

Rochester Diocese safeguarding guidance for church groups or individuals travelling abroad on behalf of a church or Rochester Diocese specifically to work with children, young people or adults who are vulnerable

(This guidance should be followed in addition to the general guidance for overseas travel)

When a church group or individual decides to undertake a visit abroad with a plan to work, in any capacity, in an establishment or project where children and young people are placed or where the beneficiaries are vulnerable adults, the following steps should be followed.

1. The trip should be commissioned by the PCC or the Diocese who should appoint the leader and set its terms of reference - stipulating the task in hand, and a profile of a suitable participant. In some circumstances the PCC/Diocese may wish to reserve the right to review and endorse the list of participants.
2. Participants should be suitable for the work entailed and should be safely recruited and selected as for any other job or voluntary position in the church involving work with children/young people or adults who are vulnerable.
3. All those travelling should have the appropriate enhanced DBS check.
4. Participants should be briefed in advance of the trip about the safeguarding protocol, the potential vulnerabilities of any beneficiaries of the project, cultural information and local laws and local safeguarding protocols. If the visit is to a Companion Diocese, please contact the relevant Companion Diocese Group Chairperson about these matters.
5. The group's named leader carries overall responsibility and who makes decisions about the conduct of the visit. The group leader should have the right, in sufficiently serious circumstances, to prohibit the continuing involvement of a group member in the work for the remainder of the trip. The group leader should be the key liaison person who relates to the establishment or area being visited. There should be a named deputy and there must also be a named link person locally in the home parish or Diocese whom the leader can contact in an emergency.
6. The leader must take written notes of any incident of concern relating to a child/young person or vulnerable adult. Where allegations are made, the future safety of children/adults must take priority. Any allegation should be reported to the Rochester Diocesan Safeguarding Team and their advice sought. It should also be reported to the host Diocese and/or local partner organisation. Respect should be shown for the legal/police system of the host country and, where appropriate, reports should be made to the police.
7. Where an allegation is against a volunteer/team member, consideration should be given to removing that person to another location or arranging for them to return home early.
8. At the end of the project, there should be opportunities for the participating volunteers to attend a debriefing session and to access ongoing support where necessary.