



INFORMATION AND WELCOME PACK

PARISH SAFEGUARDING

DECEMBER 2024



PSO National Safeguarding Group
Promoting a Safer Church

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Introduction and Rationale for this Information and Welcome Pack

The work of overseeing safeguarding is one of the most supportive and important tasks undertaken by the Parochial Church Council (PCC). In this work we demonstrate safe caring for one another, and our commitment to the flourishing of all in a tangible way.

The Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) does not need to be a member of the PCC, but is the point of contact to champion safeguarding in the parish on behalf of the PCC.

When we say safeguarding is the responsibility of *everyone* in your parish, that’s because it is a shared responsibility where we each play a small but significant part. No one should feel alone or overwhelmed with the ministry of safeguarding in our communities.

For this reason, we have designed this welcome pack to be used by PSOs, incumbents, PCCs and the whole Church community as appropriate and have tried to make clear the ways in which responsibilities are shared amongst these roles.

As Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) you may at times feel unsure about your role and it is our hope that this pack will help give you confidence and resources to allay your uncertainty.

Please ensure that this document is distributed to all Ministers and PCC members and perhaps arrange for it to be discussed as an agenda item at the next PCC meeting, so the contents are communicated and discussed and there is a shared understanding of safeguarding in your context. Thereafter we ask that each year, when your PCC formally adopts the Church of England Safeguarding policy you also take the opportunity to re-visit this document as a group as a mark of your ongoing commitment to Safeguarding.

Whilst fully appreciating that no two dioceses/parishes are the same, this welcome pack seeks to offer an outline of what the safeguarding/PSO journey might look like, with accompanying information and resources. Please replace any of our resources or documents with “live” ones from your own context. The hyperlinks provided in this document are to nationally agreed documents to support healthy safeguarding environments across the Church.

So, before we begin our journey, there are really only two things you need to know, and these are all supported by the additional information you will find either in this document or signposted by it.

- This pack and so much more information, together with many individuals, is there to help you every step of the way – use it fully
- You have heartfelt thanks from those whose voices you may never know but who, by your efforts, are able to worship God and find community more safely in our settings.

National PSO Group 2024

Parochial Church Council (PCC)

Appointing a Parish Safeguarding Officer

Every Parish should have a PSO and it is the responsibility of the PCC to ensure this as far as possible. The guidance below outlines an approach to making the appointment.

1. As members of the PCC start by reading a copy of the Role Description for a PSO, available at [Parish Safeguarding Officer role description | The Church of England](#) and added as **Appendix 1** of this document.
2. At your next meeting (or you could convene a special meeting) discuss together the key points of the Role Description and who in your congregation might be able and willing to fulfil the role. Even if you wish to open up the vacancy to applications from the general congregation it is useful to have an idea of someone you might approach (people often need encouragement to put themselves forward but no one should feel pressured to apply for the role even if they have expertise in this area).
3. If you have identified possible candidates as a PCC, agree who will approach them – e.g. the incumbent or one of the Wardens
4. Once you have expressions of interest in principle, give the prospective candidates a copy of the role description to reflect upon and ask them to let you know if, having read this, they would like to be considered for the post. It is a good idea to give them a timeframe – so perhaps a week – to get back to you. Do assure them that if they were to take up the role they would be fully supported by the PCC, which holds overall responsibility and which will support the PSO to champion and promote safeguarding.
5. Whether you have one candidate or more than one they should undergo a safer recruitment process including completing an application form, supplying references, and being interviewed. Some members on the PCC will have undertaken the Safer Recruitment training, but if not, please refer to the information around recruitment in the Safeguarding E-Manual.

6. It is important to have a conversation with candidates, even if you only have one candidate and you know them well. It emphasises the importance of the role, shows due diligence and you may never have had a conversation about safeguarding in the parish with them before. The link above also offers some questions for interview/topics for conversation – but these are also available in **Appendix 2** of this document.

It is possible that you will have a strong candidate who would like to take the role, but is unsure if they have enough time to give. In this case, the role could be shared between two people.

7. Once the conversations have taken place and a decision made, the PCC should formally record the appointment and the Secretary should notify the Diocesan Safeguarding Team of the name and contact details of the appointee.
8. During the conversation you will have indicated the support that will be available to the PSO. You should now consider arranging an early meeting with them so they can agree next steps
9. If you are unable to appoint, you should agree a named person or persons from the PCC and ensure their name(s) and contact details are displayed in church and shared with the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.

Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO)

The Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) is the person (or persons) appointed by the PCC to advise on and coordinate safeguarding across your setting in conjunction with your Diocesan Safeguarding Team. Whilst the PSO term is used throughout this document, it is acknowledged that the title may differ across settings.

