



## **Opening Churches for Private Prayer**

### **Suggested Safeguarding Arrangements**

It is vital when opening a church for private prayer that arrangements are in place to keep people safe. A church can be open and left unattended, or it can be open with people on duty.

If a parish decides to have people on duty, then Clergy and churchwardens will be unlikely to be able to manage this on their own. Thus, in many churches, stewards may be recruited to assist. It is important that those in the team should not be drawn from those instructed to shield themselves, nor, as a general rule, from groups considered more vulnerable to coronavirus.

If a parish decides to have people on duty, then:

- At least two stewards should be present in the church throughout the time it is open for prayer.  
  
One of the stewards may or may not be the Incumbent/Priest in Charge or other local clergy; stewards should be already known to the parish priest/churchwardens and be current volunteers in the parish.
- Where possible, one of each pair should be trained in safeguarding for another role in the parish community.
- Clergy or churchwardens should keep a rota of who was on duty at any given time, and the names and contact details of stewards should be kept in the parish office with the rota.
- Diocesan Safeguarding Posters should be clearly visible in the church, they should have up to date contact details on them, and the stewards should know about them so they can provide the contact details of the Parish Safeguarding Officer or Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser to anybody who appears to be concerned for themselves or for another person.
- It is not advisable for a person under 16 years to enter a church building at this time without being accompanied by an adult.

Please contact the Parish Safeguarding Officer or Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser for any additional information or advice.

Heather Bland DSA

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