

Parish Safeguarding Worksheets

The Church of England published its *National Safeguarding Standards Quality Assurance Framework* in October 2023. The introduction to Standard 1 says:

“We know from other sectors that simply knowing and following procedures is not enough to do safeguarding well. To keep people safe, and respond well when abuse happens, organisations need to have healthy cultures and effective leadership. Organisations with unhealthy cultures will be more susceptible to unhealthy behaviour becoming abusive behaviour, and they will be unsafe spaces for people to disclose abuse or to get the response they need. Leaders have a key role to play in shaping culture.”

National Safeguarding Standards and QA Framework, page 7

These worksheets aim to help clergy and PCC members in shaping a healthy culture.

How can these worksheets be used?

Safeguarding Worksheet 1A has been designed to help each PCC with the mandatory requirement to regularly review their church culture.

The remaining worksheets have been designed to help promote good practice in accordance with the *National Safeguarding Standards*. These are not mandatory.

The National Safeguarding Team recognises that it takes time to develop a healthy culture, and it recommends a three-year cycle for implementing and reviewing the *Safeguarding Standards*.¹ The worksheets can be used as part of this cycle.

What is the status of these worksheets?

These worksheets have been designed by Clearly Simpler, the developer of *Safeguarding Dashboards*.

PCCs are welcome to use them – and any feedback would be very much appreciated. Please give us your feedback here...

<https://forms.office.com/r/AqqckNnJ4G>

¹ *National Safeguarding Standards and QA Framework*, page 4

Safeguarding Worksheet 1A

Promoting a healthy and safe culture

Safeguarding Standard 1 relates to culture, leadership and capacity.

The Church of England published *Responding Well to Victims and Survivors of Abuse* in 2021. This includes the following mandatory requirements:

- 1.1 *Church Bodies must promote a healthy, compassionate and safe culture which facilitates disclosures.*
- 1.2 *Church Bodies must regularly review their culture using the section 'Characteristics of a healthy and safe church cultures', to consider how their culture can be made healthier and safer, and make any changes identified. This must be done with the involvement of victims and survivors.*

Section 1: Responding well to all victims and survivors

Therefore, the PCC must consider how they can better promote a healthy and safe church culture.

In preparation for the PCC meeting

The incumbent or Parish Safeguarding Officer should consult with known victims and survivors.

This worksheet (including the 'Characteristics of a healthy and safe church cultures') should be distributed to PCC members prior to the meeting.

Ask PCC members to consider these questions:

- What are some of the strengths of our church culture?
- What are the main weaknesses of our church culture?

During the PCC meeting

1. Ask PCC members to share their answers to the above two questions.
2. Ask the PCC to identify some specific actions that will better promote a safe, compassionate and healthy culture within the church.

Ensure the actions are recorded in the minutes of the meeting – What? ...Who? ...When?

Repeating this discussion

The National Safeguarding Team recommends a three-year cycle for implementing and reviewing the *Safeguarding Standards*.²

This worksheet should be used at least once during this three-year cycle.

² [National Safeguarding Standards and QA Framework](#) - page 4

Characteristics of healthy and safe church cultures

Communication patterns

- The mode of communication adopted by people is “genuine dialogue”, a respectful, person-centred exchange in which all people are open to being influenced, rather than “monologue disguised as dialogue.”
- There is encouragement and welcoming of different perspectives and views.
- People do not feel they are “taking a risk” by expressing different views to other members of the community.
- People do not have anxiety or fear about raising concerns.

Behaviour patterns

- There is absence of coercive and/or controlling behaviour by ordained and non-ordained people and a “command and control” style of leadership.
- “Poor behaviour” (e.g. bullying) is challenged and resolved when it occurs.
- There is no evasion of responsibility to address difficult situations – for example, senior clergy or staff are not reallocated different roles when safeguarding concerns are raised about them, and the matter is addressed.
- Those involved in the Church Body support each other through difficult times.

Relationships

- Power is shared and distributed instead of being vested in a few people.
- Leadership styles are inclusive and consultative rather than controlling.
- There are no powerful elites or cliques dominating the life and affairs of the Church Body.
- Safe boundaries between people are understood and observed.
- No one is isolated or left out of the Church Body’s life and activities.

Self-reflexivity

- Collectively and individually, the Church community devotes time to reflect on their behaviours and relationships.
- The tendency towards, and dangers of, clerical deference are acknowledged and actively guarded against.
- People are aware of the impact they can have on others.
- Feedback from others (for example, about communication style and behaviour) is welcomed.
- Leaders in the Church Body learn from failures and reviews and take appropriate actions to seek to prevent any recurrence.

