

How to Support Your Church Safeguarding Officer – Quick Reference Guide (Sept 2022)

Presentation Link	Tasks for the Church Safeguarding officer	Ways Church Council Members can show their support
<p>Session 1: Safeguarding Officer Basics</p>	<p>Complete the Foundation Module, if not already done so.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowing how vital a Church Safeguarding Officer is how could you make sure that they know how much they are appreciated? Just as you do with Pastoral Visitors could 1 Sunday a year be dedicated to highlighting the work the Church Safeguarding Officer does? Could they be commissioned and prayed for? One Sunday, in the autumn, is now dedicated as Safeguarding Sunday. This be a very appropriate occasion. It's important people are not taken for granted. They should be sincerely thanked for their commitment and for the time they spend safeguarding everyone. • Thinking about the fact that safeguarding officer don't need to attend every church council meeting. Would it take pressure of them if you offered to read out their written report rather than ask them to attend every meeting? Perhaps more people would volunteer to take up the role if they realised that they didn't need to attend all meeting? • If your church safeguarding officer worships at a different church, is there anything you can do to help them feel more comfortable and supported? If they don't drive could you offer them a lift? Rather than them being expected to go to the church to pick something up could you drop it off instead. • Do you have someone in your church who oversees Safer Recruitment? Do you know who carried out the process for your safeguarding officer? Normally it would be the Safeguarding Officer who made sure safer recruitment was followed. Obviously, it would not be appropriate in this case so is this something you could do? • Do you know if your safeguarding officer has an identified supervisor? Do you know if regular support sessions are happening? If there not is this something you could volunteer to do? • What could prevent your safeguarding officer attending training? If the training sessions are online does your safeguarding officer have the ability to access it? If they don't is this something you could facilitate? Could you do it together with you overseeing the technology? • If your church safeguarding officer doesn't have time could you attend in their place and there share any notes or personal insight? • If your safeguarding officer identifies a face to face session but doesn't have the means to physically get there could you take them? • As a council member you can help the safeguarding officer by checking council agendas to make sure safeguarding is down. If your safeguarding officer does not have anything to share they may forget to make sure that safeguarding is still on the agenda. If you notice you may decide to contact your safeguarding officer and just check they know the meeting is happening, and again ask if they would like you to present anything. • Consider where safeguarding lies on your Church Council Meeting agendas – if its near the bottom could you ask for it to go near the top?
	<p>Complete the Advanced module training, if not already done so, and refresh your training once every 4 years.</p>	
	<p>Attend an additional safeguarding training session which is relevant to the people using your church.</p>	
	<p>Check safeguarding is an agenda item at every Church Council Meeting.</p>	
	<p>Register to receive the District Newsletter</p>	

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<p>Session 2: recording & Reporting Concerns</p>	<p>Year 1: Help your church to amend and adopt the District created Safeguarding Recording Policy, Procedures & Guidance document.</p>	<p>Step 1: Arrange to meet with your Church Safeguarding Officer and spend time going through chapter 2 of their handbook together. Two heads are always better than one.</p> <p>Step 2: Together decide who is best placed to have access to confidential safeguarding documents and amend your policy to reflect this.</p> <p>Step 3: Talk with your safeguarding officer to decide if they are going to keep electronic records or paper records. Both may require items to be purchased so decide who is going to do this and how.</p> <p>Step 4: Read the Privacy Notice together – its long and discussing it together may help.</p> <p>Step 5: Offer to do some photocopying to help the safeguarding officer if they would struggle with the task.</p> <p>Step 6: Working together, present the model policy to your Church Council. Explain why it is needed and talk through how the model policy will work and what it will achieve.</p>
	<p>All subsequent years: Using the updated version of the District created Safeguarding Recording Policy, Procedures & Guidance document, amend, if required and adopt.</p>	
	<p>Print off and display the latest version of the Responding Well Flow Chart.</p>	

