



## Diocesan Training Strategy 2025-2028

### Introduction

The national safeguarding code of Practice: Safeguarding Learning And Development Framework (2024) sets out arrangements and expectations for safeguarding training in all church bodies<sup>1</sup> to ensure that all Church officers<sup>2</sup> are trained in aspects of safeguarding relevant to their role to develop and maintain the necessary knowledge, attitude and skills to safeguard and protect children, young people, vulnerable adults<sup>3</sup> as outlined in the 'Promoting a Safer Church' House of Bishops policy statement (2017)<sup>4</sup>. The practice guidance applies to all Church officers.

This Framework is a safeguarding Code of Practice issued under s. 5A of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016, as amended by the Safeguarding (Code of Practice) Measure 2021, which came into effect on 1 March 2022.

Section 5A replaces the former rules under which safeguarding guidance has been issued. Section 5A differs in two important respects from the former rules. First, it replaces the former 'duty to have due regard' with a 'duty to comply' with the

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<sup>1</sup> Church Bodies includes PCCs, diocesan bodies, cathedrals, religious communities, and the National Church Institutions.

<sup>2</sup> A 'Church Officer' is anyone appointed/ elected by or on behalf of the Church to a post or role, whether they are ordained or lay, paid or unpaid

<sup>3</sup> For the purpose of Church policy and guidance the definition of 'vulnerable adult' is contained in the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016, which defines a 'vulnerable adult' as 'a person aged 18 or over whose ability to protect himself or herself from violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation is significantly impaired through physical or mental disability or illness, old age, emotional fragility or distress, or otherwise; and for that purpose, the reference to being impaired is to being temporarily or indefinitely impaired'. Please note that the Care and Support Statutory Guidance issued under the Care Act 2014 (14.2) by the Department of Health uses the term 'adults experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect' to assess eligibility to statutory social care services.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/17545>

requirements of the Code. Secondly, it extends the list of 'relevant persons' to whom this Code applies.

This Code applies to people who have safeguarding responsibilities within the Church, including all authorised clergy, bishops, archdeacons, licensed readers and lay workers, churchwardens, members of parochial church councils and cathedral chapters.

This Code contains both **requirements**, which are mandatory, and **good practice advice**, which is advisory.

Failure by a member of the clergy to comply with a requirement is an act or omission which may constitute misconduct under the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003 ('CDM'). Failure by a Reader or lay worker to comply with a requirement would be grounds for the revocation of that Reader's or lay worker's licence by the bishop, and failure by a churchwarden, members of parochial church council or cathedral chapter could result in an investigation being conducted by the Charity Commission and the person being disqualified as a charity trustee. If a volunteer is in a role that requires them to undertake safeguarding learning, they should not be allowed continue in that role if they refuse to complete the required learning<sup>5</sup>.

A healthy Christian community is one which ensures and nurtures the wellbeing of all. Safeguarding needs therefore to be embedded in all aspects of the life and ministry of the Church, and safeguarding training and development is seen in this context. It is essential that churches understand safeguarding as a theological imperative, rooted in the nature and love of God, and outworking in basic commitments to giving equal worth to all, practising reciprocal pastoral care, and treating those who are most vulnerable with respect and dignity.

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<sup>5</sup> Please also refer to the section on Exemptions

## **Content**

Training will be focused on building healthy communities with a culture of safety, in which the wellbeing of all is ensured and nurtured. Modules reflect the national Safeguarding Standards across all dioceses for ensuring healthy safeguarding practice, responding well to victims and survivors of abuse in the church context. They emphasise the need to work in co-operation with the Safeguarding Officer and with statutory agencies in all safeguarding matters. Training for all church roles will include safer working practices which emphasise the importance of maintaining proper boundaries and a culture of 'respectful uncertainty'. Within the Church, all are welcomed, including those who pose risk, and in most situations, Church officers will be unaware of any risks posed. The Church is therefore uniquely challenged to provide a safe environment for all who attend, especially children and those who are vulnerable.

## **Training arrangements**

The annual training programme is set by the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer, in consultation with the Diocesan Mission and Ministry Team, the Diocese Safeguarding Steering Group and the Diocesan Bishop.

Safeguarding training must be delivered by experienced and skilled trainers, who understand the statutory requirements of safeguarding children and adults, and how these are provided in the church context. In the Diocese of Bristol, the delivery of Safeguarding training is led by the Deputy Diocesan Safeguarding Officer: Training and Development.

Online courses are available for basic awareness and foundation safeguarding courses through the online safeguarding training portal<sup>6</sup>.

