

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

 <p>Steph Haynes – concerns Bishop’s Safeguarding Adviser</p>	<p>☎ 07342 993844 ✉ stephh@cofebirmingham.com</p>
 <p>Claire Wesley – policy, safe practice, safeguarding reviews, development & training</p>	<p>☎ 0121 426 0432 ✉ clairew@cofebirmingham.com</p>
 <p>Sarah Rose – concerns & safer recruitment</p>	<p>☎ 0121 426 0407 ✉ sarahr@cofebirmingham.com</p>
 <p>Peter Cozens – training support</p>	<p>☎ 0121 426 0429 ✉ peterc@cofebirmingham.com</p>
 <p>Laura Rutherford - training</p>	<p>☎ 07747 246858 ✉ laurar@cofebirmingham.com</p>

2

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 and details are available on our website -
<https://www.cofebirmingham.com/info-for-parishes/safeguarding/parish-safeguarding/>

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 information you need for safer recruitment is 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 all paid workers, volunteers and office holders.	Required for anyone who has safeguarding responsibilities/contact with children and/or vulnerable adults and all office holders.	Required for anyone who has safeguarding leadership responsibilities or who plays a lead role in shaping the culture of their church setting (this will include all church wardens in a vacancy)
Ordained and licensed lay ministers – e.g. all clergy & Readers	√	√	√ <i>repeat every 3 yrs</i>
Commissioned lay ministers e.g. pastoral teams	√	√	√ <i>repeat every 3 yrs</i>
Roles that have direct contact with children, young people & vulnerable adults	√	√ <i>repeat every 3 yrs</i>	X
PCC Members & Church Wardens	√	√ <i>repeat every 3 yrs</i>	X <i>recommended for church wardens</i>
Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator, PCC Safeguarding Lead	√	√	√ <i>repeat every 3 yrs</i>
Paid/volunteer leaders and office holders who play a lead role in shaping the culture of their church setting	√	√	√ <i>repeat every 3 yrs</i>
Safeguarding Training Requirements – Issue Based & Toolkit Pathways			
Role	Safer Recruitment	Domestic Violence	
All ordained and licensed lay ministers (e.g. all clergy & Readers), pastoral visitors	X	√ <i>required</i>	
Parish Identity Verifiers, line managers and anyone involved in the recruitment of church officers (workers/volunteers/elected office holders). This will include all area deans, incumbents, priests-in-charge and team vicars.	√ <i>required</i>	X	
Paid/volunteer roles who have direct contact with children/vulnerable adults/families	X	√ <i>recommended</i>	
Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator	√ <i>required</i>	√ <i>required</i>	
PCC Members & Church Wardens	X	√ <i>required</i>	