

Diocesan Training Strategy – update 2025

Introduction

Our Diocesan Training Strategy in the Diocese of Norwich is written in line with the Learning and Development Framework and will be updated in line with national policy.

The Learning and Development Framework 2024 sets out details of the Church's safeguarding learning pathways, and expectations of Church officers in respect of those pathways. The safeguarding learning pathways support participants in developing and maintaining the necessary values, beliefs, knowledge, and skills to safeguard and protect children, young people, and vulnerable adults as outlined in the 'Promoting a Safer Church' House of Bishops policy statement (2017).

Ensuring that Safeguarding Learning is up to date helps embed a culture where people feel safe, and abuse can be spotted and dealt with in an appropriate and timely fashion. People should be encouraged to engage with the required safeguarding learning for their roles. However, where this encouragement fails it is important to remind people that all current safeguarding policy and practice guidance has been approved by General Synod as Safeguarding Code and must be followed by all relevant persons. The Safeguarding Code replaces the former requirement to have 'due regard' to safeguarding guidance.

The Safeguarding Code applies to people who have safeguarding responsibilities within the Church, including all authorised clergy, bishops, archdeacons, licensed readers and lay workers, churchwardens, members of parochial church councils and cathedral chapters. The full list of relevant people is set out within the Learning and Development Framework. In practice, safeguarding policy uses the terms Church bodies and Church officers to cover relevant people.

Parish life is at the heart of the Diocese, and a healthy Christian community should be one which ensures and nurtures the wellbeing of all. Safeguarding therefore, needs to be embedded in all aspects of the life and ministry of the Church in order to ensure that the culture of safeguarding is integral throughout all of our church communities. The facilitation and delivery of safeguarding training and development within the Diocese of Norwich is seen in this context. It is essential therefore, that churches and church officers understand safeguarding as a theological imperative, rooted in the nature and love of God, outworking in basic commitments to giving equal worth to all, practising reciprocal pastoral care, and treating those who are most vulnerable with respect and dignity.

Content

Training will be focused on building healthy communities with a demonstrable culture of safety, in which the wellbeing of all is ensured and nurtured. Training modules reflect the national requirements across all dioceses for ensuring healthy safeguarding practice, responding well to victims and survivors of abuse in the church, and church community context. They emphasise the need to work in co-operation with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser and with statutory agencies in all safeguarding matters. Training for all church roles is to heighten and raise safeguarding awareness, to include safer working practices which emphasise the importance of maintaining appropriate and proper boundaries, as well as exercising a culture of "respectful uncertainty".

Although in the past, "safeguarding" was considered very much in the light of "Child Protection" it is now generally regarded as having a much broader remit, addressing the needs not only of children

and young people, but also of adults. In the church context, adult vulnerability may be identified through specific conditions, such as disability or ill health, or because of specific situations, for example because of the power imbalance between a priest and people for whom he or she has a duty of care. Within the Church, all are welcomed, including those who pose risk; and in most situations, church officers will be unaware of any risks posed. The Church is therefore uniquely challenged to provide a safe environment for all who attend, especially children and all those who are vulnerable.

Training Arrangements

Safeguarding training is to be led and delivered by appropriately trained, experienced and skilled trainers who understand the statutory requirements of safeguarding children and adults, and how these are carried out within the church context.

The Safeguarding Learning and Development Framework provides the framework for safeguarding learning and development across all Church of England communities. It also sets out the core safeguarding learning pathway training modules which are a mandatory requirement determined for clergy, for those holding licence to officiate as well as for specific church roles and responsibilities.

It is recognised that participants need the opportunity to reflect and explore with the trainer as well as with one another, some of the particular and complex challenges which they face in their work with children and adults who may be vulnerable. Participants may also have vulnerabilities due to having experienced abuse in the past, and trainers will need to be both aware and sensitive in taking this into consideration, whilst making provision for any attendee who may become distressed.

Those participating in training are also likely to need some opportunity to reflect on the relationship between safeguarding issues and their beliefs as articulated in theological language if safeguarding learning is to become thoroughly integrated with their behaviour, relationships, and culture within the life of the church.

Planning

Using our Diocesan Database, we are able to monitor safeguarding training compliance; produce quarterly reviews of training progress and ensure that we are offering enough training opportunities for the core pathways to meet the needs of those requiring training.