Privacy and data protection

- The importance of protecting peoples’ personal data and privacy is understood.
- People feel safe in sharing personal information because they know their privacy is taken seriously.
- People know how information about them will be used and they can trust people to use it appropriately to follow up their safeguarding concerns.

Safeguarding Worksheet 1B

Promoting the welfare of vulnerable groups

Safeguarding Standard 1 relates to culture, leadership and capacity.

An indicator of 'what good looks like' is:

- 1.6 *Those in leadership roles engage with and promote the welfare and voice of children, vulnerable adults, victims and survivors of abuse, as well as those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse.*

National Safeguarding Standards and QA Framework - page 8

Therefore, the PCC is asked to consider how they can encourage those in leadership roles to better promote the welfare of vulnerable groups.

In preparation for the PCC meeting

This worksheet should be distributed to PCC members prior to the meeting.

Ask PCC members to consider these questions:

- What vulnerable groups do we have in our church?
- How could those in leadership roles better engage with and promote their welfare?

During the PCC meeting

Please note that, for reasons of confidentiality, PCC members should not expect to be told about individuals who are victims and survivors of abuse, or those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse.

The following discussion should be restricted to categories of people. Individuals people must not be identified.

1. Ask PCC members to share their answers to the above two questions.
2. Ask the PCC to choose two actions that will encourage those in leadership roles to better promote the welfare of vulnerable groups.

Ensure the actions are recorded in the minutes of the meeting – What? ...Who? ...When?

Repeating this discussion

The National Safeguarding Team recommends a three-year cycle for implementing and reviewing the *Safeguarding Standards*.³

This worksheet should be used at least once during this three-year cycle.

³ *National Safeguarding Standards and QA Framework - page 4*

Safeguarding Worksheet 4

Victims and survivors of abuse

Safeguarding Standard 4 relates to victims and survivors.

The *Our Parish* booklet includes the following indicators of 'what good looks like'.

Our parish:

- Hears, respects, believes and genuinely cares for those who are reporting abuse.
- Responds to safeguarding disclosures in a victim-centred and trauma-informed way.
- Is aware of the routes to disclosure and the processes that follow and can communicate that to those who report abuse.
- Acts on safeguarding concerns appropriately, transparently and in a timely manner.
- Fulfils the support requirements set out in the 'Responding Well to Victims and Survivors of Abuse' House of Bishops' Guidance.
- Also supports victims and survivors of non-Church based abuse, abuse within churches other than the Church of England, and those with broader safeguarding issues (e.g., mental health, homelessness) in accessing relevant support services.
- Ensures that the Bible and Christian theology is used with victims and survivors sensitively and with their consent, to provide care and support.

Our Parish booklet - page 3

**We want to consult with some victims and survivors of abuse
before Safeguarding Worksheet 4 is drafted.**

FOR CONSULTATION

Safeguarding Worksheet 5A

Supporting people in safeguarding roles

Safeguarding Standard 5 relates to learning, supervision and support.

Two indicators of 'what good looks like' are:

- 5.8 *Those in safeguarding roles report they are well supported, feel part of a team within their setting, have strong connections with other safeguarding professionals and a healthy work-life balance.*
- 5.4 *Clergy are provided with the type and quantity of support that will meet their emotional and psychological needs arising from the traumatic impact of their work.*

National Safeguarding Standards and QA Framework - page 20

Therefore, the PCC is asked to consider how they can better support people in their safeguarding roles.

In preparation for the PCC meeting

Although safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone, some people have key safeguarding roles. For example: clergy, Parish Safeguarding Officer, churchwardens and those administering DBS checks.

The Standing Committee should make a list of people who have key safeguarding roles, and then invite them to a PCC meeting.

In preparation for the meeting, ask them to consider these questions:

- What are the main challenges of your safeguarding role?
- How could the church better support you in your role?

During the PCC meeting

1. Ask those with key safeguarding roles (including clergy and the Parish Safeguarding Officer) to share their answers to the above two questions.
2. Ask PCC members to feedback what they have heard. Are there any common themes?
3. Ask the PCC to identify some specific actions to support people in their safeguarding roles.

Ensure the actions are recorded in the minutes of the meeting – What? ...Who? ...When?

Repeating this discussion

The National Safeguarding Team recommends a three-year cycle for implementing and reviewing the *Safeguarding Standards*.⁴

This worksheet should be used at least once during this three-year cycle.

⁴ *National Safeguarding Standards and QA Framework - page 4*