

## **Parish Safeguarding Officer Toolkit**

**This toolkit brings together in one place, the policy, guidance and resources which will help you in understanding and performing your role as Parish Safeguarding Officer.**

The toolkit is presented in 3 sections.

Additional guidance in each section is signposted via [embedded links](#).

- Section 1: Safeguarding and the Role of Parish Safeguarding Officer
- Section 2: Diocese Resources and Support for Parish Safeguarding Officers
- Section 3: Safeguarding National Policy, Resources and Systems
- Annex: Summary of Tools, Resources and Guidance for Parish Safeguarding Officer Role and Responsibilities

The Parish Safeguarding Officer plays a key role in making good safeguarding happen at parish level, and the dedication and commitment of Parish Safeguarding Officers across the Diocese is something we are all extremely grateful for.

**THANK YOU**

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## **Section 1: Safeguarding and the Role of Parish Safeguarding Officer**

### **1.1 Safeguarding within Our Church**

Safeguarding is the action the Church takes to promote a safer culture and is a **shared responsibility** across our church communities, Diocese and nationally.

Safeguarding promotes the protection and consideration of the welfare of our vulnerable especially children, young people and vulnerable adults. Together we strive to prevent abuse from occurring, seek to protect those that are at risk of being abused and respond well to those that have been abused. We will take care to identify where a person may present a risk to others, and offer support to them whilst taking steps to mitigate such risks.

The Diocese is responsible for supporting parishes in implementing the House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policy and Practice Guidance. This includes arrangements to monitor the quality of safeguarding arrangements in parishes.

### **1.2 Parochial Church Council (PCC) Legal Responsibility for Safeguarding**

The PCC is the main decision maker of a parish. Its members are clergy, Churchwardens and others elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) of the parish. It is the legal responsibility of each PCC and the incumbent to fulfil their **duty of care** towards all those present during worship, all church sponsored activities and activities in church buildings. In practice, this means that each parish must adopt an appropriate safeguarding policy, **appoint a safeguarding officer**, and generally ensure that all of its practices and procedures comply with that policy and with relevant law.

### **1.3 Parish Roles with Safeguarding Responsibilities**

As Parish Safeguarding Officer you work closely with your incumbent, as Chair of the PCC and safeguarding lead, and other roles with safeguarding responsibilities, including Churchwardens, DBS Administrator / Validator (if this role is not undertaken by yourself), PCC members and leaders and helpers in church activities.

Responsibilities are set out in [Key Roles and Responsibilities of Church Officer Holders and Bodies Practice Guidance](#), (House of Bishops, October 2017) and referenced in brackets

below. This guidance includes a Model Parish Safeguarding Officer Role Description at Appendix 8.

**Churchwarden(s):** as senior lay representative(s) of the parish, should be aware of the guidance (3.2) including [Safeguarding Responsibilities of Churchwardens](#) and act accordingly.

**DBS Administrator / Validator:** Every parish should have a nominated person who is responsible for administration of DBS applications, per the guidance (3.4). In smaller churches this role is often carried out by the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

**PCC members:** are under a collective and individual duty to “have due regard” to House of Bishops’ guidance (3.1) on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. It is not sufficient for individual members of the PCC to rely on the Parish Safeguarding Officer or the incumbent to take responsibility for safeguarding matters. Every PCC member, whether clergy or lay, is personally responsible for ensuring that the parish follows safeguarding guidance.

## **1.4 Parish Safeguarding Officer**

The Parish Safeguarding Officer role is a vital one – you are the ‘champion’ of safeguarding in the parish. Much of the role of the Parish Safeguarding Officer revolves around ensuring people are aware of, and comply with, safeguarding measures in our churches. This includes supporting those in parish roles with meeting their safeguarding responsibilities and, where needed, being part of the response to any specific safeguarding concern.

### **1.4.1 Appointment to Role**

With the incumbent, the PCC must appoint at least one designated Parish Safeguarding Officer to work with the incumbent and PCC. The Parish Safeguarding Officer should be:

- a lay person;
- either a member of the PCC (elected or co-opted) or have the right to attend the PCC’s meetings, and
- should report regularly on the implementation of safeguarding measures within the parish.

It is important for everyone to remember that overall responsibility remains with the incumbent and PCC. As Parish Safeguarding Officer you are exercising a specific responsibility on behalf of the PCC, but not accepting liability in their place. The incumbent and PCC should understand the remit of your role and provide you with full support in meeting your responsibilities.

If you have come into role as Parish Safeguarding Officer, since the start of 2022, you should have been safely recruited in accordance with [Safer Recruitment and People Management](#) framework (see Section 3.2).

