



Safeguarding Roles within a Parish

This paper sets out the responsibilities of those who have a safeguarding role within a parish.¹

It uses the following definition of terms:

- **Child** - anyone under the age of 18 years.
- **Adult at risk** - a person aged 18 years or over who is experiencing or at risk of abuse (including neglect). The term 'vulnerable adult' is also used in some legislation.

Parochial Church Council (PCC)

The PCC and the Incumbent (or Priest-in-Charge) are together responsible for ensuring that safeguarding policies and procedures are implemented within the parish.

Specific responsibilities of the PCC are listed in section 4 of the *Safeguarding Policy for the Diocese of Coventry*.²

If a PCC sponsors (in its own name) any activities for adults at risk or children, all PCC members are eligible for an Enhanced DBS Check without barred list information. However, even though everyone is eligible, the Diocese of Coventry only requires that three lay PCC members are DBS checked.³

If a PCC does not sponsor any activities for adults at risk or children (in its own name), churchwardens and other PCC members are not eligible for a DBS Check.

Incumbent or Priest-in-Charge

The Incumbent (or Priest-in-Charge) and the PCC are together responsible for ensuring that safeguarding policies and procedures are implemented within the parish.

The Incumbent (or Priest-in-Charge) has the 'cure of souls' within the parish. Part of this pastoral care is to ensure safeguarding is taken seriously within their church community.

He/she also plays an important role in the response to any safeguarding allegation (unless the allegation has been made against the Incumbent or Priest-in-Charge). This role must be carried out under the guidance of the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.

The Incumbent (or Priest-in-Charge) requires an Enhanced DBS Check with barred list information.

¹ In a team ministry, the PCC may delegate some or all of these responsibilities to the districts within the team.

² Available on the diocesan website at <http://www.dioceseofcoventry.org/SafeguardingResources>

³ This must include all Churchwardens and the PCC Lead on Safeguarding. However, other PCC members may need to be checked to bring the total to three.

Parish Safeguarding Officer

Working under the authority of the PCC, the Parish Safeguarding Officer takes the lead role for safeguarding within the parish. This includes:

- Developing local practices that comply with the *Safeguarding Policy for the Diocese of Coventry*.
- Reporting all safeguarding situations to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.
- In addition to the above, immediately notifying the statutory authorities if an adult or child:
 - Is at imminent risk of harm; or,
 - Discloses any abuse which is a criminal offence.
- Processing DBS checks for volunteers and staff (or delegating it to a Safeguarding Evidence Checker).
- Ensuring that volunteers and staff receive appropriate diocesan safeguarding training.
- Producing an annual Safeguarding Report and presenting it to the PCC.
- Acting as a bridge between the church and the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser for matters relating to the safeguarding of adults at risk and children in the parish.

The Parish Safeguarding Officer is a local contact; they are not expected to be a safeguarding expert or to deliver training. They would never be expected to conduct investigations.

An Enhanced DBS Check with barred list information is required for a Parish Safeguarding Officer.

Churchwardens

Churchwardens are the senior lay representatives within the parish. They carry the responsibility for the oversight of the parish in the absence of the Incumbent (or Priest-in-Charge) and must therefore be fully aware of safeguarding procedures.

If a PCC sponsors (in its own name) any activities for adults at risk or children, the Churchwardens require an Enhanced DBS Check without barred list information. If not, Government rules do not permit Churchwardens to have a DBS check.

PCC Lead on Safeguarding

The PCC must appoint a lay member to take the lead on discussing any safeguarding matters at PCC meetings. This person must not be related to the Incumbent (or Priest-in-Charge).

This role will often be carried out by the Parish Safeguarding Officer. If not, the PCC Lead on Safeguarding requires an Enhanced DBS Check without barred list information.

Children's Advocate

If a PCC sponsors (in its own name) any activities for children, the PCC must appoint a Children's Advocate to whom children can talk about any problems if they wish.

This role will often be carried out by the Parish Safeguarding Officer. If not, the Children's Advocate requires an Enhanced DBS Check with barred list information.

Safeguarding Evidence Checker

DBS checks within the Diocese of Coventry are carried out via an online system provided by Churches' Agency for Safeguarding (CAS). Within a parish, the system can only be accessed by the Parish Safeguarding Officer or by other authorised people.

Additional authorised people are called Safeguarding Evidence Checkers. Their role is to assist the Parish Safeguarding Officer with the processing of DBS checks for volunteers and staff.

They can be ordained or lay, but they must have an email address which they regularly check.

This is an administrative role which is not eligible for a DBS check.