

# Introduction to the role of Parish Safeguarding Officer



## Introduction to the role of Parish Safeguarding officer

Congratulations on your appointment as safeguarding officer in your parish or benefice. The role you have been appointed to is central to the safeguarding of children, young people and adults who may be at risk of neglect, abuse or exploitation in your church community. You are now part of the wider safeguarding team for the Diocese. The team includes the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, Diocesan Safeguarding Trainer and Diocesan Safeguarding Administrator all of whom are based in Salisbury. In turn they are supported by the Diocesan Safeguarding Management Group, which is made up of people from the Diocese including clergy and Parish Safeguarding Officers. It is led by an independent lay chair who comes from a Police background. This group meets quarterly in Salisbury to discuss how safeguarding is managed in the Diocese. The Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser is there to advise and support you in your role, so please do not hesitate to contact her if you need help or information.

### Safe Recruitment for PSO's

As a new safeguarding officer we will expect you to have been "Safely Recruited"

- You will have been given the role outline for parish safeguarding officer which explains the five main strands of activity (Appendix One) : Safer Recruitment; Responding to any disclosure made or concerns raised; working with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser and Incumbent or Priest in Charge; raising the profile of safeguarding in your parish; record keeping.
- You will have been asked to complete an application form and provide references.
- You should have had a discussion with a member of clergy, churchwarden and possibly the outgoing safeguarding officer about what the role entails.
- You will have been asked to complete a Confidential Declaration and a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS Criminal Records Check) application.

All of these things help to ensure that the Church community is kept safe, and that the right people are encouraged to support the parish by taking on important volunteer roles. If you haven't been safely recruited, please talk to your member of clergy about the steps that have been missed out, and make sure they are done before you start your role. (Appendix Two)

This is the same process we would expect the parish to follow when people are being recruited to other parish roles where they will be in a leadership position, providing pastoral care, or working with children and adults who may be at risk. Before we can add your details to our database as the Safeguarding Officer for your parish or benefice, we need confirmation from your member of clergy, or the PCC Secretary, that the safer recruitment process has been completed, and the PCC have confirmed you in role, and have minuted that decision.

Once you have been confirmed in the role the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser will contact you and your incumbent/Priest-in-Charge to offer a visit to meet up with you both to answer any questions you may have including what you can expect from the Safeguarding Team and what things you might need to do.

## Training

During your first year in role, you will have the opportunity to attend diocesan safeguarding training. Although you may have attended training before elsewhere, because the Church welcomes everyone, including families, younger and older people, people who may have disabilities or be vulnerable in some other way, and people who may have committed serious offences in the past, Diocesan Safeguarding Training focuses on how you can keep the whole church community safe. It therefore includes some issues that may not be covered in training in schools, care homes or Children's Social Services. These courses take place in a variety of locations around the Diocese, and are advertised on the Diocesan Website. You will need to attend training at least once every 3 years. As well as the online Basic Awareness in Safeguarding (C0) you will also be expected to complete the Foundation Module (C1) and the Leadership Module (C2). There are also a range of specialist modules which you may like to complete, depending upon the activities in your church.

## Guidance for PSO's

The Safeguarding section on the Diocesan website offers you useful information including;

- Policies and procedures
- What to do if you have a concern
- Guidance about how to respond to some of the queries that regularly come up.
- A list of training dates which will be updated during the year as we book in additional dates.

The Safeguarding section is easy to find from the front page of the website.

In addition, the National Church has now published a Parish Safeguarding Handbook which can be found from a link on our website. You will also be given a hard copy in due course.

## Record keeping

Because of the nature of this role, it is important that you have somewhere secure and confidential to keep safeguarding paperwork. This could be a locked drawer in the parish office, or a lockable file box at your home, or you could ask your incumbent to store it for you. Confidential information would include any information relating to an allegation or disclosure of abuse, any concerns raised about anyone, completed references and Confidential Declaration forms. You may also need to store non-confidential paperwork such as blank copies of Confidential Declaration forms, leaflets about helping services available in your area and copies of the Church of England Parish Safeguarding Handbook and Safer Recruitment Practice Guidance

You will need to keep a list of everyone who has a DBS check, recording details such as:

- The reference number
- Date of the check
- What role the check was for
- What level it is at
- Whether or not it is clear of any "blemishes" (convictions, cautions and Police information).