First Steps on Your Journey as Parish Safeguarding Officer

Once you have accepted the role of PSO you may feel you need some help to identify the things you need to prioritise and engage with first and this is where your Diocesan Safeguarding Team and PCC will be able to guide you.

Please check that your Diocesan Safeguarding Team has been notified of your appointment.

Diocesan Safeguarding Team

Having been notified of your appointment by your parish, your Diocesan Safeguarding Team will be in touch, usually by email. Should you not hear from them, please contact your diocesan team directly as they will want to welcome and support you in your role. They will want to share some important details with you. These may include:

1. Their name(s) and contact information
2. Details of an induction course for you to attend (either virtually or face-to-face) which will:
 - Help you explore your role
 - Familiarise you with key policies, procedures and resources
 - Look at some scenarios to help you feel confident about identifying what is and what is not a safeguarding concern
 - Explain how to respond to a safeguarding concern
 - Give you the opportunity to ask questions
3. Details of training, some mandatory and some optional, you will need to complete as part of your role
4. How to access and use your Parish Safeguarding Dashboard (where available)
5. Information about support and networking meetings

The message will assure you that your Diocesan Safeguarding Team is there to support and guide you with your role and may well invite you to arrange a brief Zoom/Teams meeting so you can “meet” them and ask any initial questions you may have – and there really is no such thing as a silly question!

In Your Parish

There are a few early things to check and/or establish with your PCC.

1. If you are not a member of the PCC, you might discuss whether or not it would be good for you to be co-opted
2. Safeguarding should be a standing item on the agenda for all PCC meetings. If you are not on the PCC (either elected or co-opted) **agree how this item will be championed** – you might submit a written report ahead of the meeting or attend just for the Safeguarding item; This can be easily created from your Safeguarding Dashboard (The Parish Safeguarding Plan), which will be explained to you by your Diocesan Safeguarding Team. You can access a useful video produced by PSOs titled ‘PSO Safeguarding Dashboard’ via the Safeguarding Virtual Library [Safeguarding Training Portal \(cofeportal.org\)](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1i3bhXbBhcVJ2yO3I6gG0_OrvjH19X-Ez/view?usp=share_link) where there are more resources to support you, or you can view the video via this link:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1i3bhXbBhcVJ2yO3I6gG0_OrvjH19X-Ez/view?usp=share_link You might give one or two prompts for discussion or indicate where something is not in place and needs to be agreed.
3. Discuss with your incumbent or PCC how you will be introduced to the congregation. This might be in church at the main Sunday service and/or via a Church Newsletter.
4. If your Church has a website, Safeguarding should be prominent on it. Ask for it to be updated with your details and check you are happy with what is there – if not ask the PCC to amend.
5. Check with your incumbent and Diocesan Safeguarding Team if anyone has a Safety Plan (previously Safeguarding Agreement) in place and ask that this be discussed with you. These exist where there is someone who is a known potential risk and acts to identify safeguards around their Church activities. They are confidential documents and are only shared on a “need to know” basis. The Parish and Diocesan Safeguarding Team hold copies and these must be reviewed annually; you should be involved at each review.

6. Check there is displayed in church a copy of a poster showing your PCC has adopted and implements the House of Bishops policy “Promoting a Safer Church.” You can find this in **Appendix 4** and also here, together with other useful templates: <https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/policy-practice-guidance/templates-and-resources>
7. As part of “Promoting a Safer Church” your details as PSO should be displayed prominently in church and the poster mentioned above includes space for your information
8. Check there is a separate Parish DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) administrator/recruiter who ensures all those who need a DBS have one and liaise with them. If there isn’t a separate DBS person you may be asked to undertake this role as well: you can decline! These roles are often helpfully separated.
9. There should be a record of who in your parish has undertaken required Safeguarding training. Check the list to see if necessary training has been completed and has not expired. Should you need to develop a list, appendix 3 provides a useful template you could adapt. If no such list exists, or if appropriate training has not been undertaken this may be a focus for the first PCC. Remember your Diocesan Safeguarding Team will be able to guide you as to how to access what is needed.

