



Safeguarding Policy

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Links to other policies, guidance	Diocese of Portsmouth Safeguarding Handbook (2019) https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/ParishSafeGuardingHandBookAugust2019Web.pdf Church of England: Promoting a Safer Church (House of Bishops, (2017) https://tools.parishdashboards.org.uk/storage/app/media/Resources/promoting-a-safer-church.pdf Church of England: Learning and Development Framework (2021) https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/SafeguardingLearningAndDevelopmentFramework2021.pdf Church of England: Key Roles and Responsibilities of Church Office Holders and Bodies Practice Guidance https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-10/roles-and-responsibilities-practice-guidance.pdf Church of England: Practice Guidance: Safer Recruitment (2016) safeguarding safer recruitment practice guidance 2016.pdf (churchofengland.org) Church of England: Practice Guidance: Responding to, assessing and managing safeguarding concerns or allegations against church officers Responding PG V2.pdf (churchofengland.org)
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1.0 Introduction

Safeguarding refers to the action the Church takes to promote a safer culture. The parish of The Church of the Good Shepherd, Crookhorn (COGS), takes seriously its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children, young people and adults who may be at risk of harm and has produced the following safeguarding policy and underpinning procedures to set out the standards we wish to uphold. All of the church's activities and events have the potential to include either children or adults; therefore, the provisions of this policy are applicable to all activities, for the safeguarding of all.

COGS has fully adopted the policy and practice for safeguarding set out by the national Church of England (Promoting a Safer Church, 2017) with regards to **all** aspects of safeguarding policy and practice. This policy sets out how the national safeguarding requirements are to be implemented locally.

The following **core principles** underpin the Church of England's approach to safeguarding practice:

- The welfare of the child, young person and vulnerable adult is paramount.
- Integrity, respect and listening to all.
- Transparency and openness.
- Accountability.
- Collaboration with key statutory authorities and other partners.
- Use of professional safeguarding advice and support both inside and outside the Church.
- A commitment to the prevention of abuse.
- The active management of risk.
- Promoting a culture of informed vigilance.
- Regular evaluation to ensure best practice.

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to all church officers and members, (all staff, clergy, PCC members and volunteers) and is informed by and supports the *House of Bishops' and Diocesan policy and practice guidance*. The term 'parish' is used to denote the PCC and Incumbent who together are responsible for ensuring the safety and protection of all vulnerable children and adults involved with the church. It is also the responsibility of all church officers to assist the PCC in this endeavour.

3.0 Definitions

3.1 Children and Young People

The legal definition of 'children' applies to those under 18 years of age. For this policy the term 'children' applies to all children and young people. This includes young people aged 16 and 17 years with safeguarding needs. It is important to note that the "Mental Capacity Act 2005" applies from the age of 16.

3.2 Child abuse

The UK central government document "*Working Together to Safeguard Children*" categorises and defines child abuse in terms of:

- **Physical abuse** including hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, or scalding, drowning or suffocating.

- **Emotional abuse** including conveying to a child that they are inadequate, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, verbal abuse, isolation, seeing or hearing the illtreatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying).
- **Sexual abuse** including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. It may include involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse.
- **Neglect** including failure to provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter, to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, to provide adequate supervision and/or access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may occur during pregnancy because of maternal substance abuse.
- **Domestic Abuse** Witnessing domestic abuse is child abuse¹⁸, and teenagers can suffer domestic abuse in their relationships.
- **Sexual Exploitation** Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a type of sexual abuse. Children or young people may be tricked into believing they are in a loving, consensual relationship. They might be invited to parties and given drugs and alcohol. They may also be groomed and exploited online. Some children and young people are trafficked into or within the UK for the purpose of sexual exploitation.
- **Bullying and Cyberbullying** **Bullying** is behaviour that hurts someone else – such as name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone. It can happen anywhere – at school, at home or online. It is usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child both physically and emotionally. Bullying that happens online, using social networks, games and mobile phones, is often called cyberbullying. A child can feel like there is no escape because it can happen wherever they are, at any time of day or night.
- **Online Abuse** With the ever-growing use of the internet, mobile telephones and online gaming (e.g. Xbox/ PlayStation), there has been a corresponding rise in the use of the internet and other electronic communication to target, groom and abuse children. Adults may target chat rooms, social networking sites, messaging services, mobile phones, online gaming sites and the internet generally. Children are particularly vulnerable to abuse by adults who pretend to be children of comparable ages when online and who try to obtain images or engineer meetings.
- **Electronic Images** The downloading, keeping, or distributing of indecent images of children are all classified as sexual offences. Such offences are sometimes referred to as non-contact sexual offences. However, it must be remembered that children will have been abused in the making of the images. The texting of sexual messages and photographs (sometimes referred to as ‘sexting’ - see Fact Sheet - Sexting) can be particularly problematic and abusive amongst children and young people.

