**From The Church of England Safeguarding Handbook**

1. **Parish Roles and Responsibilities5**

Parochial Church Council (PCC) and the Incumbent

The PCC is the main decision maker of a parish. Its members are clergy, church wardens6 and others elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) of the parish. 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, the incumbent and the PCC will:

Adopt and Implement

• The House of Bishops’ Safeguarding Policy ‘Promoting a Safer Church’ (see A3 poster or the Model Parish Safeguarding Policy7.

Appoint

• An appropriately experienced8, named Parish Safeguarding Officer to work with the incumbent and the Parochial Church Council or join with other parishes to share a named Parish Safeguarding Officer9 (see Model Parish Safeguarding Officer Role Description).

Safer Recruitment, Support and Training

* Have a policy statement on the recruitment of ex-offenders and ensure all those responsible for working with children, young people and vulnerable adults on behalf of the church are safely recruited (see section 5).
* Ensure all church officers are aware of the safeguarding policy/guidance and are trained appropriately for their roles (see section 6).
* Provide appropriate insurance to cover for all activities undertaken in the name of the Parochial Church Council which involve children, young people and 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.
* Ensure information is displayed about how to contact the DSA(s), Parish Safeguarding Officer and how to get help outside the church with child and adult safeguarding issues (see Model Safeguarding in Your Parish – Who’s Who).
* Ensure that safeguarding arrangements are clearly visible on the front page of the parish website10.

Respond

• Have a procedure in place to deal promptly with safeguarding allegations or suspicions of abuse (see section 7).

5 For further information please see section 3 in the House of Bishops’ Key Roles and Responsibilities of Church Office Holders and Bodies Practice Guidance (‘Roles 2017’).

6 Church wardens operate in accordance with the Church Wardens Measure 2001 and the Canons of the Church of England (see in particular Canon E1). Their safeguarding responsibilities are outlined in section 3 of ‘**Roles 2017’.**

7 In addition, the diocese may also offer an aligned parish safeguarding policy bespoke for its parishes.

8 Section 3.3. of ‘**Roles 2017’** states that ‘*Preferably the PSO should be someone who is a lay person, has good pastoral and organisational skills and experience of working with children/young people or vulnerable adults, although not always currently involved in such work in the parish. They should not be the incumbent or his or her partner.’*

9 The role of the PSO is outlined in section 3 of **Roles 2017.**

10 Some parishes do not have their own website. In this situation the parish may want to offer some information on the A Church Near You website.

9

* Report all safeguarding concerns or allegations including those against church officers to the Parish Safeguarding Officer/incumbent and the DSA (see section 7).
* 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 DSA (see section 10).
* Comply with all data protection legislation especially in regard to using (e.g. storing) information about any church officers and any safeguarding records.
* Ensure 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 (see Model Activity Risk Assessment Template).

Review and Report Progress

• The PSO should regularly report on safeguarding in the parish. Safeguarding should be a standing agenda item at each PCC meeting11. At the APCM the PCC should provide an annual report in relation to safeguarding. In the PCC’s annual report will be a statement which reports on progress and a statement as to whether or not the PCC has complied with the duty to have “due regard” to the House of Bishops’ Safeguarding Policy and Practice Guidance.12

Hire Out Church Premises

• Ensure an addendum to a hire agreement is always used when any person/body hires church premises (i.e. a church building or a church hall) for activity that involves children, young people or vulnerable adults13, for example a pre-school, youth group or mental health support group (see Model Safeguarding Provision for Church Premises Hire).

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 Vacancy14

• The PCC must, working with the church wardens, 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/her new role.

5 For further information please see section 3 in the House of Bishops’ Key Roles and Responsibilities of Church Office Holders and Bodies Practice Guidance (‘Roles 2017’).

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11  Regular reporting means a minimum of twice a year to the PCC.

12  Church Representation Rules 9(2A).

13  This does not include hiring by private individuals for private events, e.g. a child’s birthday party.

14  This relates to a clergy vacancy in a benefice and is known as an interregnum.