

House of Bishops' Policy and Practice Guidance

Introduction to 'Roles and Responsibilities of Church Office Holders and Bodies Practice Guidance'

Introduction

1. This guidance replaces and updates the 'Responsibilities of Church organisations' section in 'Protecting all God's Children 2010'. This is a substantial revision of the previous section in 'Protecting All God's Children'. It is supported by the revised Glossary reference document.
2. The guidance is underpinned by the Children Act 2004 (section 11); the Care Act 2014, the Church of England's safeguarding policy statement, 'Promoting a Safer Church' and ecclesiastical law. This includes the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016, Safeguarding (Clergy Risk Assessment) Regulations 2016, the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisors Regulations 2016 and the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisors (Amendment) Regulations 2017.
3. It attempts to ensure that the Church is compliant with Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 and the Care Act 2014. In particular that as an organisation it has '*Clear lines of accountability and leadership responsibilities for the organisation's safeguarding arrangements*' and '*Designated professional leads with a role to support other professionals in their agencies to recognise the needs of children, including identification of possible abuse or neglect. These roles should always be explicitly defined in job descriptions. They should be competent to carry out these roles. They should be given sufficient time, funding, supervision and support to fulfil their welfare and safeguarding responsibilities effectively*'.
4. It recognises that the Church of England is not a single entity. Rather, it consists of many essentially autonomous office holders and other bodies, including both ancient ecclesiastical corporations and modern statutory corporations (many of which are charities). This complex structure and consequent dispersal of authority over a number of bodies and institutions, has a significant impact on the way in which responsibility for safeguarding matters is exercised. It is not meant to be an exhaustive list but for the first time it attempts to clarify key safeguarding roles and responsibilities for church office holders and bodies that the House of Bishops has agreed to support a consistent approach to safeguarding across the whole Church.
5. This guidance was part of the document 'Promoting a Safer Church' which was consulted upon in 2016. There were 43 responses to the consultation via survey monkey and many hard copy submissions, from across church office holders and bodies. In addition many of the specific sections have been co-produced with the identified Church Body e.g. Cathedrals, Religious Communities and TEIs. All feedback has been carefully considered and most has been accepted and informed changes to the guidance. Generally the response welcomed :
 - The more comprehensive guidance and a whole church approach
 - The recognition of the complexity of diocesan structures and bodies
 - The identification of more realistic responsibilities for Parish Safeguarding Officers and a more flexible approach to appointment
 - The DSA Regulations as a positive step forward
6. The guidance was agreed by the National Safeguarding Steering group in July 2017 under its delegated powers from the House of Bishops. It is now being issued and comes

into force immediately. However, the National Safeguarding Steering Group does recognise that some new elements of the guidance will require additional time to implement. This introductory note offers some advice about interim arrangements while the diocese is working towards full implementation.

7. The guidance places the diocese and the DSA at the heart of the Churches safeguarding response. Although it was developed before the Gibb Review, it supports recommendation 5 'The Church should ensure that the responsibility for delivering robust and reliable safeguarding arrangements is clearly located in the dioceses' and Recommendation 7 '*all Church bodies come within the relevant diocesan arrangements where safeguarding capacity and expertise can be both concentrated and deployed most efficiently*'. It expects that dioceses should have clear and agreed safeguarding arrangements in place with other Church Bodies which operate within the diocese, including a cathedral, any religious communities and TEs.
8. Further work is underway in relation to the Peter Ball Review Action Plan. This will involve looking at options to strengthen the arrangements in place between a diocese and other Church Bodies including service level agreements and information sharing protocols. It will consider whether any further Church legislative changes are required to support this approach. It will look to review the role of the National Safeguarding Team and how best national arrangements can support the delivery of a more consistent and quality safeguarding service within the Church.

Summary of key changes

Section 1. National Roles and Responsibilities

9. This is a new section and attempts to clarify the key safeguarding roles of :
 - Archbishops
 - House of Bishops
 - National Lead Safeguarding Bishop
 - Archbishops Council
 - Church Commissioners
 - General Synod
 - National Safeguarding Steering Group
 - National Safeguarding Team
 - National Safeguarding Panel

Section 2: Diocese Roles and Responsibilities.

