



Parish Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance: A Guide

This guide has been produced following requests for guidance on what should be included in parish safeguarding policies and for clarity around which national policies are currently in use.

Each church is different in terms of membership, physical and community setting and activities and so each church will need to consider what is relevant to them and their specific circumstances. For this reason it is not particularly useful for a template policy or set of procedures to be provided.

This guidance aims instead to advise on areas for consideration and to sign post to policies, procedures and guidance that can be adopted and amended for parish use.

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Section I: Church of England Safeguarding Policy, Procedure and Guidance

Policy

The Church of England has three main safeguarding policies in use, all of which can be accessed via the diocesan website or the Church of England website:

*Protecting All God's Children 2010 (Safeguarding Children)*¹

*Promoting a Safer Church 2006 (Safeguarding Adults)*²

*Safer Recruitment 2016*³

A revised Policy Statement from the House of Bishops was issued in March 2017 and adopted by the Diocesan Synod in June 2017.

*Promoting a Safer Church; House of Bishops policy statement (2017)*⁴

In addition the Church of England has two further policies which focus on specific safeguarding issues:

*Responding to Domestic Abuse 2017*⁵

*Responding Well: to those who have been sexually abused 2011*⁶

Responding Well to Domestic Abuse requires Dioceses and Parishes to adopt a statement with regards to their approach to Domestic Abuse. The Diocese Statement is published on the Diocese website here:

<https://www.bristol.anglican.org/documents/domestic-abuse-policy-statement-2017/>

The main safeguarding policies of the Church of England are currently under review. Updated versions are expected to be issued subject to approval by the House of Bishops during 2017.

Practice Guidance

The Church of England issues new practice guidance notes as required. This guidance sits alongside the above policies and is issued to address specific issues or changes to legislation. The current list of practice guidance is:

*Safeguarding Learning and Development Framework Jan 2017*⁷

*Responding to Serious Safeguarding Situations 2015*⁸

*Risk Assessment for Individuals who may Pose a Risk to Children or Adults 2015*⁹

¹ <https://churchofengland.org/media/37378/protectingallgodschildren.pdf>

² <https://churchofengland.org/media/37405/promotingasafechurch.pdf>

³ https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2552006/safer_recruitment_practice_guidance_2016.pdf

⁴ <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/3896819/cofe-policy-statement.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/3896806/responding-well-to-domestic-abuse-2017.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2257646/responding%20well.pdf>

⁷ <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/3791799/approved-practice-guidance-safeguarding-training-and-development.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2254740/responding%20to%20serious%20situations.pdf>

*Safeguarding in Religious Communities 2015*¹⁰

*Safeguarding Records: Joint practice guidance for the Church of England and Methodist Church 2015*¹¹

*Safeguarding Records Retention Toolkit 2015*¹²

*Safeguarding Guidance for Single Congregational Local Ecumenical Partnerships 2015*¹³

Every diocese and parish has a duty to abide by the Church of England policies. These policies have been adopted by the Diocese of Bristol Synod and Bishops Council.

In addition General Synod passed the Safeguarding and Clergy Disciplinary Measure in July 2015. Amongst other requirements this places a duty on Clergy and Church Officers to pay due regard to the safeguarding policies of the Church of England. This measure came into force in sections through 2016 and was fully implemented on 1 March 2017.

Section 2: Diocesan Safeguarding Policy, Procedure and Guidance

Each diocese is required to abide by Church of England policy as above and also to provide additional safeguarding policy, procedure and guidance as required locally. Diocese of Bristol policies, procedures and guidance can all be found on the Diocese website here: <https://www.bristol.anglican.org/safeguarding-resources/>

In 2014 the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy was updated (and reviewed July 2015/ July 2016) and can now be found on the Diocesan website here: <https://www.bristol.anglican.org/documents/safeguarding-policy-2016/> alongside additional relevant local policy, procedure and guidance.

The local policy, procedure and guidance are all compliant with the national versions but do include any required local amendments. They do not include good practice guidance for working with children or adults; please refer to the main national statutory guidance¹⁴ and regional multi-agency procedures¹⁵.

It is recognised that diocesan policy, procedure and guidance appears somewhat piecemeal at present as it is no longer all contained within one document. However,

⁹ <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2254753/risk%20assessment%20guidance.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2254779/safeguarding%20practice%20guidance-%20safeguarding%20in%20religious%20communities.pdf>

¹¹ <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2254792/safeguarding%20joint%20practice%20guidance%20-%20safeguarding%20records.pdf>

¹² https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2433705/safeguarding_records_retention_tool_kit_-dec_15

¹³ <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2254805/safeguarding%20joint%20practice%20guidance-%20leps.pdf>

¹⁴ Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2015 and Care and Support Statutory Guidance, 2016 Ch. 14.

¹⁵ For Children: Southwest Child Protection Procedures www.swcpp.org.uk, For Adults:

this will be revised once the national policies have been fully reviewed; with the aim of minimising the number of separate documents published.

Section 3: Parish Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance

Each parish is required by Church of England policy to have in place a safeguarding policy, procedures and guidance for children and adults at risk of abuse and neglect.

