ST ANDREW'S CHURCH, TAUNTON *(reg. charity no: 1196804)*

Safeguarding (PCC policy, with guidance notes, 2025)

The Church of England, in all aspects of its life, is committed to and will promote the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults. It fully accepts and endorses the Children Act 1989 & 2004 & the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

Christian communities should be places where all people feel welcomed, respected and safe from abuse. The Church is particularly called by God to support those less powerful and those without a voice in our society. Our Parish is working towards creating a safe and non-discriminatory environment by being aware of some of the particular situations that create vulnerability. Issues which need to be considered include both the physical environment and the attitudes of workers and volunteers.

A person (adult or child) who might be considered vulnerable has the right to:

- Be treated with respect and dignity.
- Have their privacy respected.
- Be able to lead as independent a life as possible.
- Be able to choose how to lead their life.
- Have the protection of the law.
- Have their rights upheld regardless of their ethnicity, gender, sexuality, impairment or disability, age, religion or cultural background.
- Be able to use their chosen language or method of communication.
- Be heard.

In any situations where there may be a difference of opinion about priorities, the welfare of any child or vulnerable adult should be the paramount concern.

St Andrew's Church, Taunton, will foster and encourage best practice within its community by setting standards for working with children, young people and vulnerable adults. It will work with the Diocesan Safeguarding team, statutory bodies, voluntary agencies and other faith communities to promote the safety and well-being of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

We are committed to acting promptly whenever a concern is raised about a child, young person or vulnerable adult or about the behaviour of an adult in a position of trust, and will work with the Diocesan Team, and the appropriate statutory bodies when an investigation is necessary. We are also committed to the support of those who have been abused and to listening to the voices of survivors, who can help the church learn lessons from the past.

This statement of principles applies to children, young people and adults.

We are committed to:

- The care, nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with, all children, young people and adults
- The safeguarding and protection of all children and adults
- The establishment of a safe, caring community which provides an environment where there is a culture of informed vigilance regarding the dangers of abuse, and where victims of abuse can report or disclose abuse and find support.
- The promotion of best practice that contributes to the prevention of abuse.

The safeguarding and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults is everyone's responsibility, not just parents or those who have formal leadership or caring responsibilities. Procedures and formal processes alone, though essential, will not protect children and adults. The community, including all its members, needs to be aware of the dangers and be prepared to report concerns and take action if necessary.

We will carefully select and train all those with any responsibility for children, young people and vulnerable adults within the church, in line with safer recruitment principles, including taking up references and the use of criminal records checks.

The suitability of an applicant or nominated volunteer for work with children, young people or vulnerable adults should not be solely dependent upon Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) disclosures and vetting checks. Someone whose DBS disclosure is clear may still be unsuitable. Hence the need for an interview and references to assure ourselves, as far as we can, that someone is suitable.

As part of the Safer Recruitment process, it is the policy of St Andrew's Church, Taunton, that:

- All those who regularly work with children, young people and vulnerable adults including those who work on a rota, should have enhanced DBS checks if they reach the criteria;
- Those who work only occasionally will be asked to apply for a DBS check if they reach the criteria;
- Those who manage or supervise people who work with vulnerable groups will be required to be DBS plus Barred List checked if they reach the criteria.

(See accompanying guidance notes for explanations of the criteria.)

Safeguarding ministries at St Andrew's include:

Children@10 Leader & Helpers
Church Mice Leader & Helpers
Head Server
Director of Music *[currently in vacancy]*
Pastoral Team members – Eucharistic Ministers and Lay Pastoral Assistants
Churchwardens
PCC Safeguarding Officer
Tower Captain

It is noted that the Diocese is responsible for the DBS clearance of all Clergy and Readers (both licensed and those holding Bishop's Permission to Officiate) and no one holding these offices may work in the Diocese without successful clearance.

St Andrew's Church, Taunton, accepts that, through its workers and volunteers, it is responsible for children, young people and vulnerable adults when in a church building, on church property and other premises being used by the church and during church activities. Responsibility extends to travel between places, when it is organised by the church. However, a church is not responsible for private arrangements.

When events are shared with other churches or organisations due regard will be given to the safeguarding procedures in partner organisations

The term ‘complaint’ can cover an allegation, disclosure or statement, something seen, or something heard. The complaint need not be made in writing but once received it must be recorded and acted upon. Complaints can be taken from alleged victims and third parties.