10. **Diocese Roles and Responsibilities.** This is a revised section which attempts to further clarify the role of the diocesan bishop (section 2.1). It acknowledges that bishops often delegate functions and the interconnected relationship between different diocesan bodies, including the Diocesan Board of Finance and the Diocesan Synod. It leaves it up to local determination how safeguarding governance is organised in a diocese but expects that dioceses will ensure that there is a structure to manage safeguarding in the diocese with clear lines of accountability between diocesan groups and bodies. That the DSA should be reporting to and engaged in senior meetings. It is supplemented by additional advice on resourcing safeguarding in Appendix 1.

11. It expects that dioceses should have clear and agreed safeguarding arrangements in place with other Church Bodies which operate within the diocese, including a Cathedral, any Religious Communities and TEIs. It is recognised that it will may take time for a diocese to develop these arrangements if they are not already in place. In addition there will be national work undertaken to support dioceses in developing these arrangements-see para 8 above. Now the guidance has come into force it is advised that a diocese could develop some simple interim agreements, if they are not already in place, for instance around the reporting of safeguarding concerns or allegations against church officers.

12. It introduces a new section on the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel (section 2.2) which focuses on key functions, the role of the chair and operations. It allows for local determination in relation to name and membership within the framework offered. It is supplemented by model templates for a Terms of Reference and Chair role description. It highlights the strategic, scrutiny and quality assurance role of the panel and that it is expected not to be involved in case work management.

13. It introduces new sections on the:
 - Diocesan Secretary (section 2.3) which attempts to acknowledge the key role played in safeguarding resourcing and in some dioceses as the bishop's nominated safeguarding lead.
 - Diocesan Communicator (section 2.5).
 - Archdeacons (section 2.6) which recognises the key safeguarding role they play in dioceses.

14. It strengthens the guidance in relation to Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers in line with Diocesan Safeguarding Advisors Regulations 2016 and the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisors Regulations (amendment)2017 (section 2.4). It provides consistency with the revised practice guidance in respect of '*Responding to, Assessing and Managing Safeguarding Concerns or Allegations against Church Officers*'.

15. It offers additional guidance on what safeguarding resources are expected in a dioceses and in Appendix 1, best practice advice on any additional resources that would be beneficial. This guidance aims to strengthen the quality of and support to professional safeguarding advisers in the Church, offering additional guidance around arranging professional supervision for the DSA, if they are not already in place, and the importance of having an agreement which clarifies the relation between the supervisee, professional supervisor and the line manager.

16. It leaves it to local determination as to the level of resource but advises (see Appendix 1) that the majority of dioceses, wherever possible, should appoint a minimum of one full time DSA operating within the primary safeguarding advisory role for the diocese as identified in the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisors Regulations 2016. Where it is considered not necessary or practical to appoint a fulltime DSA, this decision should be fully documented.

It recognises that many dioceses now have teams of safeguarding professionals and/or specialist roles.

17. Appendix 1 also offers further advice in relation to what '**suitably qualified and experienced**' means in appointing a DSA and supervision requirements for the DSA to support the implementation of the DSA Regulations 2016. It offers the key experience and skills to achieve a 'best fit' to the role as described in the regulations. In terms of professional requirements it recommends that the primary DSA should be an individual registered as a social worker as part of the register maintained under the Health and

Social Work Professions Order 2001 which relates to the social work profession in England, or in a register maintained by the Care Council for Wales, the Scottish Social Services Council or the Northern Ireland Social Care Council. This is the only professional background that offers a clear professional framework for undertaking safeguarding work that is recognised nationally¹. The guidance offers a template for a DSA job description and person specification in line with section 2.3 and Appendix 1.

