

Safeguarding Responsibilities of the PCC and Incumbent

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. Its powers and duties are defined by legislation and can principally be found in the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956.

The PCC has the responsibility, along with the incumbent, to promote the mission of God in its parish.

Legally, the PCC is responsible for the finances of the parish. It also has ultimate responsibility for the care and maintenance of all church buildings and their contents. Although these responsibilities are executed by the churchwardens, all PCC members must share in the oversight.

It has a voice in the forms of Service used by the church and may make representations to the bishop on matters that affect the welfare of the parish.

All PCCs are charities; those with an annual income of more than £100,000 need to register with the Charity Commission. Therefore, every member of a PCC is also a charity trustee. As a charity, the PCC must comply with the Charity Commission guidance and legislation in relation to charities, including Serious Incident Reporting.

The incumbent's role is to provide leadership concerning safeguarding, and to encourage everyone to promote a safer church.



The PCC and the incumbent have a duty of care to ensure the protection of the vulnerable in their church community. In terms of safeguarding, with the incumbent the PCC will:

- **Promote:**

a safer church for all in the church community, and ensure there is a plan in place to raise awareness of, promote training and ensure that safeguarding is taken seriously by all those in the church community;

- **Adopt:**

The House of Bishops' 'Promoting a Safer Church; safeguarding policy statement, the House of Bishop's and diocesan safeguarding policies and practice guidance, while being responsive to local parish requirements;

- **Appoint:**

At least one appropriately experienced designated **parish safeguarding officer (PSO)** to work with the incumbent and PCC. This PSO should be a lay person. It cannot be the incumbent. The PSO may also be the DBS administrator for church officers who work with children or vulnerable adults but if not, the PCC should appoint another individual. Role profiles for both the Parish Administrator and the PSO are on the Resources section of the website at <https://www.cofeguildford.org.uk/about/safeguarding-inclusion/safeguarding-resources>.

The PSO should be supported, trained and given a copy of the [Parish Handbook](#) and safeguarding policy and procedures.

Additional safeguarding roles, as required. These roles are optional. They will be dependent on local need and available resources. They may also be fulfilled by the same people.

Any additional roles are left to local determination and are described in the [Roles and Responsibilities Practice Guidance](#) 2017.

- **Safer Recruit, Support and Train:**

Ensure that all church officers who work with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults are:

- recruited following the House of Bishop's Safer Recruitment practice guidance;
- aware of and work to House of Bishop's safeguarding guidance (includes both policies and practice guidance);
- attend diocesan safeguarding training at least every three years; all PCC members must complete the national church Core 1 module either online or face to face.

- **Provide appropriate insurance** to cover for all activities undertaken in the name of the PCC which involve children and vulnerable adults;

- **Display:**

A formal parish policy statement of adoption of the House of Bishops' 'Promoting a Safer Church; safeguarding policy'. The parish policy statement should be signed on behalf of the PCC and must be returned to the safeguarding team by 30th June 2019. This can be submitted unsigned online at www.cofeguildford.org.uk/safeguarding-policy-return.

Contact details of the PSO, churchwarden and any other local leaders; Information about where to get help with child and adult safeguarding issues e.g. local authority contact details, domestic abuse and key helplines.

Details of safeguarding arrangements with a link from the front page of the parish website. We recommend that the minimum information required would be details of a specific point of contact within the parish (this must include the Incumbent and may include the PSO and a link to the diocesan website).

You could provide a link to the statement of safeguarding policy with the option to redact the contact details of the PSO to protect privacy. You may in addition wish to include a link to the Safeguarding Poster which you can edit for parish use.

(The [Parish Safeguarding Poster](#) also provides emergency contacts specific to your area and should be edited to include your parish safeguarding contact details and clearly displayed on your church premises.)

Provide access to the [Parish Handbook](#).

- **Respond:**

Create an environment, which is welcoming and respectful and enables safeguarding concerns to be raised and responded to openly, promptly and consistently;

Have a procedure in place to deal promptly with safeguarding allegations or suspicions of abuse in accordance with the relevant policy and practice guidance and in consultation with the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor (DSA);

Report all safeguarding concerns or allegations against church officers to the DSA;

Ensure that known offenders or others who may pose a risk to children and/or vulnerable adults are effectively managed and monitored in consultation with the DSA;

