

# Our church is going to be in vacancy.....

Safeguarding is important to the mission and ministry of your church so that all are welcome and can come in safety to know the love of God. During a vacancy the responsibility for safeguarding rests with the church wardens and Area Dean, supported by the PCC and Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO).

## How can the diocesan safeguarding team help?

We can work with your church to ensure you know how to access support during the vacancy, where records will be kept and where to get advice if there are any concerns. We can:

- be in contact with the vicar, church wardens and PSO before the vicar leaves
- continue to offer advice and support during the vacancy
- be in contact with your new vicar as soon as possible once they are in post.

## Who can we ask to help?

The church wardens' main source of help during the vacancy will be their PSO and they should let them know of all concerns or allegations, (except when the concern or allegation is about them or a member of their family). If you don't have a PSO you can get help from your Area Dean, your Archdeacon or, more usually, the safeguarding team at Church House. You can call us, send an email or use our report a concern page [here](#) and we'll get back to you as soon as we can.

You might also be able to find what you're looking for on our website which has lots of advice, resources and template policies and forms for churches: [Safeguarding - Diocese of Derby \(anglican.org\)](https://www.anglican.org.uk/safeguarding).

## What happens during the vacancy?

The church wardens have oversight of safeguarding during the vacancy. This will involve making sure:

- people know that they must report concerns and who to
- volunteers are safely recruited and trained
- activities are run safely, reviewed and insured
- records are kept securely
- the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard is kept updated
- policies are reviewed annually and there is a safeguarding report at the APCM.

How this can be managed and who might be able to help during the vacancy will be discussed at the church's first meeting with the safeguarding team.

## How to 'do' safeguarding in a parish is explained in your:

- Parish Safeguarding Handbook
- on the safeguarding pages of the diocesan and national church websites.
- within the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard.

Your parish safeguarding officer has access to these and details are available on our [website](#).

## Concerns & Allegations

PSOs respond to, record and report all safeguarding concerns and allegations on behalf of the PCC. The diocesan safeguarding office **must** be told, within 24 hours, when:

- the abuse/concern happens at an activity approved by the PCC
- a church officer<sup>1</sup> has, or is alleged to have, committed abuse in church or in another context (or when you're worried their behaviour may lead to abuse)
- someone convicted of a sexual or serious violent offence (including domestic violence) is attending an activity approved by the PCC
- there is the potential for risk or harm for the church – wherever the abuse happened.

The safety of a child or adult is always the priority, so never delay reporting to statutory agencies when you need to.

## Records & Policies

Every church must have a safeguarding policy and must abide by all the Church of England's safeguarding policies and practice guidance. Safeguarding records must be kept confidentially and securely on church premises. The safeguarding team will explore with your church what policies and records you currently have and how and where you might be able to keep them during the vacancy. We will also advise you what records you must keep and for how long.

## Safer Recruitment

Everyone who works in a role that involves contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults **must** be safely recruited and have a DBS check if the role is eligible. Either the PSO needs to process DBS applications or they should contact the diocesan safeguarding team DBS administrator.

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<sup>1</sup> A church officer is anyone, lay or ordained, paid or unpaid, who is appointed or elected to a role on behalf of the church