



Promoting a Safer Church

House of Bishops Safeguarding Statement

VERSION 2 2026

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Foreword

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1. Introduction

The care and protection of everyone, but particularly children, young people and vulnerable adults involved in church activities is the responsibility of the whole Church. Everyone who participates in the life of the church has a role to play in promoting a Safer Church for all.

The Church of England, its archbishops, bishops, clergy and leaders are committed to safeguarding as an integral part of the life and ministry of the church. It is who we are and what we do – it is part of our DNA as Christians. Safeguarding means the action the Church takes to promote a safer culture:

- Promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults,
- Working to prevent abuse from occurring,
- Seeking to protect those that are at risk of being abused and
- Responding well to those that have been abused.

We will take care to identify where a person may present a risk to others and offer support to them, whilst robustly taking steps to mitigate such risks. The Church of England affirms the 'Whole Church' approach to safeguarding. This approach encompasses a commitment to **consistent** practice across all church bodies, and an expectation that everyone associated with the Church has a role to play. The Church will take appropriate steps to maintain a safer environment for all and to fully and positively practice Christ's Ministry towards children, young people and vulnerable adults and to respond sensitively and compassionately to their need, and the needs of all, in order to help keep them safe from harm.

2. Principles

Gospel

The Church is called to share the good news of God's salvation through Jesus Christ. The life of our communities and institutions is integral to how we address this task. The good news speaks of welcome for all, with a particular regard for those who are most vulnerable, into a community where the value and dignity of every human being is affirmed and those in positions of responsibility and authority are truly trustworthy. Being faithful to our call to share the gospel therefore compels us to take with the utmost seriousness the challenge of preventing abuse from happening and responding well where it has.

Legislation

The Church recognises the personal dignity and rights of all children, young people and adults, as enshrined in the Human Rights Act 1998 and the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Safeguarding work is undertaken within the government's legislative framework and translated into Safeguarding Codes of Practice which set out a range of safeguarding legal requirements and associated guidance.

Assumptions

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

- The welfare of the child, young person and vulnerable adult is paramount
- A commitment to the prevention of abuse
- Promoting a safe and healthy culture of informed curiosity
- Embedding safeguarding into the heart and soul of our activities
- Committing to our own learning and compliance with Codes of Practice
- The active and appropriate management of risk
- Integrity, respect and listening to all
- Transparency and openness
- Learning and accountability when things go wrong
- Regular evaluation and review to continually improve practice

3. Safeguarding Standards

All Church of England bodies will:

- Have safe and healthy cultures, effective leadership, resourcing and scrutiny arrangements necessary to deliver high-quality safeguarding practices and outcomes.
- Have in place a planned range of measures which together are effective in preventing abuse in their context.
- Ensure risk assessments, safety plans and associated processes are of a high quality and result in positive outcomes. The assessment and management of risk is underpinned by effective partnership working.
- Ensure victims and survivors experience the timeliness and quality of Church bodies' responses to disclosures, and their subsequent support, as positively meeting their needs, including their search for justice and helping their healing process.
- Ensure all those engaged in safeguarding-related activity in Church bodies receive the type and level of learning, professional development, support and supervision necessary to respond to safeguarding situations, victims and survivors, and respondents, effectively.

4. Putting the Standards into practice

4.1 What you must do

The mandatory requirements for implementing these standards are set out in Safeguarding Codes of Practice. These are available on the Safeguarding e-manual. Codes of Practice are approved by General Synod following extensive consultation and come with a legal duty to comply with the items in the blue boxes, which give clarity around what is a “Must-Do”.

All of the requirements are aimed at a “relevant person”. Depending on the context, this could be the bishop, the DSO, the PSO, or everyone who has a role in a Church. Sometimes, the relevant person may not be the person who has to carry out the action, but who still has the responsibility for ensuring the action happens.

Codes of Practice also contain guidance. This guidance is not mandatory but will help Church Bodies to deliver the requirements to a good standard.

4.2 How you do it

The Codes of Practice are by necessity, technical, legalistic documents. The requirements and guidance from these Codes have been translated into parish focused resources, which are available in the Parish Safeguarding Toolkit. These resources take people through key safeguarding processes with flowcharts, How To guides and templates, in order that everyone can meet the requirements of the relevant Code of Practice.