3.3 Adults

The term “vulnerable adult” or “adult at risk” refers to a person aged 18 or over whose ability to protect themselves from violence, abuse, neglect, or exploitation is significantly impaired through physical or mental disability, illness, old age, emotional fragility,

distress, or otherwise, and for that purpose, the reference to being impaired is to being temporarily or indefinitely impaired.

Please note that some adults may not consider themselves vulnerable but may be vulnerable to being abused by individuals in positions of leadership and responsibility. As adults are not inherently vulnerable and in need of protection it is important to recognise that the factors described below do not, of themselves, mean that a person is vulnerable. It is a combination of these factors and the circumstances that a person finds him/herself in that can make an individual vulnerable to abuse or neglect.

Some factors that increase vulnerability include:

- A mental illness, chronic or acute
- A sensory or physical disability or impairment
- A learning disability
- A physical illness
- Dementia
- An addiction to alcohol or drugs
- Failing faculties of old age
- Those who are homeless
- Refugee families or individuals (including those seeking asylum)
- Victims/survivors of domestic abuse – direct violence and/or significant emotional coercion
- Those who have suffered historic abuse in childhood
- A permanent or temporary reduction in physical, mental or emotional capacity brought about by life events – for example bereavement, abuse or trauma

These factors may not exist in isolation; for example, someone with a drink problem masking underlying dementia; or a frail housebound elderly person with underlying depression.

3.4 Adult Abuse

Who Abuses Adults?

Potentially anyone, adult or child, can be the abuser of an adult. Abuse will sometimes be deliberate, but it may also be an unintended consequence of ignorance or lack of awareness. Alternatively, it may arise from frustration or lack of support. The list can include:

- Relatives of the vulnerable person including husband, wife, partner, son or daughter. It will sometimes include a relative who is a main carer.
- Neighbours
- Paid carers.
- Workers in places of worship
- People who are themselves vulnerable and/or are users of a care service.
- Confidence tricksters who prey on people in their own homes or elsewhere.

3.5 Definitions of Adult Abuse

Adult safeguarding means protecting a persons' right to be free from abuse and neglect ensuring good outcomes are based on the key principles set out within the Care Act

(2014). Abuse and neglect of adults can take many forms and it is crucial that this is assessed on an individual basis.

The UK central government document “Care and Support Statutory guidance” categorises and defines adult abuse in terms of:

- **Physical abuse** including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions
- **Sexual abuse** including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented or could not consent or was pressurised into consenting.
- **Psychological abuse** including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.
- **Financial or material abuse** including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions, or benefits.
- **Neglect or acts of omission** including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition, and heating.
- **Discriminatory abuse** including racist, sexist, that is based on a person’s disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs, or similar treatment.
- **Domestic abuse** that is usually a systematic, repeated and often escalating pattern of behaviour by which the abuser seeks to control, limit, and humiliate, often behind closed doors.
- **Organisational abuse** including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice because of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.
- **Modern Slavery** including human trafficking; forced labour and domestic servitude; traffickers and slave masters using whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive, and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

Abuse may occur in individual’s homes, community, online, or in the workplace or an institution. Neglect and abuse may also occur through care provided by regulated health and social care services.

4 Policy Statement

COGS recognises that:

- The welfare of the child, young person or adult at risk is paramount.
- All children and adults at risk, regardless of age, culture, disability, gender, ethnic origin, religious belief, sexual orientation, or identity, have the right to protection from abuse and neglect.
- Partnership working, including the sharing of information, is essential to good safeguarding practice.

- All suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice must be taken seriously and responded to without delay.
- All church officers have a responsibility to report concerns to their Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO).
- Church officers must receive the appropriate level of support and training to be aware of and understand best practice, and how to manage any welfare or safeguarding issues that may arise.

5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

A detailed description of all safeguarding related roles and responsibilities can be found in: *Church of England Guidance: Key Roles and Responsibilities of Church Office Holders and Bodies Practice Guidance, 2017.*

Area	Title/Abbreviation	Responsible for:
Diocesan Roles	Diocesan Safeguarding Case Advisor (CSA) (Case Work)	Responding to allegations; risk assessments and investigations; giving advice to Parishes and the Bishop; liaising with statutory agencies; giving support; ensuring training provision; issuing guidance and policy;
	Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor/Manager	Overall management of the diocese Safeguarding function.
	Diocesan Safeguarding Trainer	Undertakes support, training, and development across the parishes; responsible for policy development and implementation.
	Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator	Responsible for all aspects of safeguarding administration at diocese level
Parish Roles	PCC and Incumbent	<p>The incumbent's role is to provide leadership concerning safeguarding, and to encourage everyone to promote a safer church.</p> <p>The PCC and the incumbent must have "due regard" to national church of England safeguarding policy and guidance, and have a duty of care to ensure the prevention of harm and protection of the vulnerable at COGS.</p> <p>In terms of safeguarding, with the incumbent the PCC will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote a safer church for all in the church community and ensure there is a plan in place to raise awareness of, promote training and ensure that safeguarding is taken seriously by all those in the church community. • Adopt: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) The House of Bishops' 'Promoting a Safer Church; safeguarding policy statement; 42'