### **1.4.2 Responsibilities of the Role**

The role of Parish Safeguarding Officer revolves around ensuring people, including church officers and volunteers, are aware of and understand the safeguarding measures needed in our churches so that our places of worship are inclusive and safe for all. It is both *proactive* and *responsive*. This will necessitate supporting others in parish roles to meet their safeguarding responsibilities and, as needed, responding to any specific safeguarding concern.

Your responsibilities as Parish Safeguarding Officer are based on safeguarding best practice and compliance, for which communication, reporting and record keeping are essential. Your responsibilities are set out in the [Diocesan Safeguarding Policy](#) and [national policy](#) as follows:

- Implement and monitor the recommended parish policy and procedure on safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults, encouraging good practice and working closely with the incumbent on all safeguarding matters;
- Ensure that the Parish Safeguarding Policies and Parish Safeguarding Officer contact details are displayed in all church premises and readily accessible;
- Keep the church leadership informed of good safeguarding practice and provide a regular update on safeguarding for the PCC;
- Have an overview of all church activities involving children and vulnerable adults and keep a record of those activities;
- Offer advice and support to all leaders of activities within the parish on safeguarding policy and practice guidance (including training);
- Contribute to the appointment of all volunteers and PCC employees in regular contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults (in accordance with Diocesan Safer

Recruitment Guidelines); to obtain necessary criminal records and renew these appropriately: Note: The Parish Safeguarding Officer may also be the DBS Administrator, but where this is not the case, the PCC should appoint another individual;

- Act (usually) as the “Lead Recruiter” as defined by Churches Child Protection Advisory service;
- Compile and update annually a list of names of paid and voluntary workers and ensure that full recruitment procedures have been followed for each of them;
- Attend Diocesan Safeguarding Training and undertake other safeguarding training as opportunity arises (or requires);
- Send and update by email their contact details to the Diocesan Office;
- Liaise with incumbent and churchwardens as appropriate about any safeguarding issues in the parish;
- Report annually on safeguarding matters to the PCC and send to Diocese (typically at APCM);
- Liaise with Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser on safeguarding concerns regarding children or adults and report ALL such concerns about church officers to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser;
- Receive, but not to investigate, any suspicions or allegations of abuse which may arise in the church(es) they represent, including allegations against clergy, or licensed commissioned ministers and to inform immediately and subsequently liaise with the DSA;
- Keep a log of incidents, allegations or concerns which arise, storing records safely and securely in a locked cabinet, with access restricted to the Parish Safeguarding Officer and the incumbent.

**This toolkit is aimed at providing the Parish Safeguarding Officer with essential information and resources to perform the role.**

**The Annex provides a summary mapping of tools, resources and guidance contained in this toolkit to enable the Parish Safeguarding Officer to meet the responsibilities of their role.**

### **1.4.3 Training for the Role**

It is a national requirement that a Parish Safeguarding Officer completes (and refreshes every three years) Church of England safeguarding training for their role as follows:

<b>Training Module</b>	<b>Available</b>	<b>Need to Refresh</b>
Basic Awareness (1-1.5 hours)	<b>Online</b> via Church of England Safeguarding Training Portal (3.4)	No
Foundation (1-1.5 hours)	<b>Online</b> via Church of England Safeguarding Training Portal (3.4)	No
Leadership	Provided by Diocese Safeguarding Training Team, face to face or via Zoom (2.5)	Yes
Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse (1.5- 2 hours)	<b>Online</b> via Church of England Safeguarding Training Portal (3.4)	Yes
Safer Recruitment & People Management (1.5- 2 hours)	<b>Online</b> via Church of England Safeguarding Training Portal (3.4)	Yes

Parish Safeguarding Officers who are new to the Church of England must complete the Church of England safeguarding training. Safeguarding training completed for other roles or occupations is not accepted as safeguarding training for the church.

- Information on accessing Diocese Safeguarding Training is given in section 2.5;
- Further information on the Church of England Safeguarding Training Portal for online training is given in section 3.5.

### **1.4.4 Your Contact Details**

Communication and availability are key to the Parish Safeguarding Officer's role.

It is essential, as Parish Safeguarding Officer, that your contact details are available to your parish and the Diocese. In your parish your contact details should be available in church buildings on safeguarding posters and on parish websites. In the Diocese your name,

address, phone number and email address are included in the secure, electronic Contact Management System, so that we can contact you when necessary.

The Diocese uses the CMS contacts database when communicating widely with all church officers, including Parish Safeguarding Officers, to provide you with information, keep you up to date and invite you to Diocese training and events.

