

# Safeguarding

## Frequently Asked Questions

**1. Am I legally obliged to have a safeguarding policy for children and adults?**

There is no legal requirement to have a policy in place but the Charity Commission expects organisations that serve or may serve children and/ or vulnerable adults to have safeguarding policies and procedures in place. Trustees are required to inform the commission if they don't have them. The Charity Commission would regard the absence of policies as a serious incident and would investigate. Your insurance company might also be concerned if you don't have a policy and you could be breaching your policy if you do not have safeguarding arrangements in place.

**2. Am I allowed to touch or pick up children when they are distressed?**

Yes, but be sensible. Keep everything in public – a hug in a group is very different to one behind closed doors. Touch should be age appropriate and generally initiated by the child not the worker. Picking up a distressed child is perfectly OK.

**3. Am I allowed to be alone with children?**

Yes but again be sensible. This should only be for a very short time – perhaps while your adult colleague is taking another child to the toilet.

**4. Do I need to report concerns of abuse where the victim is now an adult?**

Adults have the right to give or withhold their own personal information. However, if someone alleges that they were abused by an identifiable adult who is still alive then you must consider whether other children could be at risk now. Never promise confidentiality. Talk to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser who can talk through the options.

**5. If someone discloses to me that they were abused a long time ago, can that be investigated and prosecuted now?**

There is no time limit on the investigation of offences and people can be prosecuted but proving it might be very difficult as it tends to be one person's word against another as there is not going to be any forensic evidence available after so long.

**6. If I am concerned about a child, must I contact the parents first under Data Protection rules?**

No – if you are seriously concerned talk to your priest, Parish Safeguarding Representative or the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.

**7. If someone has committed offences against children should they be allowed to work with children again?**

No – some people will be legally barred but even if they are not they should not be allowed to work with children. Some offences are addictive by nature and to place someone in a position where they might succumb to the same temptation would show a lack of pastoral care and might put children at serious risk of harm.

**8. Do I have to have a criminal record check?**

If the role for which you have been recruited involves 'regulated' activity with either a child or a vulnerable adult then you are legally required to be checked. In other roles there is discretion. If you are not sure talk the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. The Charity Commission and your insurance company will expect checks to be carried out where they are legally possible.

**9. We don't have any problems arising from child or vulnerable adult abuse in our congregation. Why do we need a policy or training?**

You might or you might not, but if you don't know what to look for or how to deal with it you won't know.

**10. Our Prayer Ministry is advertised as maintaining strict confidentiality. What happens if someone discloses something which could mean they or someone else is at risk of abuse?**

You should encourage them to talk to someone else about it and to report it to the relevant authorities. The best course of action would be to have a short disclaimer up front which says something along the lines of “strict confidentiality will be respected in our prayer ministry unless we are concerned that something that is disclosed means that you or someone else is at risk of abuse and/or harm”.

**11. Should bell-ringers and choir members be subject to DBS clearance?**

Bell-ringers and members of choirs are not in eligible categories for DBS checks. Tower Captains should be subject to DBS clearance, as should all bell-ringers, if they are personally teaching or training children under the age of 18. The teaching of vulnerable adults is less clear and perhaps should be considered on a case by case basis. Choirmasters, and if applicable organists where there is no choirmaster, who have children in their choir are subject to DBS clearance.