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<p>Session 3: Providing Support - Health & Safety</p>	<p>Give the current version of the Pastoral Visitors Guidance to the Pastoral Visitors Secretary, and ask that they give each Pastoral Visitor a copy.</p>	<p>It would be great if you could sit down with your Safeguarding Officer and look through Chapter 3 in the Church safeguarding Officers Handbook. They will now have the forms and booklets that I introduce in presentation 3, and two pairs of eye is undoubtedly better than one, when digesting new information.</p> <p>The next thing you could do is speak with your council colleagues, and explain their responsibility, in promoting safeguarding and making sure good practice is embedded throughout all aspects of church life.</p>
	<p>Give the current version of the Pastoral Visitors Guidance to the Senior Steward, and ask that they give each Steward a copy.</p>	<p>I am asking your Safeguarding Officer to share a number of resources with others. If these can be shared electronically then that's great but if they can't please will you check that the Safeguarding Officer has access to a photocopier and knows how to use it.</p>
	<p>Give the current version of the Safeguarding & Pastoral Care booklet to the Pastoral Visitors Secretary</p>	<p>In regards to the specific safeguarding aspects of the Health and Safety Risk assessment please can you do two things: Save your Safeguarding Officer time and effort and let them know who completes the Health and safety assessment at your church and give them contact details for that person. Also, please will you explain to the Health and safety assessor, that the specific safeguarding questions need to be asked by the church safeguarding officer, and asked for their cooperation in this matter.</p>
	<p>Give the current version of the Safeguarding & Pastoral Care booklet to the Minister or Lay Pastor</p>	<p>In regards to Church Organised Transport please will you consider supporting your safeguarding officer if they need to have conversations with people already in a role. As I've already said, even if your safeguarding officers is happy to proceed please be by their side and ready to intervene if needed. Perhaps you could suggest a better way of approaching this issue? Perhaps you could oversee the filling in of the forms yourself? The main priority here is that your Church Safeguarding Officer is not made to feel awkward or worried in anyway.</p>
	<p>Working with the property Steward or their representative, complete the Safeguarding Health & Safety Assessment form</p>	<p>Lastly in regards to Activity Risk Assessments please will you seek to improve any areas where a lack of communication is an issue. If you become aware that no risk assessments are being completed please will you speak to group leaders and remind them of their responsibilities.</p>
	<p>Give a copy of the code of Conduct to all leaders of groups aimed at Children and young people.</p>	
	<p>First time: Give group leaders, working with Children, Young people or Vulnerable Adults the Risk</p>	

	<p>Assessment leaflet and that they complete an Activity Risk Assessment for their activity.</p>	
	<p>All subsequent years: Give group leaders, working with Children, Young people or Vulnerable Adults the Risk Assessment leaflet and that they update last year's Risk Assessment if needed.</p>	

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Session 4: Providing Support – Safer Recruitment	First year: Work with your Church Council to amend and adopt the District created 10 Steps to Safer Recruitment policy.	It would be helpful and supportive if you were able to sit down with your safeguarding officer and read all Chapter 4 in the Handbook. I'm not for one moment suggesting they need you to explain what I'm suggesting but rather working on something together can be interesting as you bounce ideas of each other.
	Subsequent Years: Amend, if needed the local church policy and adopt at a Church Council meeting	Its more than likely that work will need to be completed to get up to Connexional standards – for example creating Volunteer Role outlines for each role within the church. Working together you will hopefully come up with a painless solution for getting these completed, and, when they are presented to the Church Council or to the trustees for approval you will be able to explain how they have been created.
	First Year: Create a spreadsheet of all the safeguarding information relating to Safer Recruitment.	All people who potentially may work alone should be given a Lone Work Policy for their protection. I have shared one example with the safeguarding officers but it would be good if together you could consider if this would be applicable for your church.
	Subsequent years: Update the Safer recruitment Spreadsheet, as and when required.	Once the bespoke recruitment and selection policy for your church is ready to present to your church council for approval it would good if you would stand alongside the safeguarding officer and together explain why it's needed and how you agreed on a suitable version which you are sharing today. You may well have a Church Safeguarding Officer who is very experienced and has been in the post for a long time. They may have extensive knowledge and need no practical support at all. But, if you offer your help and your time, demonstrating a willingness to learn and understand, you will let your safeguarding officer know they are appreciated and valued.

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Session 5: Safeguarding Training	Inform people who, either need to complete the Foundation Module Training or need to refresh after 4 years, that they need to do this sometime in the Connexional year.	<p>Identify and inform those who are required to attend safeguarding training and maintain records of attendance. Work with the circuit safeguarding officer and DSO to arrange training.</p> <p>Please you can check on the progress of adopting a Safer recruitment policy for your church. Hopefully a colleague will already be supporting with this but without it people will be left guessing what they should be doing and when.</p> <p>Next please ask your safeguarding officer if they really know who is in what role. If they don't then have a conversation to try and understand why. If my church is anything like your church then people put all their energy into asking people to do things and then completely forget to let me, as church safeguarding officer, know. Carry on recruiting volunteers absolutely, but make sure the safeguarding officer is kept informed.</p> <p>If you have one Safeguarding officer covering several locations then things are even more complicated to oversee so a strategy needs to be devised to offset the multi-location issue.</p> <p>Advise the circuit safeguarding officer and / or DSO of any issues with compliance with safeguarding training, policy or safer recruitment requirements and respond promptly to any requests from them about audit of safeguarding activities.</p> <p>Please will you take time to consider how you would respond if your church safeguarding officer brought on issue of compliance to the Church Council meeting. The correct procedure would be to step in and resolve the issues 'in house' so to speak. But, if anyone in your church has concerns that safeguarding policy and procedure is not being followed they must be encouraged to contact me. People with concerns must not be put off contacting me. They must not be told they are over reaching or creating problems – that is for me to decide.</p> <p>Second, if I contact your church concerning the Safeguarding audit please respond to my communications. Please reassure your Church Council colleagues that I'm here to help. I'm not here to name or shame people; I don't have the authority to close your church etc. I'm her to help and support you. If safeguarding is a burden, let me share the load.</p>