		<p>b) The House of Bishops' and diocesan safeguarding policies and practice guidance, while being responsive to local parish requirements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint the Parish Safeguarding Officer (see below)
	Church Wardens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure safeguarding arrangements are robust and all roles and policy requirements are fulfilled during an interregnum period. • Pay attention to the needs of vulnerable adults and children in relation to health and safety. • Ensure risk assessments are carried out for new activities. • Ensure that COGS has procedures for responding to complaints and grievances. • Answer questions regarding safeguarding as they arise in the archdeacon's visitations, and respond to any specific safeguarding advice, which may be given from the archdeacon.
	Parish Safeguarding Officer	<p>The PCC will appoint at least one appropriately experienced designated parish safeguarding officer (PSO) to work with the incumbent and PCC.</p> <p>This PSO will be a lay person. It cannot be the incumbent. The PSO should be supported, trained, and given a copy of the parish safeguarding policy and procedures. The PSO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advises on all safeguarding matters relating to children, young people, and vulnerable adults • Receives any concerns about children or adults in the parish and makes sure that proper advice is sought, and proper referrals are made to the DSA. • Ensures that any ex-offenders with offences against children or vulnerable adults known to be in the church community are notified to the diocesan safeguarding adviser and contribute to managing Safeguarding Agreements. • Seeks to ensure that Safer Recruitment practice is followed, with the support of diocese. • Attends diocesan safeguarding training at least every three years. • Maintains safeguarding records

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completes national, diocesan and parish safeguarding self-assessments as required. • Contributes to the annual review of parish safeguarding arrangements. • The PSO should regularly report on safeguarding in the parish. Safeguarding should be a standing agenda item at each PCC meeting. At the APCM, the PCC will provide an annual report in relation to safeguarding. • Provides or arranges provision of safeguarding training for parish workers (both volunteers and paid staff).
	DBS Administrator	<p>Responsible for undertaking the relevant DBS checks for church officers and volunteers who work with children or vulnerable adults. They are responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing the identity of the applicant, through the examination of a range of identification documents as set out by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) • Checking and validating the information provided by the applicant on the application form • Ensuring the application form is fully completed and the information it contains is accurate.
	Safeguarding Recruitment Officer	<p>Ensures that all church officers and volunteers who work with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults are recruited following the <i>House of Bishops' Safer Recruitment practice guidance</i>, are aware of and work to House of Bishops' safeguarding guidance (includes both policies and practice guidance) and attends diocesan safeguarding training at least every three years.</p>

6.0 Policy and Practice

6.1 Signs and Indicators of abuse

You may become aware of abuse or neglect of an adult, child or young person in various ways to include the following:

- You observe this yourself (e.g., bullying of a person with learning difficulties)
- It is reported to you (e.g., by someone else in the church)
- The person discloses the abuse to you
- There might be visible signs (e.g., unexplained bruises, black eye or burns)

6.2 Promoting a safer environment and culture

We will ensure that all reasonable steps have been taken to safeguard children and vulnerable adults in order that they can participate fully in any pastoral, social and other PCC endorsed or approved activities and events, safe from harm and abuse.

The following activities and events have been identified as those which are associated with vulnerable groups and run in the name of the church:

- Puppets
- Toddlers groups
- Messy Church
- The Bus Stop Café and its associated ministries
- (Young) Mums Groups
- Tots and Tunes
- Kids Zone
- The Zone
- Men's Prayer Group
- Evening Prayer Group
- Home Groups
- Vintage Wine
- Holiday Club
- Pastoral and Home Visits (Adhere to the Lone Working Policy where applicable)
- Communion in the community

The following activities and events have been identified as those which may be associated with vulnerable groups but run independently of the church. For the sake of clarity these activities are out of scope for the purpose of this Safeguarding Policy however, those responsible for these activities will adhere to the conditions of use of the church facilities and should observe their own Safeguarding Policy.

- SOBS (Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide)
- Rainbows
- Circuit Training
- Gospel Road Choir

6.3 For all church-initiated activities and events COGs will:

- Designate a Group Leader
- Ensure an appropriate staffing/supervision ratio of adults to children, taking into account the nature of the activity, the venue and the age, gender and needs of participants.
- Ensure adult volunteers do not work alone with children and young people
- Obtain and record parental/guardian consent for attendance at groups and trips, use of images and transporting children in private cars.
- Ensure unaccompanied children are taken care of by a suitably appointed adult and endeavour to establish contact with the parent or carers to gain their consent to their child's attendance.
- Ensure no child or young person is invited into the home of a church officer in the execution of their role as an officer of the church, unless the reason for this has been approved and agreed with parents and the PCC. PCC approval will be granted in the context of a PCC meeting, where the decision is recorded in the meeting minutes. Permission will be given on a case-by-case basis, and in the event that permission is

given for a regular activity, a date for that permission to be reviewed (not longer than 1 year) will be set by the PCC in consultation with the Parish Safeguarding Officers.