- The policy and associated documents should be reviewed annually and be agreed by the PCC.
- It is acceptable to have joint or separate child and adult safeguarding policies.
- It is acceptable to have a benefice safeguarding policy where all PCC's included in that benefice agree to and follow that policy.
- Where your parish is involved in an LEP a decision should be made regarding which denominations policy to follow (i.e. if the LEP decides to follow Church of England Safeguarding Policy this means that it is only requirement to attend Church of England Safeguarding Training).
- Where a Bishops Mission Order has been granted or mission or ministry is undertaken outside of a parish context; a safeguarding policy and associated procedures and guidance will still be needed where work involves children or adults who may be vulnerable.

Section 3a: What is a Safeguarding Policy?

A safeguarding policy sets out for the reader the organisations commitment to safeguarding children and adults at risk of abuse or neglect.

It should be accompanied by relevant procedures and practice guidance. These make it clear what to do in particular circumstances (procedures) and provide guidance about expected behaviours and ways of working (guidance).

Section 3b: With which policies, procedures and guidance do we need to comply?

As well as the Church of England Safeguarding policies named above, each parish must comply with legislation, statutory and non statutory government guidance as well as any guidance issued by Local Authorities, the Charity Commission and Insurers. A failure to do so could invalidate any insurance cover and place the Parish in Breach of Charity Commission requirements

Children

Each Local Authority area has a Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), the LSCB will have issued a Multi Agency Child Protection Procedures¹⁶ - ensure that your policy and procedures are compliant with theirs. Focus on ensuring that it is clear how to report a concern and who to. As well as how to manage allegations against people (Church Officers) who work with Children.

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015) is statutory guidance from the Department for Education regarding the process of child protection and the role of each agency. Faith Organisations are specifically named as having a role - check that your parish is meeting the requirements.

Faith Organisations

*Churches, other places of worship and faith-based organisations provide a wide range of activities for children and have an important role in safeguarding children and supporting families. Like other organisations who work with children they need to have appropriate arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, as described in paragraph 4 of this chapter.*¹⁷

(Working together to safeguarding Children, 2015, DfE)

Adults

Each Local Authority area has a Safeguarding Adult's Board (SAB), the SAB will have issued a Multi Agency Adult Protection Procedures - ensure that your policy and procedures are compliant with theirs. Again focus on how to report a concern and who to.

Chapter 14 Care and Support Statutory Guidance, May 2016¹⁸ is guidance from the Department of Health regarding the process of adult protection and the role of each agency. This sits under the Care Act, 2014 and replaces previous safeguarding adult protection guidance 'No Secrets, 2000. Check that your parish is meeting the requirements.

Charity Commission

Check the charity commission website for information about the duties of trustees. The commission provides a helpful paper 'Safeguarding Children and Young People 2014'¹⁹ which sets out the Charity Commission expectations. This can be found on the Charity Commission Website. Note the requirement to inform the Charity

¹⁶ For the Diocese of Bristol the Multi-Agency Child Protection Procedures are the South West Child Protection Procedures – www.swcpp.org.uk

¹⁷ http://www.workingtogetheronline.co.uk/chapters/chapter_two.html#faith Paragraph 4 refers to the arrangements that should be in place under s.11 Children Act 2004 -

http://www.workingtogetheronline.co.uk/chapters/chapter_two.html#section_eleven

¹⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance/care-and-support-statutory-guidance#safeguarding-1>

¹⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-and-young-people>

Commission of safeguarding cases involving people in positions of trust or related to Church premises or actions.

Section 3c: What should be in our parish safeguarding policy, procedures and guidance?

An example policy is provided on the Diocesan website which can be adopted and amended to suit if required: <https://www.bristol.anglican.org/documents/sample-parish-safeguarding-policy/>

The principles of Church of England and Diocesan policy must be adopted. However it is important that these are laid out in Parish policy so that it can be used without having to access multiple other documents where time is a factor.

- **A policy statement:** This sets out what the parish commits itself to do and the standards to uphold. The Diocesan safeguarding policy can be found on the Diocesan website. It is taken from the Principles of the House of Bishops Policy for Safeguarding. You can use this as a template.
- **What is safeguarding:** Define what safeguarding and the various types of abuse are (information on this can be found on the diocesan website entitled 'What is Safeguarding?' which can be used as a template).
- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Explain who holds what responsibility for Safeguarding within the parish e.g. PCC, Parish Safeguarding Officer(s), Incumbent, Church Wardens, Activity Leaders, staff and volunteers and congregation.

Procedures

Raising Safeguarding Concerns:

- Who should any concerns be communicated to? See diocesan website for diocesan advice specifically "I've got a concern about the safety/wellbeing of a Child/ Vulnerable Adult WHAT SHOULD I DO?" and the Diocese of Bristol "Allegations Management" procedure²⁰. You can use this information and direct readers to the procedure or include it in full.
- How can that person/ people be contacted: should this be by telephone, email etc.
- What if that person is not available or the concern is about them - who else can be contacted? (Incumbent, Diocesan Safeguarding Team, Local Authority, Police). Give the telephone numbers for each.