The Training Plan is drafted annually in August, and includes the following pathways:

- Leadership Pathway
- PtO Pathway
- Face to Face sessions covering the Basic Awareness and Foundation modules for those who cannot access online training
- PSO Induction sessions
- PSO quarterly Networking sessions.

The number of sessions planned is based on the data analysis aforementioned but is regularly reviewed, and amended to meet any further training needs identified. Attendance on training courses must be booked in advance, and certification is only upon completion of all training requirements specific to the module undertaken.

The Training Plan for succeeding years will be devised and based upon evaluation of the training delivered throughout the year, along with the ongoing need throughout the Diocese, as well as any changes made by NST.

Training Delivery

Training sessions should include two people in a leadership role: either two trainers, or one trainer and one experienced and skilled co-worker, in order that the needs of participants can be fully addressed. Two trainers are generally required to ensure there is a change of voice, pace and approach, since both the delivery and receipt of safeguarding training may be experienced as emotionally draining within the leadership and specialist courses dealing with aspects of abuse. Therefore a 'listener role' may on occasion be needed, usually one of the trainers, or in larger groups, alongside trainers.

Training Requirements

The Learning and Development Framework 2024 applies to people who have safeguarding responsibilities within the Church, including all authorised clergy, bishops, archdeacons, licensed readers and lay workers, churchwardens, members of PCCs and cathedral chapters. The full list of relevant people is set out below. In practice, safeguarding policy uses the terms 'church bodies' and 'church officers' to cover relevant people.

The list of relevant people is as follows:

- a clerk in Holy Orders who is authorised to officiate in accordance with the Canons.
- an archbishop.
- a diocesan, suffragan or assistant bishop.
- an archdeacon.
- a person who is licensed to exercise the office of reader or serve as a lay worker.
- a churchwarden.
- members of a parochial church council.
- members of the Chapter of a cathedral.
- the Diocesan Board of Finance for a diocese.
- any other diocesan body as defined by section 19(1) of the Dioceses, Pastoral and Mission Measure 2007.
- a body established to carry out a mission initiative as defined by section 80(1) of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011.
- a person who is an officer or member of staff of the Archbishops' Council, or who provides services to the Archbishops' Council, and whose work to any extent relates to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.
- a person who works (on any basis) in a diocese or parish, or at a cathedral or for the purposes of a mission initiative, and whose work to any extent relates to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

A Bishop may not license or authorise a reader or lay worker unless they are satisfied that the candidate has undergone suitable and appropriate training relating to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults within the church and church community context. The Bishop of Norwich supports this, and continues to work in conjunction with the Diocesan Safeguarding Team in the promotion of a safer church. In addition, the government guidance on how organisations address child protection issues, 'Working Together, 2018, sets out that "All staff should be given a mandatory

induction, which includes familiarisation with child protection responsibilities and procedures to be followed if anyone has any concerns about a child's safety or welfare".

Current courses

The annual training programme is set by the Diocesan Safeguarding Trainer, in consultation with the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor, the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Group and the Lead Bishop for Safeguarding. Training is delivered by the Diocesan Safeguarding Trainer, and Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor.

Summary of courses:

Part 1 – Courses accessed via the online training portal.

Basic Awareness

Required attendees are:

- All Church Officers, staff in church bodies, and bellringers
- Anyone going on to complete any other safeguarding learning pathway.

Foundation

Required attendees are:

- Anyone holding the bishop's licence, commission, authorisation, or permission (including clergy, PtO, Readers, LLMs).
- Anyone (volunteers and employees) in a role which involves work with children, young people, or vulnerable adults, including Tower Captains and ringing teachers.
- Churchwardens.
- Pre-ordination or licence students, prior to Stage 1 Panel.
- Vergers.
- PCC Members / Lay Chapter Members / DBF Trustees.
- Members of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel.
- Non-executive Chapter members.

Safer Recruitment & People Management Training

Safeguarding learning is mandatory for all posts that fall within the scope of the guidance on Safer Recruitment & People Management.

Learning requirements will vary according to the role and responsibility as set out in the Safeguarding Learning and Development Framework. However, all those involved in the recruitment, appointment and management/supervision of roles that fall within the scope of this guidance must undertake the training on Safer Recruitment and People Management. The aim of this training is to equip participants with an understanding of safer recruitment, as well as the skills and practices necessary to promote positive safeguarding behaviour, (and detect safeguarding risk) once a person is in role.

Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse

This module explores the typologies of domestic abuse and equips participants to engage thoughtfully and proactively with the issue of domestic abuse, as well as those affected by domestic

abuse. It also looks at identifying safeguarding actions to protect victims or those at risk and effectively recognise and respond to possible domestic abuse.

Required attendees for this course are:

- Anyone holding the bishop's licence, commission, authorisation, or permission (including clergy, PtO, Readers, LLMs) or serving as an officer of the bishop
- Anyone (volunteers and employees) working with children, young people, or vulnerable adults, including Bishops Visitors and Pastoral Visitors
- Safeguarding Officers / Safeguarding Leads including Designated Safeguarding Person in a Religious Community
- Pre-ordination or licence students, prior to BAP or selection Panel

Part 2 - Training facilitated locally by our Diocesan Safeguarding Team

Leadership Module

The Leadership safeguarding module is designed for those people who play a lead role in shaping the culture of the Church body concerned. This will always include:

- All clergy holding the bishop's licence, commission, authorisation, or permission (including PtO where exemption has not been given) including Honorary/Assistant Bishops and Chaplains.
- All Readers and Licensed Lay Ministers holding the bishop's licence (under Canons E6 & E8), together with all others who hold the bishop's commission, authorisation, or permission to carry out similar ministerial functions (including PtO where exemption has not been given).
- (Ordinands need to have completed the Leadership Pathway before their diaconal ordination and lay ministers in training before they are licenced, authorised or commissioned.)
- Non-executive members of Chapter (unless their role in the diocese requires a higher level).
- Safeguarding Officers / Leads in all Church bodies[1].
- Paid Children's / Youth Worker

It should also, according to the local context, include such other people who significantly influence the culture of that Church body. These may include, for example, lay ministry staff employed by a PCC or BMO, locally appointed leaders of new worshipping communities, focal ministers, and Churchwardens*.

Tower captains at prominent towers (including Cathedrals, towers with frequent visitors or people learning) and the district chair / district safeguarding lead of bell ringing guilds/councils should complete the Leadership Pathway.

The requirements for attendance for people in local leadership roles will be determined by agreement between the Bishop/Dean and their respective safeguarding officer. Where there is a determination that someone must undertake this pathway, that person then becomes a required attendee.

* Whilst in many contexts the level of influence of Churchwardens may well not reach the threshold, it should be noted that this can increase significantly during vacancies

'Permission to Officiate' Module

It has been recognised that the exercise of Permission to Officiate (PtO) for both retired clergy and Licensed Lay Ministers (LLMs) or Readers, may vary considerably within the diocese. The Safeguarding Leadership Pathway is intended for those who are regularly involved in a high level of work and play a lead role within the Church body concerned. Therefore, those who fall into this category should undertake the full Safeguarding Leadership Pathway. However, all others of those with PtO (i.e. both Licensed Clergy with PtO and Licensed Lay Ministers with PtO) whose role does not fit the Leadership Pathway criterion, or do not undertake a high level of activity should undertake the Permission to Officiate' Module.

Parish Safeguarding Officer Induction

Parish Safeguarding Officer Induction sessions are for those new to taking on the role of the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO). The focus of the induction is an introduction to the role of the PSO, equip participants with an understanding of their role, and induct them in key working practices and relationships.

The Parish Safeguarding Officer Induction will involve interactive participation in a three-hour inclusive session. Pre-reading material will be sent two weeks prior to the session, and there will be an evaluation task to complete, using materials shared within the induction session. We usually deliver this training in person at Diocesan House, Easton. Though we are also able to facilitate this via Zoom. Everyone who attends this course must have completed the Safeguarding Basic Awareness and Safeguarding Foundations modules in advance of attending the training.

Evaluation and review

All courses will be based on those set as Core and Additional Safeguarding Modules as part of the Learning and Development Framework. A record of attendance will be kept by the Diocesan Safeguarding Team, and it is expected that parishes will also keep a record of those in key roles who have completed the requisite training for their role. The responsibility for ensuring that the requisite training is undertaken, and updated at the appropriate interval, lies with the appointing individual or body, together with the postholder of the role/position held.

References:

The Church of England's Practice Guidance: Safeguarding Learning & Development Framework 2024: [Safeguarding Learning and Development Framework | The Church of England](#)
Church of England Safeguarding Training Portal: <https://safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org>
Safer Recruitment & People Management Guidance: churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-e-manual/safer-recruitment-and-people-management-guidance