

Safeguarding practice guidelines.

St Stephen's Church

These guidelines were endorsed and adopted by the St Stephens PCC on 11 October 2021

These guidelines are intended to help clarify how existing Church of England policies on safeguarding are to be implemented on a day-to-day basis.

They supplement the Parish Safeguarding Handbook and checklist.

Everyone in the Church is responsible for keeping each other safe. Part of what those with a special role in safeguarding need to do is to get this message across to the congregation as a whole, so that everyone knows what to do and who to talk to if they have worries that someone may be unsafe.

Duties of the PCC.

Church of England policies make it clear that the churchwardens and PCC have a *legal* duty to ensure that there are appropriate practices in place to promote the safety of congregation members and visitors, especially children and vulnerable adults.

Here is how the churchwardens and PCC carry out that duty.

- All members of the PCC shall pass their basic training provided by the Church and send a copy of their certificate to the church administrator.
- This should be complied with by every PCC member within one month of joining the PCC unless there are compelling reasons for delay.
- Safeguarding should be an agenda item on each and every PCC agenda.
- The PCC should not get involved in decision-making on individual cases.
- PCC members should act as critical friends to the incumbent and Parish Safeguarding Officers in respect of safeguarding,
- satisfy themselves that the system is fit for purpose and
- that those acting as PSOs are capable, adequately trained and supported.

Duties of the Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSOs)

- To promote awareness of safeguarding as an important issue within the church community.
- To give members of the Church and visitors clear ways by which to refer safeguarding concerns.
- To successfully undertake all three levels of training: Basic awareness, Foundation and Leadership and undertake a DBS check. Training and a DBS check should be completed within 2 months of taking office. In addition to enroll in specific Diocesan training for PSOs.
- Following advice in the Parish Safeguarding Handbook (p16) to audit church roles and organisations to identify all those who need training at one of three levels: Basic awareness, Foundation and Leadership.
- To ensure that all those requiring training at Foundation and Leadership levels complete a Church of England questionnaire and undertake a DBS check.
- To be available to hear and record any concerns on safeguarding issues that emerge in the church community.
- To consult each other and the incumbent as to whether to seek advice from the Diocesan safeguarding Team about taking action including reporting matters to the appropriate public authority. To record decisions and actions taken.

- In emergency situations, to report situations to the police or other statutory organisations.
- To set up a recording system for safeguarding concerns, confidential to the PSOs and the incumbent.
- Parish Safeguarding Officer(s) will report to the PCC on
 - systems that are in place to keep the congregation and visitors safe,
 - initiatives to raise awareness,
 - the incidence of concerns have been made known to them and the outcomes in general terms,
 - training and DBS check compliance and
 - any emerging issues.

Duties of the Incumbent:

- These are the same as those for the PSOs.
- The Church of England's policy on safeguarding is that there should be an equal partnership between incumbents and lay PSO(s) rather than safeguarding being clerically led. The thinking is that mutual support is vital and better decisions in situations which may well be difficult or ambiguous are likely to be made following mutual consultation.
- Unless there is an emergency, the incumbent should always consult with a PSO(s) before taking action in respect of a safeguarding concern.