- Ensure pastoral carers do not misuse or abuse the trust that is bestowed upon them.
- Ensure risk assessments are carried out before the activity/event takes place, and these are reviewed regularly.
- Provide appropriate insurance cover for all activities undertaken in the name of the PCC.
- Ensure that all activities and events which are not run directly by the church, but which take place in church buildings or grounds comply with the relevant safeguarding guidance.

6.4 Children's activities

COGs activities that involve children need to ensure good practice standards across a wide range of areas including:

- Proper recruitment of volunteers/activity leaders
- Enhanced DBS checking for all volunteers and group leaders
- staffing ratios
- suitability of premises
- health and safety arrangements; and facilities for children with special needs.

The **minimum** staffing levels for groups should be as follows:

- 0 – 2 years 1 adult to 3 children 1:3
- 2 – 3 years 1 adult to 4 children 1:4
- 4 – 8 years 1 adult to 6 children 1:6
- 9 – 12 years 1 adult to 8 children 1:8
- 13 – 18 years 1 adult to 10 children 1:10

- Each group should have a minimum of two workers, even for smaller groups, and if possible one male and one female. Staff ratios for all groups should always be based on a risk assessment. For example, staffing numbers would need to be increased for outdoor activities and more so if that activity is considered higher risk, potentially dangerous or when children with disabilities or special needs are involved.

For all groups and activities:

- Undertake a health and safety risk assessment (see diocese Model Activity Risk Assessment template).
- A registration form must be completed for every child or young person who attends groups or activities which should include up-to- date information on parents' contact numbers, medical information (e.g. allergies) and any special needs (see diocese Model Registration Form – Activities and Trips).
- An attendance register must be kept and be available for all group meetings.
- A First Aid kit must be available on any premises that are used by children.
- An accident and incident log book must be available, and all accidents recorded. The logbook should be stored in a secure place. Any significant incidents must be recorded (e.g. a fight between children).
- There should be access to a telephone, if possible.
- In premises where children's groups meet, the Childline and Family Lives telephone numbers should be displayed.

- Parents must sign a consent form before children are transported in a private car, and before any photography or images are taken (see diocese Model Consent Form – Transport).

In addition, when taking children offsite:

- The church leadership must be informed and agree to the activity.
- Details of the activity and any itinerary must be given in advance to parent/s and consent forms received in advance of the activity taking place.
- Details of the activity and a list of contacts must be left with someone in the church.
- Details of the activity and arrangements must be given to the incumbent and/or PSO.
- A risk assessment must be undertaken, and confirmation obtained that the activity is covered by PCC insurance.
- A leader must be designated to take responsibility for First Aid.

Many of these items are equally applicable to groups involving vulnerable adults.

6.5 Visiting adults

Visiting vulnerable adults in their homes is an essential element of many church officers' roles. Many parishioners will be well known to the church officer and where there have been no previous concerns, the level of risk to the church officer or parishioner during visits will usually be low. However, unexpected circumstances can be encountered, some of which may place a church officer at risk. For example, the unexpected presence in the home of a relative or friend with a history of violence or threatening behaviour. Unfortunately, case histories also show that a parishioner may be at risk from a church officer. For these reasons it is very important for parishes to ensure their church officers and parishioners are as safe as they can be, and that there is accountability and transparency in the manner in which church officers engage in lone working or visits to homes.

To assure the person you are visiting of their safety, and for your own as a church officer:

- If possible undertake a risk assessment before an initial visit, especially if you do not know the person. If there are any concerns or risks known before a visit is made, you are advised always to undertake a risk assessment (see Model Risk Assessment Checklist for Home Visiting). In these circumstances, consider whether the visit is necessary, or whether you should be accompanied by another church officer. In addition, visiting in pairs may be advisable, especially if the adult is perceived to be vulnerable.
- Do not call unannounced; call by appointment, if appropriate telephoning the person just before visiting.
- Leave a visit card with the person being visited saying who visited and when.
- Be clear about what support you can offer and the purpose and limitations of any pastoral care/support that is available.
- Do not make referrals to any agency that could provide help without the adult's permission, and ideally encourage them to set up the contact, unless there are safeguarding concerns.
- Never offer 'over-the-counter' remedies to people on visits or administer prescribed medicines, even if asked to do so.
- Do not accept any gifts from adults other than token items, to avoid misunderstandings or subsequent accusations from the person or their family. If someone wants to make

- a donation to the church, put it in an envelope, mark it on the outside as a donation and obtain a receipt from the Treasurer.
- Make a note of the date when you visit people, report back about the visit to the agreed named person and say what is concerning or going well. They will report safeguarding concerns to the Parish Safeguarding Officer and/or incumbent or directly to the DSA if they are not available

7.0 Safer Recruitment

The PCC is responsible for selecting, vetting, and training all church officers working or volunteering with children and vulnerable adults in accordance with the House of Bishop's and Diocesan safeguarding policy and practice guidance.