Modules designed for face-to-face participative learning should be delivered to groups of ideally a ratio of 1:8 for virtual delivery and where it is face to face this can be extended up to no more than 32 participants with two trainers. Participants need

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<sup>6</sup> <https://safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org/>

the opportunity to explore with the trainer and one another the challenges which they face in their work with children and adults who may be vulnerable. Participants may also have vulnerabilities due to having experienced abuse in the past, and trainers will need to take this into consideration and make provision for any attendee who may become distressed.

Participants in training are also likely to need some opportunity to reflect on the relationship between safeguarding issues and their beliefs as articulated in theological language if safeguarding learning is to become thoroughly integrated with their behaviour, relationships and culture in the life of the church.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Team have recruited a small pool of volunteer trainers who are available to deliver some of the core safeguarding training courses where parishes prefer to offer a face-to-face course.

## **Exemptions**

Ensuring that all church officers are trained to recognise and respond to safeguarding concerns and information is vital for our church to become a safer place for all. However, we are mindful regarding the exposure for some not only to difficult material but to painful memories and of course it is not our intention to re-traumatise or victimise people with lived experience. Whilst it may be possible with adaptation to the materials or additional support to enable those with lived experience to complete the safeguarding learning pathways required for their role, for others this will not be the case.

As a result, we have created a discreet system of passes such that someone who is willing, wise, and wanting to serve the community but who has been the victim of the matters they are required to take a course on, be allowed a 'pass'. Such individuals should be offered a confidential conversation with their local Diocesan Safeguarding Officer (DSO) or Cathedral Safeguarding Officer (CSO) in order that the 'pass' can be granted and recorded as appropriate within training records. This should not become a matter of interrogation to be granted such a pass – that is, if a person were to ask to be excused then there should not be a cross examination of what they

are saying but it should be taken on trust and at face value – otherwise the victimhood is reinforced yet again.

### **Current courses**

The following table lists courses available as part of the Diocesan Training Strategy for 2025/28. A range of training opportunities is provided, reflecting the needs of the target groups. Local delivery of the Foundation, Safer Recruitment and Domestic Abuse courses for groups, benefices or parishes can be negotiated on request. Attendance at courses must be booked in advance.

Progress on the delivery of safeguarding training is reported quarterly to the Diocesan Safeguarding Steering Group who provide oversight of the safeguarding provision across the diocese which includes training.

## Diocesan Safeguarding Training Needs Analysis 2025-2028

Courses that can be delivered locally in person or virtually and online

<b>Module</b>	<b>Learning Aims:</b> This Module aims to...	<b>Who for:</b>	<b>Estimated Number</b>	<b>Max Attendees per course</b>	<b>Number of Courses required annually or attended during previous 3 years</b>
Basic Awareness	Develop a basic awareness of safeguarding in the context of the church and Christian pastoral care.	Anyone who wants a basic level of awareness of safeguarding: required for PCC members and anyone going on to complete Foundation or Leadership Training.	9600 <sup>7</sup>	Available as online module; can also be delivered to small groups face to face.	Basic awareness courses completed during: 2022 – 735 2023 – 872 2024 - 813
Foundation	Situate safeguarding in the context of the church and equip participants with the knowledge and skills in knowing what, when and how to report concerns.	Required for anyone who has safeguarding responsibilities or has contact in their church with children, young people or vulnerable adults	2,150 <sup>8</sup>		Foundation courses completed online during: 2022 – 451 2023 – 753 2024 - 819
Leadership	To equip church officers to embed healthy parish safeguarding practice and to explore the roles and personal vulnerabilities of parish officers in implementing parish safeguarding procedures and	Required for anyone who has safeguarding leadership responsibilities or responsibility for leading activities involving children, young people and/ or vulnerable adults	360 <sup>9</sup>	16 if virtual 23 Leadership courses over 1 year	During 2024 30 Leadership courses and 3 PtO pathway sessions were provided. To ensure flexibility and capacity.