Key Documents

The Safeguarding E-manual can be found here:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-e-manual>

The Safeguarding Handbook can be found here:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/ParishSafeGuardingHandBookAugust2019Web.pdf>

General Safeguarding Resources and Templates here:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/policy-practice-guidance/templates-and-resources>

Acronyms

| | |
|------------|---|
| CDF | Confidential Declaration Form. A Church of England Confidential Declaration form must be completed by all applicants for positions engaging in regulated activity or otherwise working/having substantial contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults which requires an enhanced (with/without barred list) DBS check. Discuss with your Diocesan Team the best way to store this information. |
| DBS | Disclosure and Barring Service. The organisation that carries out checks that help make safer recruitment decisions. |
| DSA | Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. Diocesan staff member with overall responsibility for training, support, advice and managing issues relating to Safeguarding across the diocese. This title is being changed to Diocesan Safeguarding Officer. |
| DSO | Diocesan Safeguarding Officer. Qualified and experienced social care practitioners who can provide advice and guidance to parishes and others in the diocese on child and adult protection. Often the first port of call for Parish Safeguarding Officers where there is a question or concern. |
| PCC | Parochial Church Council. The PCC is the executive committee of a parish church, and includes all clergy attached to the church plus the two churchwardens, any lay workers, and several representatives of the congregation, who are normally elected for a period of three years. It meets roughly six to ten times a year and makes all major spending and strategy decisions together with the priest. PCCs are usually also charities, answerable not only to the Diocese through the Archdeacon but to the Charity Commission. <i>Safeguarding is the responsibility of the PCC and it is the PCC that appoints a Safeguarding Officer for the Parish.</i> |
| PDO | Parish Disclosures Officer. The person responsible to the PCC for overseeing safer recruitment and the DBS process. <i>(Please note that in some dioceses this role is known as the Lead Recruiter.)</i> |
| PSO | Parish Safeguarding Officer. The Parish Safeguarding Officer is the key link between the parish and the diocese concerning safeguarding matters. They will have an overview of all church activities involving children, young people and vulnerable adults, and will seek to ensure the implementation of safeguarding policy, including checking that all appropriate training has taken place. The role can be taken by one person or shared. <i>(NB: An alternative title to PSO may be used across some dioceses.)</i> |

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Parish Safeguarding Officer Role Description

Parish Safeguarding Officer Role Description

The Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) is the **key link** between the diocese and a parish concerning safeguarding matters. The PSO is **appointed by** and **supports** the Parochial Church Council (PCC) in the delivery of its (the Council's) safeguarding responsibilities.

Person specification:

1. Willingness and aptitude to undertake the role, attend the relevant training and undertake their own development in the field of safeguarding.
2. Ability to challenge in an appropriate, supportive manner.
3. Ability to demonstrate why safeguarding is intrinsic to the Christian faith.
4. Ability to instigate and manage difficult conversations.
5. Ability to articulate the need for culture change with regard to safeguarding in the Church as a whole, and in particular in their parish community.
6. Ability to demonstrate an empathetic and objective attitude with integrity when dealing with possible allegations of abuse.
7. Ability to manage sensitive information and, where needed, understand confidentiality and data sharing.
8. The PSO should not be related to, or have a [conflict of interest](#), with the vicar / priest (or anyone acting on their behalf as an interim arrangement);
9. Willingness to declare and explore with members of the Parochial Church Council /Diocesan safeguarding team ways to manage any potential [conflicts of interest](#)

Role Description:

Exact responsibilities may differ between parishes and different areas, depending on local circumstances. For instance, some parishes have a "team" of PSOs who share responsibilities, whilst other areas have one PSO supporting multiple parishes.

1. Be familiar with the [Safeguarding e-manual | The Church of England](#) and how it is implemented in local practice.
2. Establish positive working relationships with the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer / Team.
3. Refer all safeguarding concerns to the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer / Team.
4. When someone is in immediate risk or needs urgent medical attention, report concerns to emergency services.
5. Discuss regularly with the parish priest / vicar and the PCC any emerging safeguarding issues and support them in resolving those issues.
6. Work with the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer / Team to determine which members of staff and volunteers need which level of training and when refresher training is needed and ensure that this is satisfactorily completed.
7. Have an awareness of all activities involving children and vulnerable adults, keep a record of them and assist with the safeguarding risk assessment of these activities.
8. Help facilitate discussions about what the parish sees as a safe culture, what the current barriers may be and how they might be resolved.
9. Support the PCC in the delivery of its responsibilities around safer recruitment and people management – for instance, by maintaining records, supporting recruitment, coordinating DBS applications (including updates to DBS status), and seeking advice from the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer / Team.
10. Ensure safeguarding contact details are displayed in all Church premises and on websites (where applicable);
11. Where appropriate, help the parish develop protocols to keep themselves and their visitors safe.
12. Contribute to relevant reports and meetings with a safeguarding perspective, to support the vicar / priest and the PCC in the delivery of their safeguarding responsibilities.

Appendix 2 - Model Questions to use when appointing a PSO

Section 7: Interviews & Assessment

Below are examples of possible interview questions that can be used to explore the applicant's suitability for working with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults. They can be used, amended or substituted as required and in line with the role description. Whatever question/s you do ask, try and ask about personal experience and for real examples of working with and safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults.