We will:

- Ensure we have clear role descriptions and/or person specifications for all posts working or volunteering with children and/or adults at risk.
- Ensure all church workers and volunteers with children and adults at risk complete and sign an application form and confidential declaration before appointment
- Undertake careful shortlisting, identifying areas of concern such as gaps in employment.
- Hold face to face interviews (Covid-19 permitting) using pre-planned questions and following up any concerns
- Ensure we take up written references and carefully check the applicant's right to work in the UK before appointment
- Seek an enhanced DBS check for anyone eligible **before** appointment
- Ensure new volunteers/staff have a probationary period.
- Offer support, induction and training after appointment
- Provide a written behaviour code for all volunteers and workers with children and/or adults
- Ensure all church leaders and those who work with children and/or adults complete appropriate safeguarding training in accordance with the national C/E safeguarding learning and development strategy, and refresh this every three years.

8.0 Responding to safeguarding concerns

We will ensure that anyone who brings any safeguarding suspicion, concern, knowledge, or allegation of current or non-current abuse to the notice of the church will be listened to with compassion, and responded to respectfully and in a timely manner, in line with legislation, statutory and national safeguarding policy and procedures. The latest parish flowchart for responding to concerns should be accessed via the diocesan safeguarding web pages via this link:

[Responding Promptly to every Safeguarding Concern.pdf \(contentfiles.net\)](#)

COGs will:

- Appoint at least one lay Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) for children and adults
- Ensure there are arrangements in place for cover if the PSO is not available
- Follow the diocese's written procedure (via the link above) for dealing with abuse and allegations and make this available to all church officers
- Where an allegation could amount to a criminal offence the police will be informed

- Clearly display contact details of the PSO and the Diocesan Safeguarding team, as well as local and national services available to get help with safeguarding issues
- Store personal information and safeguarding records securely and ensure information needed in an emergency is readily available
- Ensure all church officers are aware of their responsibilities regarding the recording, storage and sharing of information

9.0 Risk assessment and management of those that may pose a known risk to children, young people or vulnerable adults within COGS Congregation

9.1 COGS, adheres to the message of the gospel, by opening its doors to all. This may include those with criminal convictions for sexual and/or violent offences and other forms of abuse, as well as others who may pose a risk.

9.2 Some of these individuals will pose an ongoing or potential risk of harm to other individuals who attend the church. The church has a duty to minister to all, which imposes a particular responsibility to ensure that everyone who attends the church is safe.

9.3 Where people have convictions, which give rise to a safeguarding concern, their position in a congregation or community may need to be carefully and sensitively considered/assessed to decide whether they pose a risk to others and to put in place arrangements to ensure that these risks are mitigated. This may include people convicted of violent or sexual offences against children, young people and/or vulnerable adults. It may also include those convicted of offences linked to domestic violence/abuse and people involved in drug or alcohol addiction. In addition, there may be those who do not have convictions or cautions but where there are sound reasons for considering that they still might present a risk to others.

9.4 Where it is known that a person who poses a risk to others wishes to join COGS, in all cases the parish will consult with the diocesan safeguarding case adviser (CSA) as soon as practicable but within 24 hours. The CSA will determine the appropriate action to be taken to best safeguard the parish, based on the particular facts and circumstances of each case.

9.5 An **Ongoing Safeguarding Agreement** may be drawn up and include the following elements:

- Attend designated services or meetings only.
- Sit apart from children, young people and/or vulnerable adults.
- Stay away from areas of the building where children, young people and/or vulnerable adults meet.
- Only attend a house group where there are no children, young people and/or vulnerable adults.
- Decline hospitality where there are children, young people and/or vulnerable adults present.
- Never be alone with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults.
- Never work or be part of a mixed-age group with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults.

- Take no official role in the Church or any responsible role where they will be trusted by others.

10.0 Care of Survivors of abuse/Disclosure

Guidelines for responding to a person disclosing abuse

Do:

- Listen carefully in a confidential environment
- Take what is said seriously.
- Only use open questions (open questions begin with words like who, what, when where and how. Open questions cannot be answered with a 'yes' or 'no').
- Remain calm.
- Consider the person's age and level of understanding.
- Check, if face to face, whether they mind you taking notes while they talk so you can make sure you capture the information accurately. At the end you can check with them that you have understood everything correctly.
- Offer reassurance that disclosing is the right thing to do
- Establish only as much information as is needed to be able to tell your activity leader/ Parish Safeguarding Officer/ DSA and statutory authorities what is believed to have happened, when and where.
- Check what the person hopes to happen because of the disclosure.
- Tell the child or adult what you are going to do next.

Do not:

- Make promises that cannot be kept (e.g., that you won't share the information).
- Make assumptions or offer alternative explanations.
- Investigate.
- Contact the person about whom allegations have been made
- Do a physical or medical examination.

Record: Make some very brief notes at the time, if appropriate, and write them up in detail as soon as possible. Do not destroy your original notes in case they are required by the DSA/CSA and/or the statutory authorities. Record the date, time, place, and actual words used, including any swear words or slang. Record facts and observable things, not your interpretations or assumptions. Don't speculate or jump to conclusions.

