

## National Approved List of Independent Risk Assessors

The purpose of this briefing note is to offer some basic guidance to Diocesan and Provincial Safeguarding Advisers with regards to the use of the nationally approved List of Independent Risk Assessors.

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### Introduction

1. The Safeguarding (Clergy Risk Assessment) Regulations 2016 state:

*Appointment of person to carry out assessment*

*3 (1) The bishop of a diocese, having given a direction under paragraph 2 of Canon C 30, must appoint a person to carry out the risk assessment (an "assessor").*

*3 (2) A person may not be appointed under this regulation unless he or she is included in a list maintained for the purposes of these Regulations by the Archbishops' Council.*

2. The regulations (a full copy of which can be downloaded from <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/gs-2050-safeguarding-clergy-risk-assessment-regulations-2016.pdf>) are supported by additional House of Bishops practice guidance, 'Responding to, assessing and managing safeguarding concerns or allegations concerning Church Officers', published on 14 October 2017 – this can be downloaded from <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/safeguarding#na>
3. In order to draw up the list of approved independent risk assessors the National Safeguarding Team and Parish Buying, its procurement partner, ran an invitation to tender exercise, inviting risk assessors to tender for a place on the list. Invitations were made to 43 risk assessment suppliers, of whom 23 registered to receive further information about the process. Of these, 13 submitted tenders to be included in the approved List.
4. The 13 tenders were evaluated by a small panel comprising of three members of the National Safeguarding Team and a Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, supported by colleagues from Parish Buying. 8 independent risk assessor suppliers were approved onto the Approved List.
5. This process will be repeated on an annual basis in order to continue to expand and refresh the list.

### Using the Approved List

4. The Approved List provides details of the 8 risk assessor suppliers. In commissioning an independent risk assessment, only those on the approved List can be used. The List provides information about the following:
  - Suppliers geographical coverage
  - Suppliers services (areas of expertise)
  - Suppliers contact details
6. The published Approved List does NOT include the suppliers costs. For this information, you will need to email [safeguardinggeo@churchofengland.org](mailto:safeguardinggeo@churchofengland.org)

## GUIDANCE NOTE TO SAFEGUARDING ADVISERS

7. It is recommended where possible that you make contact with at least three potential suppliers to consider whether they are the appropriate supplier for the independent risk assessment that you are commissioning and seek quotes for at least two of these. Your evaluation of this is likely to be depend upon their areas of expertise (primary consideration) and need to take into account geographical coverage and cost. You should, where possible, attempt to negotiate the number of days that are expected to be required by the independent risk assessor to complete the risk assessment, in accordance with the regulations, including the process for finalising the report. You should discuss contingencies if, during the course of the process, circumstances arise that require additional working days and/or changes to the timescales for completion. You should follow the procedure for preparing to carry out an independent risk assessment as outlined in Section 5.4 a of 'Responding to, assessing and managing safeguarding concerns or allegations concerning Church Officers'.
8. The responsibility for commissioning the independent risk assessment and the management of this process is outlined within regulations and practice guidance.
9. The National Safeguarding Team is available for professional consultation, advice and guidance – this is likely to be the Senior Casework Manager or one of the Provincial Safeguarding Advisers.

### **After the completion of the independent risk assessment**

10. The practice guidance, sets the expectation (which must be held in 'due regard') that the National Safeguarding Team have responsibilities to monitor risk assessments and management information across the Church to measure adherence to House of Bishops guidance.
11. In addition to this, all independent risk assessments should be shared with the National Safeguarding Team to ensure they meet the national standard of quality. This is particularly important for maintaining the list of approved independent assessors – upon completion of the risk assessment, please send the final report to [safeguardingeo@churchofengland.org](mailto:safeguardingeo@churchofengland.org) password protected.
12. In general, quality assurance will be based on whether the appropriate outcome has been achieved, rather than whether a process has been followed precisely. To support those engaged in quality assurance the following guiding principle is provided:  
  
*"The quality assurer should judge whether the overall quality of the work undertaken meets the needs of the case – i.e. does sufficiency in the work outweigh any insufficiency. Therefore, whilst there may be deficits or aspects where the work could be better, the quality assurer may be able to conclude that overall this piece of work is **sufficient** within the context of the case, in particular where the deficit was unlikely to reduce the likelihood of a positive outcome. Conversely whilst there may be many strengths the importance of a particular deficit may be such that it leads to a judgement of **insufficient**." This benchmark of sufficiency is also used by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation.*
13. On an annual basis, the approved list of risk assessors will be reviewed. Feedback will be sought from diocese regarding their experiences of using assessors on the list to ascertain satisfaction with the service received; quality assurance of independent risk assessments will be undertaken and feedback provided to the assessors who have produced them and the assessors themselves will be asked if they have any feedback to provide and are content to remain on the list.