<sup>7</sup> Statistics for Mission 2023 - Usual Adult Sunday attendance

<sup>8</sup> Number of individuals with a DBS check for a role which requires Foundation level training but have yet to complete the training (60%) of total

<sup>9</sup> Number of Individuals with a DBS check for a role which requires leadership level Training but have yet to complete the Training (48%) of total

<b>Module</b>	<b>Learning Aims:</b> This Module aims to...	<b>Who for:</b>	<b>Estimated Number</b>	<b>Max Attendees per course</b>	<b>Number of Courses required annually or attended during previous 3 years</b>
	responding to serious situations.				
Safer Recruitment & People Management	To explore legislation and statutory and other relevant guidance which ensure safer recruitment To be more familiar with House of Bishops' safer recruitment practice guidance	Anyone involved in the recruitment of church officers – paid and unpaid, ordained and lay			SRPM courses completed online during: 2022 – 69 2023 – 103 2024 - 89
Raising Awareness of Domestic abuse and Violence	Examines issues relating to domestic abuse, especially for vulnerable groups and children and how the church can respond well	Anyone holding a Bishops licence, commission, authorisation or PtO, spiritual Directors, Bishops Visitors, Pastoral Visitors and Safeguarding Officers and anyone working or volunteering with children or vulnerable adults.	620	20	31
PSO Induction	To equip learners with an understanding of the role of the Parish Safeguarding Officer and induct them into key working practices and relationships.	Parish safeguarding Officers	25 per annum new PSO's, based on turnover rate of 15%		3 courses provided in spring, summer and Autumn combination of virtual and face to face

## Core Safeguarding Training

\*Churchwardens: within the Diocese of Bristol it is considered that All Churchwardens play a lead role in shaping the culture of the Church body concerned therefore the Bishop of Bristol and the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer have concluded that they are all required to complete the leadership training

Frequency: the highest required level of training for each role must be renewed every 3 years.

Basic Awareness	Foundation	Leadership
<p>Required</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Church Officers, staff in church bodies, and bellringers</li> <li>• Anyone going on to complete any other safeguarding learning pathway.</li> </ul> <p>Recommended</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anyone wanting or needing a Basic Awareness of safeguarding.</li> </ul>	<p>Required</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Anyone holding the bishop’s licence, commission, authorisation, or permission (including clergy, PtO, Readers, LLMs).</li> <li>▪ Anyone (volunteers and employees) in a role which involves work with children, young people, or vulnerable adults, including Tower Captains and ringing teachers.</li> <li>▪ Churchwardens.</li> <li>▪ Pre-ordination or licence students, prior to Stage 1 Panel.</li> <li>▪ Vergers.</li> <li>▪ PCC Members / Lay Chapter Members / DBF Trustees.</li> <li>▪ Members of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel.</li> </ul>	<p>Required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All clergy holding the bishop’s licence, commission, authorisation, or permission (including PtO where exemption has not been given) including Honorary/Assistant Bishops and Chaplains.</li> <li>• All Readers and Licensed Lay Ministers holding the bishop’s licence (under Canons E6 &amp; E8), all who hold the bishop’s commission, authorisation, or permission to carry out similar ministerial functions (including PtO where exemption has not been given).</li> <li>• (Ordinands need to have completed the Leadership Pathway before their diaconal ordination and lay ministers in training before they are licenced, authorised or commissioned.)</li> <li>• Non-executive members of Chapter (unless their role in the diocese requires a higher level).</li> <li>• Safeguarding Officers / Leads in all Church bodies</li> <li>• Churchwardens*</li> </ul>



<b>Core Safeguarding Training</b>	<b>Basic Awareness</b>	<b>Foundation</b>	<b>Leadership</b>
<b>Timescale for completion</b>	<b>Within first six months in role</b>	<b>Within first six months in role</b>	<b>Within first six months in role</b>
Vergers	✓	✓	X
Servers	✓	✓	X
Welcomers	✓	✓	X
Caretakers	✓	X	X
Refreshment helpers	✓	X	X
Shop staff	✓	X	X
Sidespersons	✓	X	X
Church watcher	✓	X	X
Flower arranger	✓	X	X
Church Administrative Staff	✓	✓	X
Bell ringers	✓	X	X
Choir Members/ Music Group members (inc. sound/AV)	✓	X	X
All employees of Diocesan Board of Education (DBE)	✓	X	X
All employees of Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF)	✓	X	X
Those who regularly sit on interview panels	✓	✓	✓
Parish workers with children/ vulnerable adults (paid or volunteer)	✓	✓	X
Supervisors of work with children/vulnerable adults (paid or volunteer)	✓	✓	✓