Report: **If there is immediate danger to a child or adult contact the police.** Otherwise report to your activity leader/Parish Safeguarding Officer/incumbent immediately. Within 24 hours the PSO/incumbent reports the concerns to the DSA. The DSA will advise regarding reporting to statutory agencies within 24 hours. If there is any doubt seek advice from Children's/Adult's Social Care or the police.

COGs will ensure that those who have suffered abuse receive a compassionate response, be listened to and taken seriously. The Diocese of Portsmouth supports national guidance, and the following information should be read in conjunction with the Church of England practice guidance ['Responding Well to those who have been sexually abused' \(2011\)](#).this has recently been revised for implementation in April 2022. The Portsmouth Diocese works in partnership with external services that

specialise in supporting survivors/victims who have experienced abuse, and who can develop a programme of support and care that is centred around their needs.

The Diocese of Portsmouth has commissioned [thirtyone:eight](#) to offer an independent Listening Service to those who have experienced abuse or have been affected by it. Please see the leaflet for more information: [Listening Service](#). Should you wish to access it, please contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser for further information

11.0 Allegations against church officers

- 11.1 **Anyone receiving information about or observing a safeguarding concern or allegation, where a child, young person or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger or requires immediate medical attention must call the emergency services via 999.** Do not delay. If at any point during the process, of responding to, assessing, or managing a safeguarding concern or allegation, information comes to light which suggests a child, young person and/or vulnerable adult is at risk of harm, the referral to the statutory agencies should not be delayed.
- 11.2 Safeguarding concerns may arise in a variety of ways including allegations of abuse and complaints. Allegations against church officers will be dealt with in a serious and prompt manner and reported to the **Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO)** and/or directly to the **Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor (DSA) within 24 working hours of receipt of the concern or allegation.** The DSA will follow national Church of England policy and process in responding to an allegation against a church officer. (*Church of England Practice Guidance: Responding to, assessing, and managing safeguarding concerns or allegations against church officers, 2017*)
- 11.3 Concerns about past, non-current and historical abuse should be responded to in the same way as contemporary concerns.
- 11.4 The person in receipt of the initial complaint or allegation should respond well to the victim/survivor to ensure they feel heard and taken seriously. They should also record the details of the concern or allegation, asking permission to do this and explaining the importance of recording all information. Where it is not appropriate to take notes at the time, or permission is not given, make a written record as soon as possible afterwards or before the end of the day. Do not be selective. Include details that may seem irrelevant.
- 11.5 The victim/survivor should be shown the record made in order to ensure they agree with the content and meaning, if possible. Record the time, date, location, persons present and how the concern or allegation was received, e.g. by telephone, face-to-face conversation, letter, etc. Please always sign and date the record. If the victim/survivor disagrees with the content of the note, any agreed changes can be made. If changes are not agreed (perhaps because they refer to additional matters that did not arise during the meeting) the person should be advised that their comments are noted and will be retained with the notes of the meeting. Pass all original records, including rough notes, immediately to the DSA. Any copies of retained records should be kept secure and confidential.

11.6 Explain to the victim/survivor what will happen next. They should be informed that their identity and the identity of the respondent will be shared with the statutory agencies. The concern or allegation should not be shared with anyone other than those who need to know (e.g. the statutory agencies and appropriate Church roles detailed in these procedures).

11.7 The DSA will now take over the response to the case.

11.8 If a concern arises about a church officer's behaviour towards their own children, partner or family member, statutory agencies may alert the employing organisation who will need to undertake a risk assessment under the guidance of the DSA.

11.9 The PCC is responsible for the provision of guidance and training on recognition of safeguarding concerns and allegations, with clear procedures on what to do when a safeguarding concern or allegation arises against a church officer who has a role with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults, so that everyone knows how to respond. This involves knowing how to receive a safeguarding concern or allegation, who to tell and how to record it.

11.10 **Referral to the Charity Commission**

After having sought the advice of the diocesan registrar the Charity Commission should be informed of any actual or suspected criminal activity within or involving the charity (e.g., PCC). They must be informed where an individual may have committed an offence that calls into question their suitability to be involved in or connected to a charity, whether as a trustee, member of staff or volunteer. The Charity Commission should be informed in relation to clergy and significant other persons, where there is risk of financial or reputational damage. It is possible to report with anonymised data explaining the situation and the response taken to address any identified risk. A Serious Incident Report may be submitted by the Diocesan Registrar on behalf of a PCC.

12.0 Recording, data protection and information sharing

12.1 Opening a church safeguarding case file

Good record keeping is an important part of the safeguarding task. A record, called a case file, should be opened whenever a safeguarding concern or allegation occurs in a church. The record should include key dates of when the information became known and the nature of the concerns. The record should include ongoing actions with dates, other key documents on the case file (e.g. observation notes, reports, consent forms etc.) and the case closure date. Records should use straightforward language and be concise and accurate so that they can be understood by anyone not familiar with the case. (Please see Model Parish Recording Template).

