

Section 2 - Guiding Principles

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The safeguarding needs of people in all Church Bodies should be of paramount consideration to all Church Officers. To do this, people involved in safeguarding must be objective about what 'safeguarding' means and take an impartial approach.

However, there are different diocesan arrangements for managing safeguarding depending on the size, resources and needs of the diocese and its existing traditions. In different dioceses Chairs of Core Groups / SCMGs can be Archdeacons, DSAs, Diocesan Secretaries or HR Directors - this is recognised in the procedures in Parts 3 & 4 below.

In all diocesan contexts, the underpinning principle for the procedures below is self-declaration: members are responsible for checking and notifying the DSA or the Chair of the Core Group / SCMG of any conflicts that arise for them at any point of the safeguarding process.

The principle of self-declaration is foundational because in some situations only the member of the Core Group / SCMG can know and tell whether they are potentially conflicted. For example, a member of Core Group / SCMG might hope to obtain a benefit from a respondent (e.g. preferment or access to charitable funds of which the respondent is a trustee) while also being involved in their safeguarding investigations.

The scenario described above could, depending on the situation, amount to a potential conflict. However, this would be difficult to identify without self-declaration by the member.

No one should be involved in a Core Group / SCMG which is managing a safeguarding case in which they are related, married, are godparents or, are in a relationship with the respondent or the person reporting abuse.

No-one should be involved in a Core Group / SCMG which is managing a safeguarding case in which they have a financial relationship or external business arrangement (for instance directorship in their company, joint ownership of a company, contracts between companies that they separately own etc) with the respondent or the person(s) reporting abuse.

If a respondent or a victim or survivor reports that a member of the Core Group / SCMG is conflicted, this should be addressed by the Chair immediately and they should document their decision.

This document is version 1 and was printed on 26 November 2022. 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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