in 2021) to ensure DBS clearance for all charity trustees, ie PCC members and churchwardens.

All PCC members are charity trustees, whether or not the PCC on which they serve is registered separately with the Charity Commission. You will know that churchwardens and deanery synod representatives are ex officio members. Currently only those parishes with an annual income over £100,000 are required to register separately with the Charity Commission. This may change over coming years.

Charity trustees are eligible for DBS clearance at enhanced level (but without barring information) at no charge. The Charity Commission strongly recommends that all charity trustees in charities which directly work with children and vulnerable adults are asked to apply for DBS clearance. Many people in our congregations are vulnerable for all sorts of reasons (some of which we may not even be aware of) so, by definition, all our PCCs are charities which directly work with children and/ or vulnerable adults.

Up until now, the Diocese of Salisbury has not put these processes into place but following consultation with the Bishop's Staff and the Senior Leadership Team at Church House, Bishop Nicholas has decided that, with effect from the 2021 APCMs, all PCC members (including churchwardens) in PCCs which are registered separately with the Charity Commission will be required to apply for DBS clearance.

After the 2021 APCM, those parishes will need to ask their elected PCC members and church wardens to apply for DBS clearance. No churchwarden or other PCC member in such parishes may be admitted to their office until such clearance has been obtained.

A DBS clearance is generally considered in the Church of England to be valid for 5 years so, where PCC members and/ or churchwardens remain in office, they will not need to renew their clearance each year. Any new churchwarden or PCC member who is elected in subsequent years will, however, be required to apply.

The diocesan safeguarding team will be preparing procedures to implement this change that should be published in the new year in time for the 2021 APCMs.