12.2 Record retention and security

The safeguarding case files, whether electronic or paper, must be stored securely by the incumbent and the PSO. This should include identifying who should have access to them. Records in relation to safeguarding issues, even if they have not been proven, should be maintained in accordance with the Church's retention guidance. If the incumbent moves

from the church, the records should be passed to the new incumbent.

12.3 Data protection and information sharing

In May 2018, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 replaced the Data Protection Act 1998. The GDPR contains the principles governing the use of personal data. It should be noted that the GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 place greater significance on organisations being accountable and transparent in relation to their use of personal data. Parishes handling personal data need to have the proper arrangements for collecting, storing and sharing information.

Personal information in relation to safeguarding will often be sensitive and is likely to be classed as what is called 'special categories of personal data' under the GDPR, which means extra care will need to be taken when handling such data. Nevertheless, it is important to be aware that the Data Protection Act 2018 includes specific reference to processing data in relation to the 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' and allows individuals to share, in certain situations, personal data without consent. *'The GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children and young people safe'* and this can equally be said to apply to vulnerable adults.

13.0 Managing risk

When it is known that a member of the church community may pose a risk to children and/or adults, we will consult without delay with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser so that a safe course of action in accordance with national and local safeguarding policy and procedures is followed, in conjunction with the relevant statutory agencies.

Further information on risk assessment for individuals and activities including forms is available on the Diocese of Portsmouth safeguarding resources pages: [Forms & Templates - Diocese of Portsmouth \(anglican.org\)](#)

14.0 Reporting

The PSO should report to the PCC on safeguarding in the parish. Safeguarding should be a standing agenda item at each PCC meeting. The report should include numbers and types of concerns received, officer and volunteer training completion data and any new guidance or policy received.

At the APCM the PCC (via the PSO) 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 the PCC has complied with the duty to have "due regard" to the House of Bishops' guidance in relation to safeguarding.

15.0 Training, and Development

The House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policy states that the church 'will train and equip church officers to have the confidence and skills they need to care and support children, young people and vulnerable adults and to recognise and respond to abuse.'

The national Church of England Learning and Development Framework was published in 2021 and outlines the core safeguarding training requirements. The link to this framework is : [safe \(churchofengland.org\)](https://www.churchofengland.org/safe).

Table 1: COGs Safeguarding Training – Role Requirements

Pathway	Course	Delivery Method	COGs personnel
Core Pathways:	Basic Awareness	Online (or in person)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All church post holders PCC members All volunteers working with vulnerable adults or children
	Foundation	Online (or in person)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clergy/PtO Readers/LLMs Anyone in a role involving work with children, young people, or vulnerable adults. Churchwardens Anyone going on to complete any other safeguarding learning pathway. PCC Members
	Leadership	Delivered locally by Portsmouth Diocese Safeguarding Trainer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All clergy holding the bishop's licence, commission, authorisation, or permission All readers and licensed lay ministers holding the bishop's licence Safeguarding officers/leads in all church bodies. Lay ministry staff employed by the PCC Church Wardens
	Senior Leadership	Delivered nationally	Principally for diocesan or national church leadership roles.
Issue Based Pathways	Domestic Abuse	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anyone holding the bishop's licence, commission, authorisation, or permission Safeguarding Officers PCC Members Persons holding any other pastoral role within the Church (advisory)
Role Specific Pathways	Permission to Officiate (inc. readers with PtO)	Delivered locally by Portsmouth Diocese	In the Portsmouth Diocese, anyone holding PtO or who is a Reader Emeritus is required to complete the Leadership Pathway. Where individuals hold more than one role, or serve more than one Church body, they should train at the highest required level.
	Parish Safeguarding Officer induction	Delivered locally by Portsmouth Diocese	Existing/new Parish Safeguarding Officers
	Link Person	Delivered nationally via ZOOM	Anyone undertaking the role of Link Person.
	Support Person DDO/ADDO		Persons taking on the role of Support Person Diocesan Directors of Ordinands and Assistant Diocesan Directors of Ordinands
Toolkit Pathways	Safer recruitment and People Management	Online (with in-person option for local delivery)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Line managers and anyone involved in the recruitment of Church Officers (employees, elected members, and volunteers). Those with responsibility for administering DBS. Safeguarding Officers in all Church bodies.

Professional development for Safeguarding Staff	DSA/CSA Development	Nationally Commissioned/ Delivered	Diocesan safeguarding advisors/case workers
	Trainers Development		Diocesan safeguarding trainers

The parish safeguarding officer (PSO) is responsible for designating required training against roles, ensuring role holders complete their training and reporting training statistics to the PCC at each meeting and at the APCM.

16.0 Communication

16.1 The PSO will ensure a formal statement of adoption of the *House of Bishops' 'Promoting a Safer Church; safeguarding policy statement'* is signed on behalf of the PCC and displayed for all to read in a prominent place the church building.

16.2 The contact details of the PSO, churchwardens and other safeguarding roles should also be displayed, along with information about where to get help with child and adult safeguarding issues e.g., local authority contact details, domestic abuse, and key helplines e.g., ChildLine.