<b>Core Safeguarding Training</b>	<b>Basic Awareness</b>	<b>Foundation</b>	<b>Leadership</b>
Safeguarding Officer (Parish/ Church/ Cathedral)	✓	✓	✓
Church Operations Manager	✓	✓	X
Church Wardens	✓	✓	✓
PCC member	✓	✓	X
PCC safeguarding Lead	✓	✓	✓
Youth and Children's Pastors	✓	✓	✓
House Group Leaders	✓	✓	X
Lay persons appointed to pastoral leadership in a local church	✓	✓	✓
Directors of Music/ Music Group leader	✓	✓	✓
Choir/ Drama Group Leaders (if under 18s or Vulnerable Adults in Group)	✓	✓	✓
Bell Tower Captains/ Teachers	✓	✓	✓
Registrar	✓	X	X
Diocesan Secretary	✓	✓	✓
Diocesan Communications Officer	✓	✓	✓
Chair of Diocesan Safeguarding Steering Group	✓	✓	✓
Members of DSSG	✓	✓	✓
Diocese Departmental Directors	✓	✓	✓
Diocesan Director of Ordinands	✓	✓	✓
HR Adviser/ Manager	✓	X	X
Bishop's Chaplain	✓	✓	✓

<b>Core Safeguarding Training</b>	<b>Basic Awareness</b>	<b>Foundation</b>	<b>Leadership</b>
Diocesan Warden of Readers	✓	✓	✓
Diocesan Safeguarding Officer	✓	✓	✓
Head of Ministry Development	✓	✓	✓
Bishop	✓	✓	✓
Archdeacon	✓	✓	✓
Incumbents/Priest-in-Charge	✓	✓	✓
Permission to Officiate (PTO)	✓	✓	✓
Curates	✓	✓	✓
Licensed Lay Minister	✓	✓	✓
Ordinands/ Independent students	✓	✓ (prior to Stage 1 Panel)	✓ (prior to leaving TEI)
Spiritual Directors	✓	✓	✓
Pastoral Visitors/ Lay persons with Pastoral Responsibility	✓	✓	<b>X</b>
Home Visitors	✓	✓	✓
Authorised Listeners	✓	✓	<b>X</b>
Bishop's Visitors	✓	✓	✓
Support and Link Persons	✓	✓	✓
Lay Chapter Members	✓	✓	✓
Members of Religious Communities in active ministry working with children/vulnerable adults	✓	✓	<b>X</b>
Safeguarding Leads in Religious Communities	✓	✓	✓

<b>Core Safeguarding Training</b>	<b>Basic Awareness</b>	<b>Foundation</b>	<b>Leadership</b>
Deans	✓	✓	✓
Residentiary/ Minor Canons	✓	✓	✓
TEI Principal	✓	✓	✓
TEI Vice Principal(s)	✓	✓	✓
TEI Safeguarding Lead	✓	✓	✓

### **Role specific and issue-based courses**

Safer Recruitment	PSO Induction	Responding to Domestic Abuse	Permission to Officiate Pathway
<p>Required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruiting managers and anyone involved in the recruitment of Church Officers (employees, elected members, and volunteers).</li> <li>Those with responsibility for administering DBS.</li> <li>Safeguarding Officers in all Church bodies, including Designated Safeguarding Person in a Religious Community.</li> <li>Ordinands during IME 1.</li> </ul>	<p>Required: New Parish safeguarding officers</p> <p>Recommended: Exiting Parish safeguarding officers</p>	<p>Required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anyone holding the bishop’s licence, commission, authorisation, or permission (including clergy, PtO, Readers, LLMs) or serving as an officer of the bishop</li> <li>Anyone (volunteers and employees) working with children, young people, or vulnerable adults, including Bishops Visitors and Pastoral Visitors</li> <li>Safeguarding Officers / Safeguarding Leads including Designated Safeguarding Person in a Religious Community</li> <li>Pre-ordination or licence students, prior to BAP or selection Panel</li> </ul> <p>Recommended: All Church Officers; PCC and Chapter members; Members of the DSSG</p>	<p>It is recognised that the exercise of PtO (for both retired clergy and readers) can vary considerably. As the main Safeguarding Leadership Pathway is now targeted at those people “who play a lead role in shaping the culture of the Church body concerned” those with PtO whose role meets this criterion must participate in the main Safeguarding Leadership Pathway.</p> <p>Those with PtO whose role does not meet this criterion must participate in a bespoke PtO Safeguarding Learning Pathway. The decision about which Pathway someone with PtO should take must be made by the Bishop or Dean in consultation with the DSA / CSA and/or safeguarding trainer. The local supervisor (incumbent or rural dean) may also be well placed to assist in identifying the level of involvement of an individual and therefore in which pathway would be most appropriate.</p> <p>For those newly retired, the Pathway individuals take should be decided at the point they start their new role. For existing PtOs a formal decision based on consideration of a person’s role against the above criterion would need to be made within the diocese.</p>