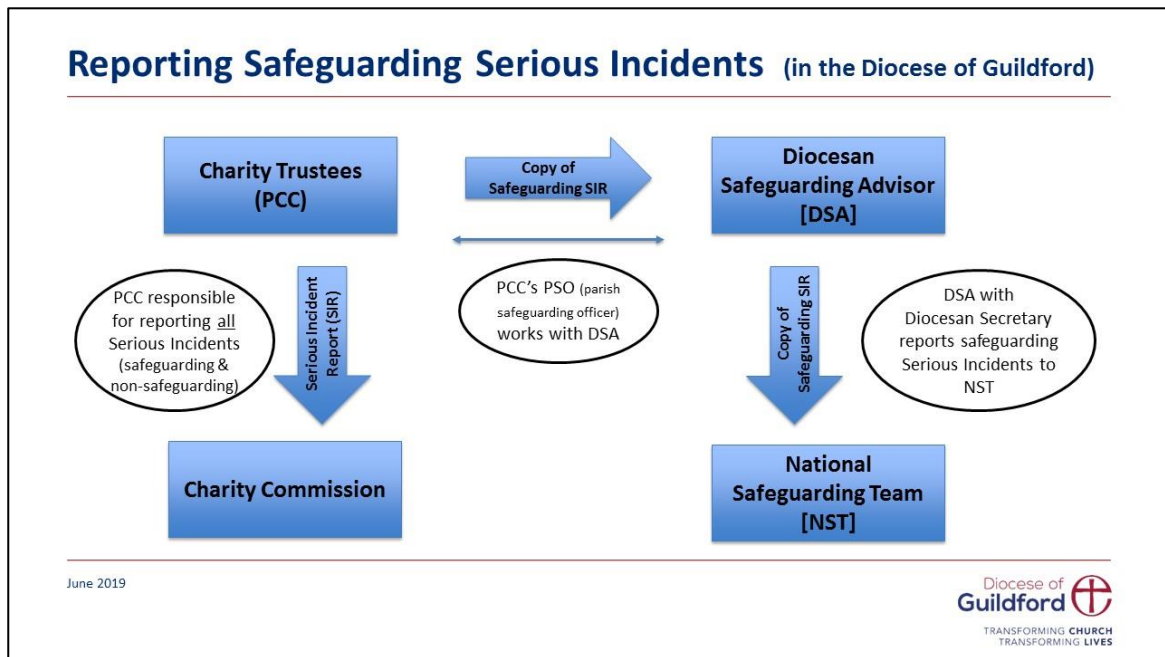
Comply with all data protection legislation especially concerning storing information about any paid/unpaid workers and any safeguarding records;

Ensure that an “activity risk assessment” is completed and reviewed regularly for each activity, which is associated with either children or vulnerable adults, and run in the name of the Church.

- **Reporting Serious Incidents:**

As charity trustees, PCCs are responsible for reporting all “Serious Incidents” to the Charity Commission. (See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-report-a-serious-incident-in-your-charity>.) As outlined above, the PSO will work with the DSA in response to safeguarding allegations. Where there is a need to make a Safeguarding Serious Incident Report to the Charity Commission, the DSA will support and advise the PCC on completing such a report if they require. A copy of any safeguarding Serious Incident Report sent to the Charity Commission by a PCC should be sent to the DSA. The DSA

and Diocesan Secretary will ensure that all safeguarding Serious Incident Reports copied to the DSA by the PCC will be reported to the Church of England's National Safeguarding Team (NST) as required by the House of Bishops' guidance.



- **Review and Report Progress:**

The PSO should regularly report on safeguarding in the parish. Safeguarding should be a standing agenda item at each PCC meeting. At the APCM the PCC should provide an annual report in relation to safeguarding. In the PCC's annual report will be a statement which reports on progress and a statement as to whether or not the PCC has complied with the duty to have "due regard" to the House of Bishops' guidance in relation to safeguarding.

The Parish Self Audit must be completed and returned to the diocesan team by 30th September 2019. The purpose of the audit is to identify areas you would value some advice and support from the central teams so we can share best practice and assist you in implementing the policies. The Audit can be submitted online at www.cofeguildford.org.uk/safeguarding-audit-return.

Hiring out church premises:

Any hire agreement with any person/body wishing to hire church premises must contain a provision whereby the person/body hiring the premises agrees to comply with the relevant safeguarding guidance issued by the House of Bishops and the diocese.

The hire agreement should contain a provision requiring all those hiring church premises to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are protected at all times, relevant staff have had appropriate DBS checks and that all reasonable steps have been taken to prevent injury, illness, loss or damage occurring. (A template provision is available under the Resources section of the website as above.) Ensure all those hiring church premises carry full public liability insurance for this, or be covered through the church insurance (e.g. hire for a children's party).

Working in an LEP:

If working within Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs), agree which denomination or organisation's safeguarding policy to follow, including where to seek advice in urgent situations in line with the practice guidance. This decision should be ratified both by the bishop and other appropriate church leaders in the partnership and shared with the DSA; in the event of a specific safeguarding concern, ensure that all the LEP partners are notified.

During a clergy vacancy

During a clergy vacancy or long term sickness absence all information regarding safeguarding matters must be handed over to the Area Dean or Archdeacon as agreed with the DSA. The safeguarding information will be handed over to the incumbent upon their return to work or to the new incumbent as part of their induction in to the diocese.