



Churchwarden – Safeguarding Responsibilities

Churchwardens are the senior lay representatives of the parish. The role of the churchwarden is extremely varied but generally involves management, maintenance and mission in accordance with the Churchwardens Measure 2001¹ and the Canons of the Church of England (see in particular Canon E1)². They are the foremost in representing the laity and in co-operating with the incumbent, and they have a duty to maintain order and decency in the church and churchyard, particularly during the times of divine service. In co-operation with the incumbent, churchwardens are generally responsible for the day-to-day functioning of the parish.

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 area dean;
- Pay attention to the specific needs of children and vulnerable adults when undertaking health and safety inspections and risk assessment;
- Ensure that risk assessments are carried out before new activities are undertaken;
- Ensure that all parish activities with children and vulnerable adults are adequately supervised and insured;
- Ensure that the parish has procedures for responding to complaints³ and grievances;
- Answer questions regarding safeguarding as they arise in the archdeacon's visitations, and respond to any specific safeguarding advice, which may be given by the archdeacon.

Churchwardens maybe disqualified or suspended from office if they are placed on a barred list or are arrested for certain offences⁴.

¹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukcm/2001/1/contents>

² See Canon E1 para 4 – Churchwardens are charged with active participation in the Church's mission – "...use their best endeavours by example and precept to encourage the parishioners in the practice of true religion and to promote peace and unity among them"

³ See Parish Resources for an example: <https://www.parishresources.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/PCC-Complaints-Procedure.doc>

DBS Certificate

A Churchwardens role is eligible for an enhanced DBS check without a barred list check. As ex officio members of a Parochial Church Council Churchwardens are Trustees of a Charity that works with children and/ or vulnerable adults. Trustees of a charity that works with Children and or vulnerable adults are eligible for an enhanced DBS check without a barred list check⁵.

The Diocese of Bristol expects all roles that are eligible for a DBS check to have a DBS certificate issued before a person is appointed to the role. DBs Checks are required to be renewed every 5 years if a person remains in the role⁶.

Safeguarding Training

Churchwardens are required to complete core safeguarding training as follows, as specified in the House of Bishops Safeguarding Training and Development: Practice Guidance (2019)⁷ (see page 13):

- Basic Awareness (previously known as C0), online
- Foundation (previously known as C1), Online
- Leadership, (previously Known as C2), via zoom

Where a Churchwarden is involved in recruitment of staff and volunteers they should also complete safer recruitment training (see [Safeguarding Training](#) webpage).

Churchwardens are also encourage to complete Domestic Abuse training when available (see [Safeguarding Training](#) webpage).

⁴ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukcm/2016/1/section/2>

⁵ <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/dbs-faq-february-2017.pdf>

⁶ Safer Recruitment Toolkit:
<https://www.bristol.anglican.org/content/pages/documents/1601377082.pdf>

⁷ <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-07/Safeguarding%20Training%20%20Development%202019%20Final%20version.pdf>