You are able to store this information on the diocesan database as you will be given direct access to this once you are confirmed in the role. When someone changes their role to one needing a higher level of check, for example moves from being a crèche assistant to crèche leader, you will need to confirm whether they need a new DBS check; DBS checks are due for renewal after 5 years unless someone changes to another role in which case they should be considered straight away. If the DBS certificate has a blemish on it you need to contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Team so that they can advise you whether the person can still take on the role.

The Diocese uses an electronic DBS system, so that the forms are filled in online and instead of needing to see the certificate to check it is clear, you will receive an email with this information. We hope this will make the process quicker and easier. This does mean though that you will need access to a computer, and because it will be accessing people's personal data to complete the DBS identity checks, it will need to be one where your account can be secured with a password, or that is not available to anyone else to use. In some parishes, a separate DBS administrator has been appointed to assist the Parish Safeguarding Officer. We send out a lot of information by email and put it up on the website so it can be very helpful to your role if you are able to use a computer and if we can have your email address. We will ask your permission to hold your personal contact details on our database.

Once you have settled into your role, and have attended Foundation Safeguarding Training, you may want to think about hosting some safeguarding training in your parish. We have a number of Parish Safeguarding Officers who have been trained to deliver the C1 course and who are prepared to visit other parishes to provide Safeguarding Training so hopefully we can help you in this.

## **Carrying out Safer Recruitment Interviews**

We have summarised the Church of England Safer Recruitment Guidance to make it more user-friendly for parishes, and it is available to download from the Parish Resources Safe Recruitment area on the Safeguarding pages of the website. Appendix two of this document are the Safer Recruitment checklists for paid employees and volunteers.

Safer Recruitment training, module S1 is available on a number of dates across the Diocese. We expect safer recruitment to have a number of stages, but not all of them are required for roles that do not involve children or adults at risk of harm or abuse.

- The applicant should complete a simple application form outlining their personal details such as name and address, and if they are working with those at risk of harm and abuse, a brief summary of their experience in the role for which they are applying. There is a sample form in the Practice Guidance
- Every role, however minor should have a standard role description. This may be as simple as "on the first Saturday of each month, bring fresh flowers to the Church, throw the old flowers away, rinse the vases and arrange the fresh flowers". For a role with Children or adults at risk of harm or abuse, it will be important that the volunteer knows what they are doing, who with, when and who they will report to if there is a concern, or if they are away on holiday or off sick.

- An interview should take place. This can be informal over a cup of coffee, but should include the safeguarding person, a member of clergy and someone familiar with the role the person will be taking on. The role description should be discussed and agreed. Some sample questions are listed below, but do change them or add some that are relevant to the role they have applied to take on.
- References should be taken up for all roles working with children and adults who may be at risk of harm and abuse. If possible one should be from outside the church, from a work colleague or previous employer, but we recognise this might not always be possible.
- A Confidential Declaration should be completed for all roles working with children and adults who may be at risk of harm and abuse, and if appropriate for the role, a DBS application. Details of who will need a DBS Check are shown in the Practice Guidance

### **Contacting the Safeguarding Team**

Our contact details are below, and should you have any questions about the role of Parish Safeguarding Officer, please get in touch with us.

#### **Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser**

Heather Bland

01722 411922 / Mobile 07500 664800

Email : [heather.bland@salisbury.anglican.org](mailto:heather.bland@salisbury.anglican.org)

Heather works 28 hours a week and is not available on Fridays.

#### **Diocesan Safeguarding Trainer**

Jonathan Whiter

01722 411922

Email: [jonathan.whiter@salisbury.anglican.org](mailto:jonathan.whiter@salisbury.anglican.org)

Jonathan works 21 hours a week and it is best to contact him by email

#### **Diocesan Safeguarding Administrator**

Adrian Smale

01722 411922

Email: [safeguarding.admin@salisbury.anglican.org](mailto:safeguarding.admin@salisbury.anglican.org)

Adrian works Monday and Tuesday all day and Friday afternoons in the safeguarding team.