The Diocese should be notified when there is a change in Parish Safeguarding Officer, typically by the incumbent, so that records can be kept up date. This will include the CMS contacts database and the ownership of the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard.

Please ensure that the Diocese has the most up to date, and correct, contact details, including email address for the Parish Safeguarding Officer(s) by emailing [Helen Straughan](#).

## **Section 2: Diocese Policy, Resources and Support for Parish Safeguarding Officers**

### **2.1 Safeguarding Diocese Contacts**

#### **Beth Miller          Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser**

Contact for advice and support where you are concerned about the safeguarding of a child or vulnerable adult, including reporting that a child or vulnerable adult is at risk of abuse or harm that may be currently happening or happened some time ago.

Email:                [Beth.miller@durham.anglican.org](mailto:Beth.miller@durham.anglican.org)

Phone:                07968 034075

#### **Sandra Partington Safeguarding Learning & Development Officer**

Contact for information about safeguarding training provided by Diocese and general safeguarding training queries.

Email:                [Sandra.partington@durham.anglican.org](mailto:Sandra.partington@durham.anglican.org)

Phone:                07442 580170

#### **Wendy Hopkins      Safeguarding Support Officer**

Contact for help with Parish Safeguarding Dashboard and general queries on safeguarding administration, including Parish Safeguarding Officer meetings and induction.

Email:                [wendy.hopkins@durham.anglican.org](mailto:wendy.hopkins@durham.anglican.org)

Phone:                07570 851951

#### **Helen Straughan    DBS and Safeguarding Administrator**

Contact for general DBS queries and for updating contact information on Church of England and Diocese contacts database (CMS)

Email:                [helen.straughan@durham.anglican.org](mailto:helen.straughan@durham.anglican.org)

Phone:                01388 660013

## **2.2 Diocesan Safeguarding Policy**

The Safeguarding Policy Statement of the Diocese of Durham, [Diocesan Safeguarding Policy](#) is based on the policy statement of the Church of England [Promoting a Safer Church](#) (2017) and forms the basis of the Diocesan Strategic Safeguarding Plan.

**The Policy applies to all parishes within the Diocese of Durham.**

Each parish should have a Safeguarding Policy in place and promote it. You can download a template [Model Parish Safeguarding Policy](#).

## **2.3 Parish Safeguarding Officer Induction**

Parish Safeguarding Officer Induction, facilitated by the Diocese, is provided for Parish Safeguarding Officers new into their role but may also be a useful refresher for those who have been in their role for a while. The induction/refresher course aims to help Parish Safeguarding Officers understand their role, responsibilities and key working relationships as well identify a variety of approaches to raising awareness and improving safeguarding practice.

Induction is a training offering which is available every 6 months and takes place at Cuthbert House.

Dates for induction are circulated by email and available on the Diocese website. Parish Safeguarding Officers will be given induction dates when the Diocese is made aware that they have taken up the role.

## **2.4 Parish Safeguarding Officer Meetings**

Parish Safeguarding Officer '*Get Together*' meetings are held quarterly across the Diocese, as we aim to make these meetings as widely accessible as possible.

All Parish Safeguarding Officers are invited and welcome to attend any, or all, of the meetings. The idea of the group is that we have a place to discuss matters relating to the role of Parish Safeguarding Officers and, together, better understand the requirements and

issues. The get together is an opportunity to share our safeguarding culture, updates and discuss questions you have.

Dates are circulated using the Diocese contacts list (CMS) and reminders are included in the Diocese Communications email circulated fortnightly.

## **2.5 Diocese Safeguarding Training**

*\*\*\* Please read this section in conjunction with Section 3:4 Safeguarding Training \*\*\**

The Diocese provides guidance on [training requirements for roles](#) and delivers training in line with the [Safeguarding & Learning Development Framework](#).

The Diocese provides Leadership training offered face to face or via Zoom. The Diocese also supplements the on line Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse training provision with face to face training.

Regular scheduled training for individuals who need to complete or refresh the training for their role are published on the [Diocese Website](#).

Parish Safeguarding Officers, Churchwardens, PCC members and leaders and helpers in church activities (employees and volunteers) will all require training at the levels determined for the roles.

## **2.6 Parish Safeguarding Dashboard**

The Diocese has introduced [Parish Safeguarding Dashboards](#) to support Parish Safeguarding Officers, clergy and PCCs in reviewing and monitoring their local safeguarding policies and procedures.

The Dashboard is a simple to use, online tool, accessed via computer or smart phone, that helps you -and your PCC- keep track of safeguarding in your church. You complete the dashboard by responding to a set of questions based on the safeguarding actions necessary under the Church of England '[Promoting a Safer Church](#)' policy and the [Durham Diocesan Safeguarding Policy](#). Green lights give assurance that you are complying with safeguarding requirements and amber and red lights highlight actions which need to be completed. It will also keep you up-to-date with local and national changes in safeguarding requirements.

