

Beacon Parishes Mission Community
Policy for the Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults 2019
(Approved by the Diocese in March 2019)

Date of Reviews April 2023 February 2025

The February 2025 outcomes of the review are shown in italics. These include changes and developments to previous policies. These must be implemented.

The PCCs of the Beacon Parishes have agreed the following policy statement:

“As members of the PCC, we commit our church community to the support, nurture, protection and safeguarding of all, especially the young and vulnerable. We recognise that our work with children, young people and vulnerable adults is the responsibility of the whole church community.

Our safeguarding work is undertaken within a legislative framework supported by Government Guidance which sets out a range of safeguarding duties, responsibilities and best practice to which we adhere. We are fully committed to acting within current guidance, national frameworks and the Diocesan policy statement and safeguarding procedures.

We have used the Diocese of Exeter Safeguarding Resources Toolkit to update this policy.

Principles

Safeguarding (towards a Safer Church) is the responsibility and duty of everyone in the church community.

The following principles determine our safeguarding work as we aim for best practice in the delivery of this policy.

The welfare of the child, young person and vulnerable adult is paramount

Transparency and openness and accountability will drive how we work in partnership with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, Children and Adult Social Care Services, the Police, Probation Service, and other agencies to safeguard children and vulnerable adults.

We will demonstrate respect, integrity and the ability to listen to all.

We are committed to the prevention of abuse and the active management of risk

We will show compassion and vigilance in all our safeguarding work.

We will regularly evaluate our efforts in promoting a safer church.

Practice

We welcome staff and volunteers who are recruited in accordance with House of Bishops' Policy Statement 2017 "Promoting a Safer Church". We take into account the Diocesan resources on Safeguarding and the DBS checks. This means that

those who are employed or who volunteer to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults are suitable for the role, that they know what the role entails and that they are supported in carrying it out.

There is clear evidence that the safer recruitment procedures, as determined by the Diocese of Exeter, have been followed in the recent appointment, (December 2024) of the new Church Administrator. The Diocese supported and approved the process used.

However, this method has not yet been implemented in the appointment of volunteers working with children, young people and vulnerable adults. This is a priority so that the Beacon parishes are compliant with the House of Bishops policy statement of 2017, updated 2024.

Therefore all volunteer posts will be advertised locally, candidates will complete a simple application form, giving references, sign a confidential declaration form, and be interviewed by the leader of the activity with a Church representative

All leaders of activities undertaken with children or vulnerable adults will hold a current DBS certificate. No activity will take place without a DBS checked person present.

When engaged in activities with children and vulnerable adults we will always do so within sight of another adult. We will ensure that staffing ratios are appropriate for the ages of the children and young people and the type of activity. Details of the requirements are available in the Safeguarding file of each church and in the Parish Safeguarding handbook online in the Diocese of Exeter safeguarding resources.

Photographs will only be taken, displayed or stored with written consent from an appropriate adult. If there is any doubt, do not take photographs.

The parish safeguarding representatives for each of the Beacon parish churches must ensure that the safeguarding posters and files are easily accessible in each church.

The Safeguarding team

The team consists of the Rector, The Church Administrator and the Safeguarding representatives for each of the Beacon parishes.

Contact details of the Diocesan safeguarding team and the safeguarding representatives for each of the Beacon parishes is available on the Mission Community website.

The Parish Safeguarding representative is the point of contact for any concerns. He / She ensures that any concerns about a child or an adult, or the behaviour of an adult towards others which are reported to her, are promptly responded to in

accordance with the statutory child and adult safeguarding procedures. These are recorded and reported to the Incumbent and the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer.

The Parish Safeguarding representative currently administers the Disclosure and Barring Service checks and maintains those records.

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are now implemented by the Church Administrator as the DBS Verifier in cooperation with the Safeguarding representatives.

All such records will be stored securely in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation of May 2018. It is everyone's responsibility to make themselves available for such checks when required.

In line with the Parish Safeguarding Responsibilities checklist for the PCC, a local advocate has been appointed. This person may only support/listen to individuals who seek help when referred by the Rector and Safeguarding Representative. She supports the work of the Safeguarding representative and is the Safeguarding lead on the PCC.

Each safeguarding representative will report regularly to the PCC. The role of a local advocate will be determined by the Rector as a need arises.

The contact details of the Parish Safeguarding Representative and the Diocesan Safeguarding team as well as that of Childline are displayed in the church porches, vestry, church halls and toilets.