²⁰ <https://www.bristol.anglican.org/documents/allegations-management-procedure/>

- If the concern/complaint is against a person in a position of trust the diocesan ‘Allegations Management Procedure’ must be followed. It can be found on the diocesan website.
- Detail issues of confidentiality - who will be told about a concern, who will not be told? Guidance on this is available on the diocesan website “Church of England Safeguarding Records Practice Guidance 2015”.

Safer Recruitment:

- Everyone within the Church of England must be recruited to any paid or voluntary role according to Church of England Safer Recruitment Policy 2016. The Diocese has developed ‘Safer Recruitment Guidance and Toolkit’ with a range of model forms/ templates that can be used by Parishes²¹.
- Explain what the process is and who does what within the process for your church.
- Every parish using the CCPAS DBS application process must have adopted policies on the ‘Fair Recruitment of Ex Offenders²²’ and ‘Handling of Disclosure Information²³’. The diocesan policies on these issues may be used as templates.
- What is the induction process for roles within our church? Describe them.
- How will the individual be supervised? Who supervises who, when do they meet, what records are kept?
- What is the training expectation for staff and volunteers? See the Diocesan safeguarding training brochure for details or mandatory and available courses.

All staff and volunteers working with children or adults at risk must complete at least C1 level safeguarding training and this must be updated every 3 years. Staff with specific supervisory responsibilities will need to complete higher level Safeguarding Training.

Ministering to those who may present a risk

- There is guidance on this available on the diocesan website entitled ‘Ministering to those that present a Risk’.

²¹ <https://www.bristol.anglican.org/PSO-resources/>

²² <https://www.bristol.anglican.org/documents/recruitment-ex-offenders/>

²³ <https://www.bristol.anglican.org/documents/handling-disclosure-information/>

Practice Guidance

- Record keeping, data protection and confidentiality: Where will records be stored, how long for, who can see them? Guidance on this is available on the diocesan website²⁴.

Work with Children and Young People

- Adhere to the principles laid out in 'All Gods Children, 2010'.
- A useful guide 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People (2015)²⁵' is available from the Safer Recruitment Consortium.
- Provide a guide to expected behaviours by staff and volunteers – a useful model for this is provided by the House of Bishops - Model Code of Safer Working Practice' an example is also available on the diocesan website.
- Ensure that each of the activities that your parish offers is considered:
 - Who should it be set up by?
 - At what point does the PCC need to be aware of and approve arrangements?
 - Who will undertake a risk assessment and keep it updated?
 - What specific guidelines are needed for each particular activity?
- Pay particular attention to any activity that may carry additional risk e.g. 1-1 mentoring, youth peer groups, overnight stays, use of vehicles. Contact the Diocesan Youth and Children's Adviser ²⁶for support with understanding risks and good practice.
- Pay regard to the risks associated with photography and use of social media. CCPAS provide a useful set of templates around photography consent in the members area of their website. If you do not know the member log in please contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Team (we have diocesan membership which covers all Anglican churches in the diocese). Diocesan advice on social media can be found on the diocesan website²⁷.

Work with Adults

- Adhere to the principles laid out in 'Promoting a Safer Church, 2006'.
- A useful guide to issues to consider is contained within 'Good Practice Recommendations 1&2 pp.10-16 within Promoting a Safer Church, 2006.

²⁴ https://cofebristol.contentfiles.net/media/documents/document/2016/11/CofE_Policy_-_safeguarding_records_retention_tool_kit.pdf

²⁵ <https://www.safeguardingschools.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Guidance-for-Safer-Working-Practices-2015-final1.pdf>

²⁶ <https://www.bristol.anglican.org/staff-directory/> - parish and external relations

²⁷ <https://www.bristol.anglican.org/communications-media/> -social media risks

- Guidelines for the ‘Professional Conduct of the Clergy²⁸ (Revised Edition), 2015’ provides useful guidance on practice and behaviour which can be adopted by church officers.

Additional Issues

- **Hire of Church Premises** - ensure that terms and conditions are clear that groups have their own safeguarding policy where relevant and that the premises are in a good, safe, condition for hiring. See diocesan advice on hiring agreements in the safeguarding section of the website.
- **Insurance Cover** - ensure that all activities are covered. Check with insurers before arranging trips or special events that may be beyond usual arrangements.

Section 4: Other Policies to consider

At times safeguarding policy and procedure needs to work alongside other policies e.g. Disciplinary (including suspension and dismissal); Health and Safety (action taken to prevent injury); Equality and Diversity; Complaints.

Ensure that the Parish have relevant policies in place and that those that need to be are aware of them and know how to make effective use of them.

Section 5: Available Support:

You may wish to forward your Parish Safeguarding Policy to the Diocesan Safeguarding Team for advice or to ask for support in re/writing one. You are absolutely welcome to do this. You may also wish to join the Safe and Welcome scheme as this includes accessible advice and support as needed.

Document Control Information	
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Next Review Due	July 2018

²⁸ <https://churchofengland.org/about-us/structure/general-synod/about-general-synod/convocations/guidelines-for-the-professional-conduct-of-the-clergy/guidelines.aspx>