**Using the Dashboard:** as Parish Safeguarding Officer, along with your parish incumbent, you will own and complete your Dashboard. Please contact [Wendy Hopkins](#), Safeguarding Support Officer, who will send you an email invitation and help you in registering and using your Dashboard.

**Help in using the Dashboard:** Wendy Hopkins provides support in scheduled group sessions, usually held on Zoom, or ad hoc one to one as needed, via telephone, Zoom or in person.

[Further information](#) on the Dashboard.

## **2.7 Parish Safeguarding Hub**

The Diocese is supporting parishes with safeguarding requirements under the Church of England [Safer Recruitment and People Management](#) framework (section 3.2) by providing the [Parish Safeguarding Hub](#).

**The Parish Safeguarding Hub** is an extension of the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard. It helps parishes to keep track of DBS checks and safeguarding training and also to manage recruitment to roles by generating job descriptions, person specifications and recognising the need for a responsible person managing safer recruitment in the parish.

**Using the Hub:** the parish needs to be ***using the Dashboard*** first and to have achieved progress to Level 3 or substantial progress at Level 2 on the Dashboard. You need to be invited by [Wendy Hopkins](#), Safeguarding Support Officer, to access the Hub.

**Help in Using the Hub:** support is provided by Wendy Hopkins and the system provider, Clearly Simpler, depending on the nature of the query and help needed.

[Further information and guidance](#) on the Hub.

## **2.8 Diocese Email Communications**

The Diocese circulates emails, at least fortnightly, to all contacts with valid email addresses on the Diocese database. Information in these emails includes notifications, updates to policy, training and events which will include relevant resources for Parish Safeguarding Officers.

If you are not receiving these emails please contact the [Communications Team](#).

## **2.9 Diocese Website Resources**

The Diocese website provides [safeguarding information](#) and contacts for parishes, including

- updates on Diocese responses and actions under national reviews;
- support for survivors;
- [training](#) requirements for roles, including training dates;
- [documents and policies](#);
- resources and tools, including the Dashboard (section 2.6) and the Hub (section 2.7)

## **Section 3: Safeguarding National Policy, Resources & Systems**

### **3.1 Church of England Safeguarding Governance**

The National Safeguarding Team (NST) is responsible for leading on House of Bishops policy and practice guidance and developing safeguarding training. The team manages complex safeguarding cases (involving a number of dioceses) and those relating to senior clergy including bishops and deans.

[Church of England national safeguarding governance](#), structures and contacts.

#### **3.1.1 Promoting a Safer Church**

[Promoting a Safer Church](#) sets out the policy of the Church of England for safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults. It has been approved by the House of Bishops and applies to all Church Bodies and Church Officers.

#### **3.1.2 Parish Safeguarding Handbook (2019)**

The [Parish Safeguarding Handbook](#) brings into one place the key safeguarding responsibilities for parishes that are outlined in the House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policy and Practice Guidance. The practice guidance contained in the Handbook has been commended by the House of Bishops for use in all parishes, particularly by clergy, Parish Safeguarding Officers and all those in the parish who have a key role to play with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The Handbook is not exhaustive but is designed to support the day-to-day safeguarding work of parishes. NOTE: the Handbook is now not fully up to date with training requirements and also does not reflect Diocese specific requirements so always refer to the [Diocese safeguarding training webpages](#).

### **3.2 Safer Recruitment and People Management**

The Church of England updated its [Safer Recruitment and People Management Guidance](#) in 2021. **The Guidance includes mandatory requirements for parishes that came into force on 4 January 2022.**

The requirements in this guidance must be followed for the appointment of all roles within parishes, whether employed or volunteers, that involve substantial contact with children and/or vulnerable adults e.g. Youth Group Leaders and Helpers. This procedure must be followed for any individual coming into role from the start of 2022.

Note: members of the clergy authorised to officiate and Readers/Licensed Lay Ministers (LLMs) are managed through the Diocese.

### **3.2.1 Summary of the Safer Recruitment Procedure**

The components of Safer Recruitment are:

- Role assessment to produce a Role Description (and Person Specification);
- Selection process, using written application and interview (discussion);
- Taking up written references (2);
- DBS check, including Confidential Declaration Form

The parish should assess each role to establish and define the level and nature of contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults that the role has, so that there is a clear understanding of the safeguarding dimensions, issues and risks.