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<p>Session 6: Safeguarding Practise on Church Premises</p>	<p>Provide the Lettings Steward with the updated Church Safeguarding Policy, after it has been adopted by the Church Council.</p>	<p>Please can you smooth the way to a meaningful and proactive relationship being established between the Letting Secretary & the Church Safeguarding Officer. I would hate the letting secretary to think that they are not trusted or though competent enough to manage the letting properly.</p> <p>As a respected member of the church council it would be helpful if you can simply walk the Letting Secretary though the task assigned to the Church Safeguarding Officer and explain that the safeguarding officer is only doing what the Connexional policy requires them to do.</p>
	<p>Check that the Lettings steward is using the Booking Form and the License provided on the TMPC website.</p>	<p>The next thing you, as a Church Council member can do, is to facilitate introductions between the two people. In a small church, or in a church where people have served in the two roles for a long time, these introductions probably won't be necessary. But if your safeguarding officer is new in post or they don't know who the letting secretary is then your help will be very important. It sounds so simple but this could make a big difference.</p>
	<p>Complete a checklist for any letting who wished to use their own Safeguarding Policy.</p>	<p>There may be occasions when an external lettings policy is not so easy to understand and when it's not so easy to see that the points on the checklist are there. If this happens I have encouraged your safeguarding officer to get a second opinion. They may wish to contact the Circuit Safeguarding Officer or myself – either is fine. But you it would be helpful if you offered your time to help and give your opinion.</p> <p>The reality is if you have a large organisation, like Girlguiding UK or the Scouts etc using your building they will have an excellent safeguarding system in place. National organisations working with children or vulnerable adults are required by law to have robust polices, procedure and guidance in place – just as the Methodist Church is. Churches still need to do their due diligence though and read through the lettings safeguarding policy.</p> <p>A church, who is letting a space to a third party is absolutely entitled to ask to see the DBS certificate of group leaders. As a Church Council you should do everything you can to protect the wellbeing of everyone in and associated with you.</p> <p>It is not necessarily the Church Safeguarding Officer's role to ask to see someone's DBS certificate but as a Church Council member you certainly can. Its worth speaking to your safeguarding officer and seeing if they would like your support in this area. They may feel very happy and confident to make a request to hirer's leader however they may also prefer if a Council member would make that request.</p>

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<p>Session 7: promoting Safeguarding</p>	<p>Place an up to date copy of your Church Safeguarding Policy on the Safeguarding Noticeboard.</p> <hr/> <p>Place the two Connexional safeguarding posters on the Church Noticeboard.</p>	<p>Connexional requirement: Please will you meet with your Church Safeguarding Officer and read through chapter 7 of the Safeguarding Handbook. Two pairs of eyes are always useful and even if your help is not needed you will have demonstrated your willingness to get involved. The next thing that maybe helpful it to make sure your Church Safeguarding Officer is able to edit and print off the documents they need. Again, this is a very simple suggestion but if they can't print the posters off then they can display them. Lastly it would be good to encourage your Church Council colleagues to familiarise themselves with the safeguarding noticeboard and the contents so that they are in a strong position to signpost people if needed.</p> <p>District Suggestions: Really this is about going back and seeing where your church is up to in regards to implementing the 3 proposals. Have the 3 suggestions already been discussed and are plan already in place? I would hope that the Church Council members who watches sessions 2 and 4 will already be proving support. If this is the first time you have heard about my 3 suggestions then it would be good to go back to the Church Safeguarding officer and discuss the ideas again. It might be that they weren't acted on previously because your church was not meeting due to Covid, or perhaps you had had a change in minister. It will never be too late to put the ideas in place.</p> <p>Using your Church Building: Simply taking time to read everything in chapter 7 of the Church Safeguarding Officers Handbook, alongside your Church Safeguarding Officer, will be really helpful. Share ideas of what is and is not needed for your church. One thing I did point out to your safeguarding officer was that I'm not suggesting plastering the walls of your church in safeguarding posters but rather thinking strategically about your building and about how it's used. You may wish to offer to print of some of the posters I've suggested – all the links are on the District Website in the safeguarding section. You simply need to select the posters relevant to your church and, download, print and display.</p> <p>Your church safeguarding officer may not want or need any practical help but the fact you have shown an interest and are willing to help will demonstrate your commitment to safeguarding in general and your safeguarding officer more specifically.</p>