September 2023

Diocese of Bristol

Role of the Parish Safeguarding Officer

The PCC and Incumbent are responsible for ensuring that a safeguarding policy is in place for working with Children and Vulnerable Adults which meets the requirements of the safeguarding policies of the House of Bishops and the Diocese of Bristol, that these policies are reviewed annually by the PCC and updated where necessary and that safeguarding procedures are in place and agreed by the PCC.

Good safeguarding practice requires there to be a lead person in each organisation who takes responsibility for supporting others in their organisation with good practice. This individual forms part of a clear structure for managing safeguarding concerns and practice (See [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/942454/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_inter_agency_guidance.pdf), Chapter 2, paragraphs 57-62).

In the Diocese of Bristol this structure is formed by the Bishop’s Staff and the Diocesan Safeguarding Steering Group (DSSG) who oversee the work of the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer, who supports Parish Safeguarding Officers.

A PCC may choose to combine the role of Child and Adult Safeguarding Officer into one or may choose to split the role into two or more. However the role is allocated, it is essential that the PCC recognise the Parish Safeguarding Officer as a volunteer who undertakes tasks for which the PCC is accountable. The PCC must therefore support the PSO, including keeping them up to date with relevant information, and enable the PSO to report to and/ or attend PCC meetings as needed.

**Safer Recruitment**

The PCC will appoint the Parish Safeguarding Officer - this should not be anyone directly involved with youth and children’s work or pastoral care and will ideally be someone who is approachable and regularly available for anyone with concerns to speak with. The safer recruitment procedure must be followed. The role of PSO is eligible for a DBS Enhanced disclosure because the role holder will be providing support and advice in relation to safeguarding to those who have responsibility for activities for Children or Vulnerable Adults.

The tasks as described below will usually be allocated to the Parish Safeguarding Officer(s), if they are allocated to anyone else this should be made clear in the Parish safeguarding policy.

# Responsibilities

* To support the PCC and Incumbent with reviewing the Parish safeguarding policies and procedures and ensuring their implementation.
* To attend training as provided by the Diocese of Bristol.
* To be familiar with the safeguarding policy and procedures of the Diocese of Bristol.
* To be familiar with Local Authority safeguarding procedures and to know how to raise a safeguarding alert for a child or vulnerable adult with the relevant authority.
* To communicate to the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer any safeguarding concern related to any minister, PCC member, staff member or volunteer to enable the Allegations Management procedure to be used.
* To communicate with the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer where any advice or support is required regarding reporting and management of any safeguarding issue in the congregation.
* To alert the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer to the presence of any individual in the congregation who has a relevant conviction or caution or there is reason to believe that they may present a risk to vulnerable adults or children if this is made know to any church official. This will enable the DSO to support with a risk assessment and agreement if required.
* To ensure that the Safer Recruitment process is followed for all volunteer and paid role holders, including arranging for individuals to apply for Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks where appropriate and maintaining a record of who has undergone a check and when their 3 year renewal is due.
* To ensure that all paid staff and volunteers attend or access safeguarding training relevant for the role that they are undertaking and to keep records of such training.
* To be available for any child or adult to speak to regarding any concerns about a child or vulnerable adult. Including making themselves known to all in the Church and having their contact details and picture displayed within church premises.
* To ensure appropriate steps are taken to satisfy insurers including recording names of all volunteers with children and young people in the PCC minutes.
* To communicate to PCC and relevant staff and volunteers information regarding safeguarding training required and available and to maintain records of training completed and next due.
* To work with the Incumbent to ensure support is provided for anyone involved with safeguarding issues in the parish as necessary.
* To ensure safe storage of all data and records related to safeguarding.

It is also important that any relevant known safeguarding information is shared with a new PSO on appointment to the role by the incumbent.

In order to achieve these tasks the Parish Safeguarding Officer should have access to PCC meetings and minutes as required and be provided with access to safe storage for records.

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