This **role assessment** will:

- confirm the level of DBS check required in compliance with the DBS eligibility criteria;
- decide what other pre-appointment checks may be required before someone starts a role;
- inform the content of a role description and person specification;
- ensure safeguarding messages are present in any advertising/recruitment process;
- ensure the selection process does explicitly explore safeguarding issues with applicants to the role, including people's understanding and experience of safeguarding, and motivation for wanting a role involving contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults;
- determine the level of training requirement for the role.

The **selection process**, which should include an interview or structured discussion based on a written submission from the applicant takes place. Note it may be agreed locally that some roles require additional assessment procedures.

Written **references** should be taken up.

- A Church of England **Confidential Declaration** form<sup>1</sup> is completed by the applicant, where an enhanced/enhanced + barred list/s DBS is required and DBS checks undertaken.
- Appointment decisions should be informed by someone with the relevant level of safeguarding expertise for the role i.e. they must have at least the same level of training – if the role needs Foundation level training, someone who has that level should be involved;
- Once appointed it should be clear to whom someone is accountable and there are arrangements in place for the continued support and oversight of that person which ensure the safeguarding dimensions of his/her role are kept in view and actively discussed.
- Arrangements are made for the person to receive the level of safeguarding training relevant for the role.

**Parish Safeguarding Officer:** should be safely recruited, following the above process (when coming into role from start of 2022).

**DBS Administrator** should be safely recruited.

**Churchwardens** are elected to the role and as such will not be taken through all of the stages above but must meet the requirements for DBS check and training.

**PCC Members** are elected to the role and as such will not be taken through all the stages above but must meet the requirements for DBS check (if required) and training.

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<sup>1</sup> The Confidential Declaration Form is available from your DBS Administrator/Validator, who should ensure they are using the most up to date version.

### **3.3 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks**

Everyone appointed to a church role involving **significant contact** with children young people or vulnerable adults –employees and volunteers – **must have a DBS check every three years.**

Those in parish roles who are included within the scope of [Safer Recruitment & People Management](#) (see 3.2) must also have a DBS check.

Guidance on DBS checks is found [here](#).

**PCC Members:** If as a church you have any activities conducted in the name of the church at a different time from the Sunday Service which may include children or vulnerable adults then PCC members require DBS (enhanced) checks. If not, then PCC members do not require DBS checks. Please be aware that when new activities commence in line with the above PCC members will require DBS checks.

#### **3.3.1 APCS**

DBS checks are performed online using [APCS](#) an organisation which specialises in disclosure checks.

### **3.4 Safeguarding Training**

**Basic Awareness** training is required for every church role.

Everyone involved in safeguarding of the parish must undertake, and refresh every 3 years, Church of England training as determined for their roles. Training is refreshed at the highest level required for the role. *For example*, a Parish Safeguarding Officer must refresh at Leadership level, having completed Basic and Foundation training as a prerequisite. A summary of training requirements is given on the [Diocese safeguarding training](#) webpages.

The following training is available online on the [Church of England Safeguarding Training Portal](#):

- Basic Awareness (1-1.5 hours)
- Foundation (1-1.5 hours)
- Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse (1.5- 2 hours)
- Safer Recruitment & People Management (1.5- 2 hours)

In support of this the Diocese offers scheduled Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse training (in person) and can provide advice on facilitating in person training based on the on line material for groups across parishes and Deaneries. The portal is run by the Church of England's National Safeguarding Team and provides online safeguarding training in line with the policies outlined in the [Safeguarding Learning and Development Framework](#).

### [Create an Account](#)

Once you have completed the registration, you will be sent a confirmation e-mail. Follow the link in this email, your account will be activated and you will be able to log in using the details you created. Please note that accounts that remain unconfirmed for seven days are automatically cleared from the system.

### [Log in](#)

Training is accessible by clicking the *Online Courses* button on the home page, or under the *Courses* menu. Other colleagues who need to complete their training on line will need to set up and access their own accounts as above.

**Training Records on the Portal:** you can view your training records on the portal.

An individual can grant another individual who is also using the system access to their training records on the portal. As a Parish Safeguarding Officer you may wish to ask parish colleagues in roles within safeguarding to enable this function. Details on how to do this are given in the system **Help & FAQs:** [Whose Records Can I See and How?](#)

The system does not generate automatic reminders when training is due for renewal and so a separate system or record is needed to do this. We recommend that the parish uses the **Safeguarding Hub** to maintain the training records for their church roles not overseen by the Diocese as this system provides these training reminders.

## **3.5 Additional Church of England Resources**

Church of England safeguarding policy and practice guidance documents can be [found here](#).

[Templates and Resources](#): which can be used alongside the Church of England's safeguarding policy and practice guidance documents.