**Diocese of Salisbury website**

<https://www.salisbury.anglican.org/>

<https://www.salisbury.anglican.org/parishes/safeguarding>

Church House

Crane Street

Salisbury

SP1 2QB

Reception: 01722 411922

## Appendix One

### Parish Safeguarding Officer [PSO] Role Outline

The PSO represents the parish/benefice according to National & Diocesan Safeguarding guidelines.

The role of PSO is to:

- Ensure that a Safeguarding Policy and Good Practice Guidelines are developed, adopted, implemented and reviewed annually. Encourage good practice and work closely with the incumbent/priest in charge on all safeguarding matters to ensure that the safeguarding policies and procedures are known, understood and acted upon across the parish/benefice.
- Act as the link person between the parish/benefice and the diocese. Advise on good practice in respect of working with children and adults who may be at risk of harm or abuse.
- Provide the PCC with regular updates on safeguarding and report at least annually on the implementation of the safeguarding policy, procedures and guidelines within the parish/benefice.
- Along with the incumbent/ priest in charge receive, but not investigate any concerns, incidents or allegations of abuse that may arise within the parish/benefice. Inform immediately and subsequently liaise with the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor [DSA]
- Ensure that a log of concerns, incidents or allegations that arise is kept; storing all records securely – confidentially in accordance with current GDPR and safeguarding guidelines.
- Along with the PCC and incumbent/priest in charge, ensure that the Safer Recruitment policy and procedures are adopted and followed and that the appropriate level of DBS check or confidential declaration is completed by all those working with children, or adults who are at risk of harm or abuse.
- Ensure that DBS forms are verified either by becoming an ID checker for the parish/benefice or ensuring that a named other person is trained to do so.
- Liaise with administrative staff to ensure that full and accurate safeguarding records are kept on the diocesan database of all volunteers and PCC employees. Monitor these records regularly to ensure that training records and DBS checks are kept up to date.
- Actively encourage volunteers, employees and PCC members to undertake safeguarding training as required.
- Work with the DSA & incumbent/priest in charge to ensure that safeguards are put in place and maintained in respect of people who are on the Sex Offenders Register and who regularly worship in the parish/benefice.
- Along with the PCC and incumbent/priest in charge; ensure that other organisations which are regularly providing a service on church premises for children or adults who are or may be at risk of harm or abuse have safeguarding procedures in place.

Appendix Two

**Record of Recruitment Process [for paid staff]**

Name & Role	Date/s	Notes	Signature/initials
Job Description and Confidential Declaration Form given/sent			
Application form given/sent			
Application form received			
Interview [ <i>N.B. at least one member of the panel has completed S1 training</i> ]			
Referees (at least 2, normally 3)			
Confidential Declaration Form completed and returned [ <i>For those 16 &amp; over</i> ]			
DBS (if necessary) [ <i>For those 16 &amp; over</i> ]			
Letter of appointment (with start date) & Staff Handbook issued.			
Safeguarding briefing (with PSO)			
Contract signed.			
Supervision sessions take place.			
Annual Review			
Training received as required			



## Record of Recruitment Process [for Volunteers working with Children/Adults who may be at risk]

Name & Role	Date/s	Notes	Signature/initials
Role outline and Confidential Declaration Form given			
Supervised trial period completed successfully			
Application form given			
Application form received			
Interview [ <i>N.B. at least one member of the panel has completed S1 training</i> ]			
Referees ( <i>at least 2</i> )			
Confidential Declaration Form completed and <i>returned [For those 16 &amp; over]</i>			
DBS (if necessary) [ <i>For those 16 &amp; over</i> ]			
Letter of appointment ( <i>with start date</i> )			
Safeguarding briefing ( <i>with Team Leader or Safeguarding Officer</i> )			
Role Outline signed.			
Supervision sessions take place.			
Annual Review			
Training received as required			