16.3 The display should also indicate where people can access COGS safeguarding handbook.

16.4 The COG's website will have a section on safeguarding with a clear and accessible link to this from its home page. The information included as a minimum on the website will be the formal safeguarding statement (House of Bishops) and this policy, as well as links indicating where to report a concern and the contact details of the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

17.0 Hire out of COGS church premises:

17.1 Any hire agreement with any person/body wishing to hire COGS church premises must contain a provision whereby the person/body hiring the premises agrees to comply with the relevant safeguarding guidance issued by the House of Bishops and the diocese.

17.2 The hire agreement should also contain a provision whereby all those hiring church premises are required to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are always protected, relevant staff have had appropriate DBS checks and that all reasonable steps have been taken to prevent injury, illness, loss or damage occurring.

17.3 The PCC will ensure all those hiring church premises carry full public liability insurance for this or be covered through the church insurance (for example hire for a children's party).

18.0 Use of Social Media

Social media sites enable users to create and share content and keep in touch with other users. They include maintaining a profile on a networking site such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat; writing or commenting on a blog, whether it is your own

or the blog of another person; and taking part in discussions on web forums or message boards. For many, especially young people, using social media is an extension of physical face-to-face relationships. It is therefore important that churches also engage with their community and worshippers through these platforms.

However, this must be done safely to avoid the risk of:

- Forming inappropriate relationships.
- Saying things you should not, such as offensive, sexual or suggestive comments.
- Blurring the boundaries between public work/ministry and your private life.
- Grooming and impersonation.
- Bullying and harassment.

The role of the PCC for Social Media Use

The PCC will approve the use of social media and mobile phones by the church. Where there are Facebook or similar online groups set up on the church's behalf, the PCC must ensure there is a named person to whom all workers are accountable. The named person must be a church officer and should be aware of the account name and password so that they can at any time log on to the account to monitor the communications. The named person should be proactive in fulfilling this role. Communications must be shared with the named person. Church officers remain bound by professional rules of confidentiality. Where there is concern that a young person or adult is at risk of abuse, or they themselves pose a risk of abuse to others, safeguarding procedures must always be followed.

Do:

- Have your eyes open and be vigilant.
- Maintain the utmost integrity – honesty, transparency, consistency, and accountability are key. Treat online communication with children, young people, and adults as you would communication that is face to face. Always maintain the same level of confidentiality.
- Report any safeguarding concerns that arise on social media to the PSO and the DSA.
- Always assume that everything you write is permanent and may be viewed by anyone at any time; and that everything can be traced back to you personally as well as to your colleagues or the church. Always think before you post.
- Draw clear boundaries around your social media usage associated with your private life and your use of different social media for public ministry. Keep church account/s and profiles separate from your personal social media account/s e.g., only use a Facebook page, Twitter or blogs for public ministry, while keeping a separate Facebook profile for private life
- Always ask parents/carers for written consent
- Use and store photographs of children/young people from activities or events in official church publications, or on the church's social media, website and displays.
- Use telephone, text message, email and other messaging services to communicate with young people.
- Allow young people to connect to the church's social media pages.
- Only use an approved church/ministry account to communicate with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults. The named person should be able to access this and review conversations, and the account should be visible to young people and their parents. Young people must be made aware that any communication will be viewed

by all users. Save any messages and threads through social networking sites, so that you can provide evidence to the named person of your exchange when required.

- Avoid one-to-one communication with a child or young person.
- Use clear and unambiguous language in all communications and avoid abbreviations that could be misinterpreted.
- Save and download to hard copy any inappropriate material received through social networking sites or other electronic means and show immediately to the named person, PSO, incumbent or, if appropriate, Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.
- Use passwords and log off promptly after use to ensure that nobody else can use social media pretending to be you.

Do not:

- Use a personal Facebook or any other social media account in your work with children, young people or vulnerable adults.
- Add children, young people or vulnerable adults as friends on your personal accounts.
- Facebook stalk (i.e., dig through people's Facebook pages to find out about them).
- Say anything on social media that you would not be happy saying in a public meeting, to someone's face, writing in a local newspaper or on headed notepaper.
- Comment on photos or posts, or share content, unless appropriate to your church role.
- Use visual media (e.g., Skype, Facetime) for one-to-one conversations with young people – use only in group settings. Do not allow content to contain or share links to other sites that contain
 - Libellous, defamatory, bullying, or harassing statements.
 - Breaches of copyright and data protection.
 - Material of an illegal nature.
 - Offensive sexual or abusive references.
 - Inappropriate language.
 - Anything which may be harmful to a child, young person, or vulnerable adult, or which may bring the church into disrepute or compromise its reputation.

19.0 Monitoring and Review

This safeguarding policy will be reviewed annually by the PSO and presented to the PCC for ratification. The following underpinning procedures will be made available to all church officers, parents, and participants:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Lone Working Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Guidance for those who exercise pastoral care