4.3 How you monitor progress

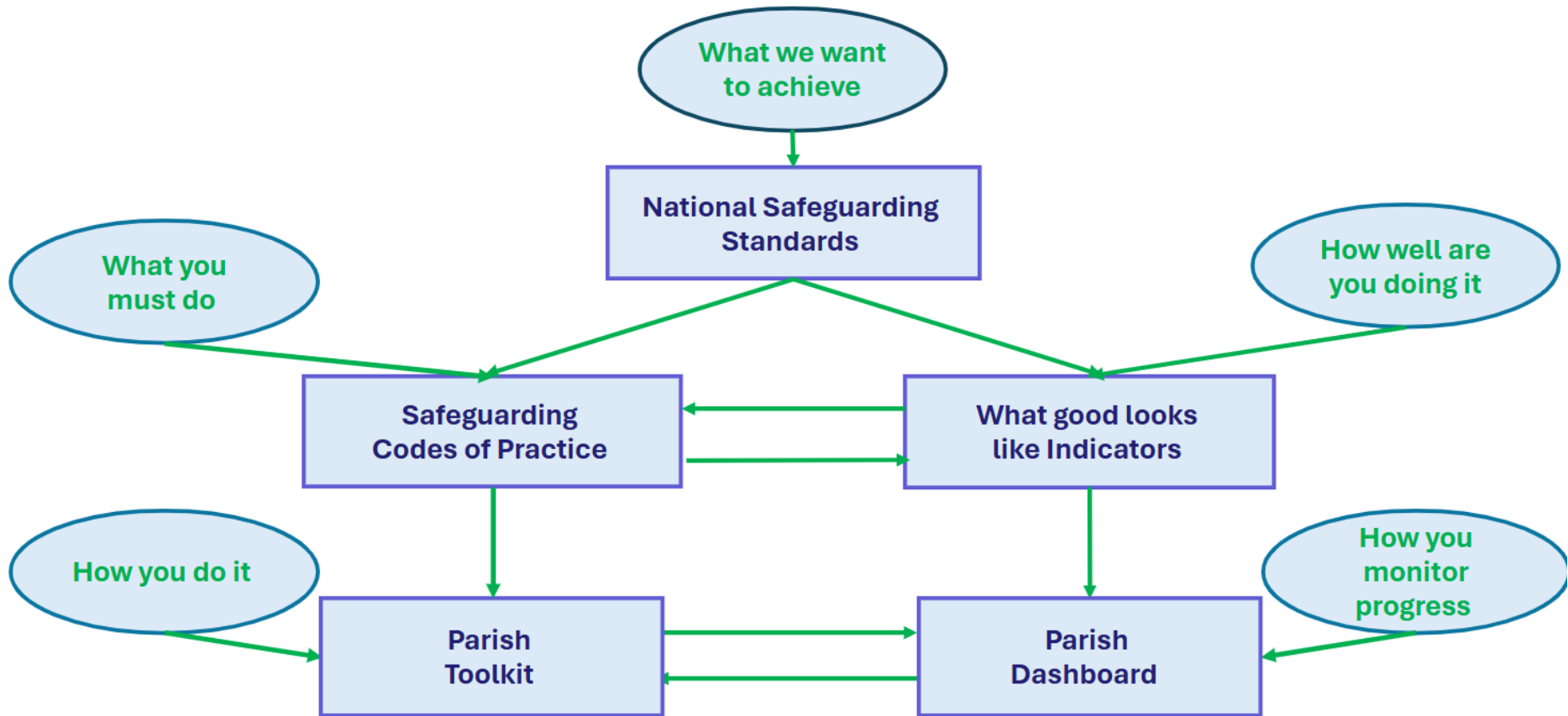
Progress at a parish level can be monitored using the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard, which provides links to the Codes and the Toolkit.

At a diocesan/cathedral level, progress is monitored in a number of ways, including via Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panels and Cathedral Equivalents.

4.4 How well you are doing it

The National Safeguarding Standards set out a number of “What good looks like” indicators for each Standard. These indicators help you know how well your church body meets each Standard.

Promoting a Safer Church



Culture, Leadership, and Capacity

Church bodies have safe and healthy cultures, effective leadership, resourcing, and scrutiny arrangements necessary to deliver high quality safeguarding practices and outcomes

Codes of Practice

Responding Well to Victims and Survivors of Abuse

Safeguarding Children, Young People, and Vulnerable Adults



Resources

Safeguarding Pastoral Principles

Thirtyone:eight Culture Dice

Safecaring Cards

Spiritual Abuse Know How

Coercive Prayer Know How

Prevention

Church bodies have in place a planned range of measures which together are effective in preventing abuse in their context

Codes of Practice

Safer Recruitment and People Management

Parish Code



Resources

Parish Safeguarding Dashboards

Guidelines for Safer Working

Running Events and Activities Toolkit

Lone Working Toolkit

Risk Assessment Toolkit

Abse Know How's

Recognising, Assessing, and Managing Risk

Risk assessments, safety plans and associated processes are of a high quality and result in positive outcomes. The assessment and management of risk is underpinned by effective partnership working

Codes of Practice

Reporting a Safeguarding Concern or Allegation

Managing a Safeguarding Concern or Allegation

Parish Code



Resources

GDPR Toolkit

Risk Assessment Toolkit

Managing a Church Safety Plan Toolkit

Victims and Survivors

Victims and survivors experience the timeliness and quality of Church bodies' responses to disclosures, and their subsequent support, as positively meeting their needs, including their search for justice and helping their healing process

Codes of Practice

Reporting a Safeguarding Concern or Allegation

Managing a Safeguarding Concern or Allegation

Responding Well to Victims and Survivors of Abuse



Resources

4 R's Toolkit

Responding Well Toolkit

Learning, Supervision, and Support

All those engaged in safeguarding related activity in Church bodies receive the type and level of learning, professional development, support and supervision necessary to respond to safeguarding situations, victims and survivors, and respondents, effectively

Codes of Practice

Learning and Development Framework

Safer Recruitment and People Management



Resources

Learning and Development Toolkit

Safer Recruitment and People Management Toolkit

Safeguarding Virtual Library