18. The guidance attempts to clarify the role of the DSA in relation to other church bodies (see section 5, 7 & 8).

Section 3: Parish Roles and Responsibilities

19. This is a revised section. It attempts to clarify the role of the:

- PCC and Incumbent (section 3.1). It offers an easy guide to the key responsibilities. This is supplemented by a number of model templates including a safeguarding checklist. These will also form part of the Parish Safeguarding Manual. The requirement is to have a named PSO. It introduces more flexibility in rural parishes or parishes held in plurality, to share a PSO whilst remembering that legal responsibility will continue to rest with the individual parishes.
- Church wardens (section 3.2). This is a new section.
- Parish Safeguarding Officer (section 3.3). This is a revised section which attempts to clarify a more realistic role for the PSO. It clarifies that the PSO cannot be the incumbent.
- Additional roles. It captures these as requested from consultation outcomes. These roles are optional and will not be required in every parish. This is for local determination depending on need and resource.

Section 4: Worshipping Communities operating under the Bishops Mission Orders (BMOs)

20. It introduces those communities operating under the BMOs that are distinctive. These communities should adopt the House of Bishops' safeguarding guidance (i.e. includes both policy and practice guidance) and that dioceses need to ensure that arrangements are in place to report any safeguarding concerns or allegations to the DSA.

Section 5: Cathedral Roles and Responsibilities

21. This is a new section. It has been completed in consultation with cathedrals and the lead safeguarding dean. It introduces the requirement for a cathedral to have a professional designated Safeguarding Officer or access to one. This can be achieved by either appointing a cathedral safeguarding officer, entering an agreement with the diocese to share safeguarding resources or for cathedrals in close proximity sharing a resource. It recognises that some cathedrals have employed a professional safeguarding adviser, but still expects all safeguarding concerns or allegations against church officers to be reported to the DSA. It also addresses the complex issues of cathedral choir schools. It introduces the formal requirement to complete national safeguarding self-assessments as required.

¹ It should be noted this is only a recommendation and not a requirement. Indeed, the purpose is not to under value many experienced and competent DSAs operating currently in dioceses. This guidance acknowledges that there are other professional roles which, depending on expertise and skills, may offer a good fit to the primary role DSA e.g. a probation officer or a senior police officer, who had specialised in public protection. This guidance also recognises that, in a diocese that has additional roles, there will be differing requirements in terms of professional expertise, skills and experience.

Section 6: Peculiar Roles and Responsibilities.

22. This is a revised section. It clarifies that these are outside the authority of the diocese and that all this guidance can do is advise them to adopt the House of Bishops' safeguarding policy and practice guidance.

Section 7: Religious Communities Roles and Responsibilities

23. **Religious Communities Roles and Responsibilities.** This is a new section but does relate to the Religious Community Practice Guidance May 2015 (which is currently being updated). It has been completed in consultation with a small sub group of the Advisory Council on the Relations of Bishops and Religious Communities' who are working on safeguarding. It is informed by the learning from a recent safeguarding case. It attempts to strengthen the role of the Episcopal Visitor in relation to safeguarding and introduces the need for every community to have a Bullying and Harassment policy. As per the guidance it stipulates that every community should have a Designated Safeguarding Person.
24. Religious Community Practice Guidance May 2015 introduced the concept that dioceses would offer the professional safeguarding advice for Communities in recognition that the designated safeguarding person will not be a professional safeguarding person. To date this has been inconsistently applied and this guidance now places a requirement for such arrangements to be put in place. How this is best achieved needs to be carefully considered in the light of resources and costs (see para 8 and 11). This RC practice guidance is currently being updated in partnership with Advisory Council for Religious Communities. It will be issued in 2018.

It introduces the formal requirement to complete national safeguarding self-assessments as required.

Section 8: Theological Education Institutions (TEIs) Roles and Responsibilities.

25. This is a new section. It has been completed in consultation with some TEI Principals. It aims to clarify the relationship between TEIs and the dioceses.

Section 9: Church of England Schools.

26. This is a revised section. It has been updated to reflect changes in national school arrangements e.g. the introduction of academies. Although Church Schools are not covered by the provision of this guidance. It does highlight the role of the Church in the appointment of school governors and in applying safer recruitment practice. It also highlights some areas where there has been a request for additional guidance and learning from cases. That is where there are Church volunteers in schools, and concerns or allegations against church officers in dual roles.

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