

Parish Roles and Safeguarding Responsibilities

Parochial Church Council (PCC) and the Incumbent (the following guidance is taken from; [Roles and Responsibilities Practice Guidance V2.pdf \(churchofengland.org\)](https://www.churchofengland.org/roles-and-responsibilities-practice-guidance-v2.pdf))

The PCC is the main decision maker of a parish. Its members are clergy, churchwardens and others elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) of the parish. Its powers and duties are defined by legislation and can principally be found in the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956.

It has the responsibility, along with the incumbent to promote the mission of God in its parish.

Legally, the PCC is responsible for the finances of the parish. It also has ultimate responsibility for the care and maintenance of all church buildings and their contents. Although these responsibilities are executed by the churchwardens, all PCC members must share in the oversight. It has a voice in the forms of Service used by the church and may make representations to the bishop on matters that affect the welfare of the parish.

All PCCs are charities, most do not the need to register with the Charity Commission, except those with an annual income of more than £100,000. Therefore, every member of a PCC is also a charity trustee. If a PCC is a charity it must comply with the Charity Commission guidance and legislation in relation to charities.

The incumbent's role is to provide leadership concerning safeguarding, and to encourage everyone to promote a safer church.

The PCC and the incumbent have a duty of care to ensure the protection of the vulnerable in their church community. In terms of safeguarding, with the incumbent, Church Wardens the PCC will:

Promote a safer church.

The PCC will work with the incumbent, Church Wardens, and Parish Safeguarding Officer to have due regard to the **safeguarding Guidance issued by the House of Bishops under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016.**

[Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukmg/2016/10/12/safeguarding-clergy-discipline-measure-2016)

Adopt

The House of Bishops' 'Promoting a Safer Church; safeguarding policy statement.

The House of Bishops' and diocesan safeguarding policies and practice guidance, while being responsive to local parish requirements.

Appoint

At least one appropriately experienced designated parish safeguarding officer (PSO) to work with the incumbent and PCC. This PSO should be a lay person. It cannot be the incumbent. The PSO may also be the DBS administrator for church officers who

work with children or vulnerable adults but if not, the PCC should appoint another individual.

Additional safeguarding roles, as required. These roles are optional. They will be dependent on local need and available resources. They may also be fulfilled by the same people. Any additional roles are left to local determination.

Safer Recruit, Support and Train

Ensure that all church officers who work with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults are:

- Recruited following the House of Bishops' Safer Recruitment practice guidance.
- Aware of and work to House of Bishops' safeguarding guidance (includes both policies and practice guidance)
- Attend diocesan safeguarding training at least every three years.
- Provide appropriate insurance to cover for all activities undertaken in the name of the PCC which involve children and vulnerable adults.
- Display a formal statement of adoption of the House of Bishops' 'Promoting a Safer Church; safeguarding policy statement'. This should be signed on behalf of the PCC.

Display

- Contact details of the PSO, churchwarden and any other local leaders.
- Information about where to get help with child and adult safeguarding issues e.g., local authority contacts details, domestic abuse, and key helplines e.g., ChildLine.
- Provide access to a safeguarding handbook.

Respond

- Create an environment, which is welcoming and respectful and enables safeguarding concerns to be raised and responded to openly, promptly, and consistently.
- Have a procedure in place to deal promptly with safeguarding allegations or suspicions of abuse in accordance with the relevant policy and practice guidance and in consultation with the diocesan safeguarding adviser.
- Report all safeguarding concerns or allegations against church officers to the diocesan safeguarding adviser.
- Ensure that known offenders or others who may pose a risk to children and/or vulnerable adults are effectively managed and monitored in consultation with the diocesan safeguarding adviser.
- Comply with all data protection legislation especially regarding storing information about any paid and unpaid workers and any safeguarding records.

- Ensure that an “activity risk assessment” is completed and reviewed regularly for each activity, which is associated with either children or vulnerable adults, and run in the name of the Church.

Review and Report Progress

- The PSO should regularly report on safeguarding in the parish.
- Safeguarding should be a standing agenda item at each PCC meeting. At the APCM the PCC should provide an annual report in relation to safeguarding. In the PCC's annual report there will be a statement which reports on progress and a statement as to whether the PCC has complied with the duty to have “due regard” to the House of Bishops' guidance in relation to safeguarding.
- **Hire out church premises.**
- Any hire agreement with any person/body wishing to hire church premises must contain a provision whereby the person/body hiring the premises agrees to comply with the relevant safeguarding guidance issued by the House of Bishops and the diocese.
- The hire agreement should also contain a provision whereby all those hiring church premises are required to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are protected at all times, relevant staff have had appropriate DBS checks and that all reasonable steps have been taken to prevent injury, illness, loss, or damage occurring.
- Ensure all those hiring church premises carry full public liability insurance for this or be covered through the church insurance (for example hire for a children's party).

Working in an LEP:

- If working within Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs), agree which denomination or organisation's safeguarding policy to follow, including where to seek advice in urgent situations in line with the practice guidance. This decision should be ratified both by the bishop and other appropriate church leaders in the partnership and shared with the DSA; in the event of a specific safeguarding concern, ensure that all the LEP partners are notified.

During a clergy vacancy

- During an interregnum the PCC must, working with the churchwardens, ensure that all information about safeguarding matters is securely stored before passing the information on to the new incumbent. The departing

incumbent must give the safeguarding information to the parish safeguarding officer who can pass the information on to the new incumbent when he/she takes up his new role.