

Our church is going to be in a vacancy....

Safeguarding is important to the mission and ministry of your church so that all are welcome and can come in safety to know the love of God. During a vacancy the responsibility for safeguarding rests with the church wardens in consultation with the PCC, Area Dean and Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator.

How can the Church of England – Birmingham Safeguarding Team help?

We will work with your church to ensure you know how to access support during the vacancy, where records will be kept and where to get advice if there are any concerns. We will:

- meet with the vicar, church wardens and Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator before the vicar leaves
- continue to offer advice and support during the vacancy
- meet with you if you have been in a vacancy for nine months to review how your safeguarding arrangements are working
- meet with your new vicar as soon as possible once they are in post

Who can we ask to help?

The church wardens main source of help during the vacancy will be their Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator and they should let him or her know of all concerns or allegations, (except when the concern or allegation is about them or a member of their family). If you don't have a Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator you can get help from your Area Dean, your Archdeacon or, more usually, the safeguarding team at the Church of England – Birmingham - call us or send an email or use our *online referral form* and we'll get back to you as soon as we can. You might also be able to find what you're looking for on our website which has lots of advice, resources and template policies and forms for churches: <https://www.cofebirmingham.com/safeguarding/>

The Church of England – Birmingham Safeguarding Team

	Steph Haynes - concerns	 07342 993844  stephh@cofebirmingham.com
	Claire Wesley – policy, safer recruitment & training	 0121 426 0432  clairew@cofebirmingham.com
	Sarah Rose – safer recruitment & general safeguarding support	 0121 426 0407  sarahr@cofebirmingham.com
	Peter Cozens – training support	 0121 426 0429  peterc@cofebirmingham.com
	Laura Rutherford - training	 07747 246858  laurar@cofebirmingham.com

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What happens during the vacancy?

The church wardens have oversight of safeguarding during the vacancy. This will involve making sure everyone knows that they must report concerns, who to and, where appropriate, the Bishop’s Safeguarding Adviser and statutory agencies have been informed; volunteers are safely recruited and trained; activities are run safely, reviewed and insured; records are kept securely; policies are reviewed annually and there is a safeguarding report at the APCM. How this can be managed and who might be able to help during the vacancy will be discussed at the church’s first meeting with the safeguarding team.

How to ‘do’ safeguarding in a parish is explained in your:

- ❖ Parish Safeguarding Handbook
<https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/promoting-safer-church-safeguarding>
- ❖ [The Church of England – Birmingham’s Handbook Supplement](#)
- ❖ [Parish Safeguarding Dashboard](#)
your Parish safeguarding Co-ordinator has access to these

Concerns & Allegations

Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinators respond to, record and report all safeguarding concerns and allegations on behalf of the PCC. The Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser **must** be told, within 24, when:

- the abuse/concern happens at an activity approved by the PCC
- a church officer¹ has, or is alleged to have, committed abuse in church or in another context (or when you're worried their behaviour may lead to abuse)
- someone convicted of a sexual or serious violent offence (including domestic violence) is attending an activity approved by the PCC
- there is the potential for risk or harm for the church – wherever the abuse happened

The safety of a child or adult is always the first priority, so never delay reporting to statutory agencies when you need to.

Records & Policies

Every church must have a safeguarding policy and must abide by all the Church of England's safeguarding policies and practice guidance. Safeguarding records must be kept confidentially and securely on church premises. The safeguarding team will explore with your church what policies and records you currently have and how and where you might be able to keep them during the vacancy. We will also advise you what records you must keep and for how long.

Safer Recruitment

Everyone who works in a role that involves contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults **must** be safely recruited and have a DBS check if the role is eligible. All the forms you need for safer recruitment are on our website – <https://www.cofebirmingham.com/safeguarding/safer-recruitment/> To process DBS applications the church needs a Parish Identity Verifier (get in touch with us or download and complete a form from our *website* to register).

¹ A church officer is anyone, lay or ordained, paid or unpaid, who is appointed or elected to a role on behalf of the church



Safeguarding Training Requirements – Core Modules

Role	Awareness	Foundation	Leadership
	Recommended for anyone who needs a basic level of awareness of safeguarding. Required for PCC members and anyone who must complete the foundation and leadership modules	Required for anyone who has safeguarding responsibilities/contact with children and/or vulnerable adults	Required for anyone who has safeguarding leadership responsibilities/is leading activities involving children and/or vulnerable adults
Commissioned lay ministers e.g. pastoral teams	√	√	√ <i>repeat every 3 yrs</i>
Paid/volunteer roles who have direct contact with children/vulnerable adults & church operations managers	√	√ <i>repeat every 3 yrs</i>	X
PCC Members	√ <i>required repeat every 3 yrs</i>	X	X
Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator, PCC Safeguarding Lead & Church Wardens	√	√	√ <i>repeat every 3 yrs</i>
Paid/volunteer leaders with responsibility for children & vulnerable adult activities e.g. Youth Pastors, Music Group or Choir Leaders, Bell Tower Captains	√	√	√ <i>repeat every 3 yrs</i>

Safeguarding Training Requirements – Specialist Modules

Role	Safer Recruitment	Domestic Violence
Paid/volunteer roles who have direct contact with children/vulnerable adults/families & Church Wardens	X	√ <i>recommended</i>
Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator	√ <i>required</i>	√ <i>required</i>
PCC Safeguarding Lead	√ <i>recommended</i>	√ <i>recommended</i>
Parish Identity Verifier & any other parish roles with recruitment responsibilities	√ <i>required</i>	X