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| Motivations for working or volunteering with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why do you want to work/volunteer with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults? What is the main driver?• Can you give an example of something that you have done that demonstrates your commitment to working with vulnerable groups (i.e. children and/or adults experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect)?• What do you have to offer in support of children, young people and/or vulnerable adults?• What experience have you of working with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults? What has this experience taught you about yourself?• How do you motivate children, young people and/or vulnerable adults?• What do you consider to be your strengths/areas for improvement, specifically in relation to working or volunteering with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults?• Can you give an example of how children, young people and/or vulnerable adults have benefited from your input?• |
| Emotional Maturity & Resilience |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can you describe a time when you have been working with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults and your authority was challenged?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ How did you react and how did you manage the situation?○ How did you get things back on course?• Can you describe a time when you had to control a child or young person's behaviour?• Can you give an example of a person you have had particular difficulty dealing with?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ What made it difficult?○ How did you manage the situation?• Have you ever felt uncomfortable about a colleague's behaviour towards or ability to work with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults in a previous job or volunteering role?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ What were your concerns?○ What did you do?○ How was the issue resolved? |
| Values & Ethics |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What might be some of the safeguarding issues you may have to deal with in this role?• Can you give an example of a time when a child, young person or vulnerable adult behaved in a way that caused you concern?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ How did you deal with that?○ Who else did you involve?• How do you feel when someone holds an opinion which differs from your own?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ How do you behave in this situation?• Can you describe how you would respect the background and culture of children, young people and/or vulnerable adults with whom you would work or volunteer? |

- Can you give some examples of how you would contribute to making this Church body a safer environment for children, young people and/or vulnerable adults?
- Can you give some examples of how you would provide kind, consistent and safe care?

Don't forget to:

- Clarify any discrepancies or concerns you have from the candidate's application form.
- Ask if they wish to declare anything that they haven't already disclosed to you:
"Do you know of any reason why you should not be working with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults? Are there any police or employment/volunteering matters outstanding which could affect your ability to take up this role?"

Appendix 3 - Model Parish Safeguarding Policy “Promoting a Safer Church”

Parish Safeguarding Handbook
Church of England

Model Parish Safeguarding Policy

The Parish of St-----

SAFEGUARDING POLICY PROMOTING A SAFER CHURCH

The following policy was agreed at the Parochial Church Council (PCC) meeting held on.....

In accordance with the Church of England Safeguarding Policy our church is committed to:

- Promoting a safer environment and culture.
- Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the church.
- Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation.
- Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons.
- Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons.
- Responding to those that may pose a present risk to others.

The Parish will:

- Create a safe and caring place for all.
- Have a named Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) to work with the incumbent and the PCC to implement policy and procedures.
- Safely recruit, train and support all those with any responsibility for children, young people and adults to have the confidence and skills to recognise and respond to abuse.
- Ensure that there is appropriate insurance cover for all activities involving children and adults undertaken in the name of the parish.
- Display in church premises and on the Parish website the details of who to contact if there are safeguarding concerns or support needs.
- Listen to and take seriously all those who disclose abuse.
- Take steps to protect children and adults when a safeguarding concern of any kind arises, following House of Bishops guidance, including notifying the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) and statutory agencies immediately.
- Offer support to victims/survivors of abuse regardless of the type of abuse, when or where it occurred.
- Care for and monitor any member of the church community who may pose a risk to children and adults whilst maintaining appropriate confidentiality and the safety of all parties.
- Ensure that health and safety policy, procedures and risk assessments are in place and that these are reviewed annually.

- Review the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Practices at least annually.

Each person who works within this church community will agree to abide by this policy and the guidelines established by this church.

This church appoints _____ as the Parish Safeguarding Officer

Incumbent

Churchwardens

Date:

Appendix 4 – Safeguarding Training List

Sample Safeguarding Training List

It is important to keep a record of DBS and training renewal dates and below is an example of how this might be done. However, there is no one way to keep such a record and your Diocesan Safeguarding Team may be able to give you alternative templates.

| Name <small>Blue indicates no e-mail</small> | Roles undertaken | DBS renewal due | Basic Awareness renewal due (if Foundations and Leadership) | Foundations renewal due (if Leadership not done) | Awareness Domestic Abuse renewal due | Safer recruitment & People management renewal due | Leadership renewal due |
|---|---|-----------------|---|--|--------------------------------------|---|------------------------|
| A. Churchwarden | Churchwarden, PCC member (Trustee), Reader, Intercessor, Cake stall | 20/09/2028 | Superseded | Superseded | 20/02/2028 | 23/02/2027 | 09/12/2028 |
| A. Volunteer | Holiday Club helper | 30/06/2027 | 12/06/2027 | 12/06/2027 | | | |
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