A Church Warden and /or Safeguarding representative will check that there is always easily visible access to the contact details.

The Safeguarding representative and the Rector are the points of contact for any concerns and allegations. They ensure that any concerns about a child or adult, or the behaviour of an adult towards others, which are reported to them are responded to promptly in accordance with the statutory child and adult safeguarding procedures. These are recorded and reported to the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer. They will ensure that any complaint made regarding a vulnerable person, who may have been harmed or is in significant danger will be reported immediately. They will fully cooperate with statutory agencies during any investigation concerning a member of the church community or any other person.

We are committed to cooperate fully with the Diocese and statutory agencies during any investigation into abuse, including when allegations are made against a member of the church community. The Incumbent and Honorary Assistant Priests will be primarily responsible for this

We will care for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons and work with others to ensure that they are supported appropriately.

All PCC members will be familiar with the procedures for responding to safeguarding concerns and allegations that occur in their parish. A guide to this process is available in the safeguarding file in each of the Beacon parishes.

There is clear evidence that the concerns that have been brought to the attention of the Rector, Safeguarding Representative and the Local Advocate have been responded to appropriately and supported by the Diocese of Exeter.

Further training will ensure that any concerns are shared promptly by all. Confidentiality will be maintained.

Training

Training is made available from the Diocesan team and online through the Diocese of Exeter safeguarding website.

All church officers, including church wardens, PCC members, safeguarding representatives, bell tower captain and bell ringers, sides - persons, Church Administrator and director of music and leaders of Lunch Club should be up to date on safeguarding training at the appropriate level to their role. All training requirements for church officers are listed in the safeguarding file in each church.

It is now mandatory that all the above roles have the appropriate level of training as set out in the training modules listed in the Safeguarding parish file and on the Diocesan website. This must be updated every three years. This is a priority for action.

Diocesan training events for the PCC and other are publicised through the Beacon, the magazine of the Beacon Parishes Mission Community. They are advertised on the Diocesan website.

Training events on specific needs such as dementia awareness are supported as part of the commitment to develop our culture of "informed vigilance" as described by the Diocese.

Domestic Abuse/Violence awareness is currently provided by the Diocese.

The Parish Safeguarding Officer maintains the list of those who attend training events and it is everyone's responsibility to inform the Safeguarding Representative of training events that they attend.

The Church Administrator will maintain the record of completed training courses and it is the responsibility of all Church Officers to keep her informed.

Before the next review in 2026 the Church Administrator will become the 'owner' with the Rector of the Parish Dashboard which is currently being updated by the Diocese so that it benefits the smooth implementation of the Safeguarding practice. This will be able to be accessed securely by the Diocese.

Health and safety procedures are in place and displayed in church.

The level of risk is assessed for all activities. Church Wardens are asked to inform either the Safeguarding Representative or the local Advocate of new activities.

Appropriate insurance cover through Ecclesiastical is provided for all activities undertaken.

There must be clear evidence of the outcome of the assessment provided by the leader of each new activity.

Children normally will not be allowed in the church tower but must always be accompanied by adults who are DBS checked.

No adults should be in the church tower alone.

Hiring of the church halls

We will ensure that any individual organisation renting/using our premises for activities involving children, young people or vulnerable adults is aware of our safeguarding policy and aware of their own individual responsibilities to have appropriate safeguarding policies and processes in place, including safer recruitment. All leaders of these groups will be asked to complete the Diocese of Exeter Safeguarding Statement.

Whilst some Statements were signed by those hiring church halls at the time of the last policy (2023) these will now be distributed again. This applies to both organisations hiring church halls as well as individuals doing so for 'one off' events.

Pastoral Care

The procedures will be reviewed in line with the principles and practice of this policy.

The principles and practice of the Pastoral teams across the Beacon parishes will be reviewed annually in line with this review.

This policy is available with other policies in our churches and on the website.

This policy will be available on the website when it has been approved by the PCCs and signed off by the Rector at the first PCC meetings in March.

This has been a far - reaching review. The actions that are highlighted in italics are essential. They protect children, young people and vulnerable adults as well as protecting all who must strive to promote a safer church. The first step to achieve this is to ensure that the practice that is adopted is compliant with what is required of us by the Diocese of Exeter and the House of Bishops of the Church of England and all legislation on Safeguarding.

February 2025

