

Introduction

5 minutes read

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Version: 1

The Church of England's Safeguarding policy statement '[Promoting a Safer Church' \(2017\)](#) outlines the Church's commitment to promoting a safe environment and culture across all church communities for children, young people and vulnerable adults.

This Guidance does two things:

1. It describes what is meant by "safeguarding" and defines the different forms that abuse and safeguarding concerns can take. As such, it provides the context and foundation for the complete suite of Church safeguarding Guidance documents. (With two exceptions, the forms of abuse are based on existing Church guidance, which have been updated and brought together in one place).
2. It provides more detailed guidance on three important safeguarding issues:
 - Domestic abuse, because many Church Officers will themselves be victims and survivors of domestic abuse, and / or will be in contact with victims and survivors who, for example, might be members of a congregation or work colleague.
 - Spiritual abuse and deliverance ministry as these are particularly relevant to safeguarding in a Church / faith context.

This Guidance replaces: "Facts Sheet: Types of Abuse 2018" (which is part of *Responding to Safeguarding Concerns or Allegations that relate to Children Young People and Vulnerable Adults practice guidance 2018*) and parts of *Responding Well to Domestic Abuse practice guidance 2017*.

What is the status of this document?

This document is safeguarding Guidance issued by the House of Bishops under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016.

Section 5 requires all authorised clergy, bishops, archdeacons, Cathedral Chapters, licensed readers and lay workers, churchwardens and parochial church councils to have "due regard" to safeguarding Guidance issued by the House of Bishops. A duty to have "due regard" to Guidance means that the person under the duty is not free to disregard it but is required to follow it unless there are cogent reasons for not doing so. 'Cogent' for this purpose means clear, logical and convincing.

Failure by a member of the clergy to have "due regard" to House of Bishops' safeguarding Guidance is an act or omission which may constitute misconduct under the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003 ('CDM'). Failure by a Reader or lay worker to have due regard to House of Bishops' safeguarding Guidance would be grounds for the revocation of that Reader's or lay worker's licence by the Bishop, and failure by a churchwarden or parochial church council could result in an investigation being carried out by the Charity Commission and the churchwarden or PCC members

being disqualified as charity trustees.

It is intended to amend the law to allow the House of Bishops to put in place a new Code of Practice on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults which will specify both requirements (which will be mandatory) and good practice (which will be advisory). The amendments will also expand the categories of person to whom the section applies. We expect that these changes will be introduced in early 2022. This document is designed to be used both before and after the law changes.

This document is structured into sections that contain both “Requirements” and “Good Practice Advice”. **Sections labelled “Requirements” are House of Bishops’ Guidance to which the people specified above are required to have “due regard”** from the date that this document comes into force, and they will also comprise the mandatory parts of the Code of practice when it comes into force. **All “Requirements” are clearly marked as such and are in a blue box.**

The **good practice advice** explains, for example, how to deliver some of the Requirements, sets out some good practice examples, and explains why some Requirements are necessary. **In other words, it explains “why and how” to deliver the Requirements.** Whilst the case examples and other associated advice should be considered as best practice which should be followed, **the duty to give due regard under Section 5 of the 2016 Measure does not apply to them**, and they will not be mandatory once the Code of Practice comes into force.

Scope

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults is everyone’s responsibility. Everyone who may come into contact with children, young people, adults and their families has a role to play. For the avoidance of doubt, this Guidance applies without exception to all Church Bodies^[1] and Church Officers^[2].

Related Guidance and Processes

This Guidance is a foundational document. That is, whilst it contains few actual process requirements itself, it provides the definitions and concepts that underpin all other House of Bishops Safeguarding Guidance.

In terms of “what to do” when safeguarding concerns and abuse as described in this Guidance are identified, the key Guidance documents are:

- In respect of Church officers: “Responding to, assessing and managing concerns or allegations against church officers practice guidance” (2017)
- In respect of those who are not Church officers: “Responding to safeguarding concerns or allegations that relate to children, young people

and vulnerable adults” (2018).

This Guidance also provides the foundation for the following which are available on the Church of England webpage^[3]

- Safer Recruitment and People Management (2021)
- Safer Environments and Activities (2019)
- Safer Working Practices (2019)
- Key Roles and Responsibilities (2017)
- Responding well to those who have been sexually abused practice Guidance (2011)
- Safeguarding Learning and Development Framework (2021)
- Safeguarding in Religious Communities (2020)
- Responding Well to Victims and Survivors of Abuse (2021)
- Guidance: Identifying and Reporting Safeguarding Serious Incidents to the Charity Commission: Guidance for DBFs, PCCs and Religious Communities (2021)

Other organisational policies and procedures

It is important that safeguarding guidance exists alongside other organisational processes and policies; for example, bullying and harassment policies, disciplinary and capability processes. It is important for Church bodies to ensure that safeguarding guidance and professionals are not used to manage situations that these other policies and procedures are designed for.

Review

This Guidance will be reviewed no later than June 2024.

[1] Church Bodies include PCCs, diocesan bodies, cathedrals, religious communities, Guild churches and the National Church Institutions. This Guidance applies to the whole of the provinces of Canterbury and York (including the diocese in Europe subject to local variations/modifications). There is also an expectation that the Guidance will apply to the Channel Islands and Sodor and Man, unless there is specific local legislation in a jurisdiction that would prevent adoption.

[2] A 'Church Officer' is anyone appointed/elected by or on behalf of the Church to a post or role, whether they are ordained or lay, paid or unpaid.

[3] <https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/promoting-safer-church/policy-practice-Guidance>

This document is version 1 and was printed on 04 May 2024. The most up to date version of this policy can be found on the Church of England website: <https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding>

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