If a child, young person or vulnerable adult comes to notice as having suffered abuse in the past, church officers will notify the Diocesan Safeguarding Team and appropriate authorities to ensure that the matter is on record. Support will be offered to adult survivors of child abuse, who will also be encouraged to make a statement to the Police if they have not done so before.

We will seek to offer informed pastoral care and support to anyone who has suffered abuse, developing with them an appropriate ministry that recognises the importance of understanding the needs of those who have been abused, including their feelings of alienation and/or isolation. We recognise that anyone can be a victim of abuse in any setting, including in their own home, and in a church environment, and will work hard to make our church a safe place for people to disclose any concerns they have and receive appropriate support. We will seek to protect survivors of abuse from the possibility of further harm and abuse.

We will seek to challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust and responsibility, where they are trusted by others.

We will seek to offer pastoral care and support, including supervision, and referral to the appropriate authorities, to any member of our Church community known to have offended against a child, young person or adult who is vulnerable. We will support them in continuing to attend church services whilst supervising their attendance to reduce the risk of further harm.

St Andrew’s Church, Taunton, agrees to follow the Practice Guidance from the House of Bishops on safeguarding matters, to adopt the House of Bishops’ ‘Promoting a Safer Church: Safeguarding Policy Statement’ and the Church of England’s ‘Promoting a Safer Church: Parish Safeguarding Handbook’.

The PCC will review this policy annually (usually in September), adopting any amendments required on the advice of the Safeguarding Officer or through any changes in diocesan policy.

This policy is accompanied by guidance notes. Please see Parish Administrator for sight of the signed document and guidance notes.

This policy is reviewed annually as part of the Safeguarding review.

Signed:

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Vicar

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Date

Date adopted by PCC Jan. 2016
Date policy last reviewed by PCC 09/09/2025
Date next review due Sept 2026

PCC Safeguarding guidance notes, Sept., 2025.

A copy of this policy is displayed in the narthex in church, and on St Andrew's website St Andrew's Church Taunton - click Safeguarding tab.

The PCC appoints a Safeguarding Officer whose name and contact telephone number is clearly set out on the main noticeboard in Church and Hall. This person should be contacted as soon as is practical in the event of any concerns arising. He/she will be responsible for initiating any appropriate action in accordance with diocesan policy and the law. The telephone numbers of the appropriate department of Social Services, Child Line and Silver Line will also be displayed.

SAFE RECRUITING AND TRAINING

All volunteers at St Andrew's Church require Safe Recruiting and for those not requiring criminal records checks this involves completion of a contact form, the issue of a Job Description and an interview with the Safeguarding Officer prior to obtaining PCC approval for them to take on a role.

All new applicants for a safeguarding-related ministry will also be asked to complete an application form, provide the names of 2 referees and complete a Confidential Declaration Form, undergo and maintain DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) clearance and sign that they have read and signed a Job Description.

The **eligibility criteria** for enhanced criminal record checks are complicated but put simply one can ask:
(a) "are you over 18?" *and*
(b) "does the role include activities that allow regular or substantial contact with children or adults experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect?"
If the answer is "Yes" then you may be eligible for an enhanced criminal record check (see Diocese of Bath and Wells Safer Recruitment guidance): Safer Recruitment and People Management Code of Practice | The Church of England *[link checked Oct 2026]*
See attached flow chart.

A person awaiting DBS clearance may not begin work until they have a completed DBS check, and the result of that check has been reported to the diocese.

Most post-holders at St Andrew's serve in a voluntary capacity and therefore intrusive structures might undermine the willingness of church members to help. This must be held in tension with the essential nature of safeguarding and the expectation of the Bishop that it is implemented. Situations requiring interview, review and appraisal may be conducted in an informal but thorough style so long as due regard and seriousness is given to their purpose, and that a written record of these conversations is made.

Safeguarding training will be made available to all volunteers, the level of which will depend on their role. Volunteers will be offered a review by their team leader one year after commencement of service. Regular team meetings will be held for purposes of planning, training and the sharing of information and good practice, with at least one team meeting each year being made available to the PCC's Safeguarding Officer. Team leaders will be overseen by the Vicar and all will meet annually with the Safeguarding Officer.

JOINT EVENTS WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

When events are shared with other churches or organisations due regard will be given to the safeguarding procedures in partner organisations.

HIRE OF THE CHURCH HALL

Regular hirers of the Church Hall where children or vulnerable adults are involved, must provide the Safeguarding Officer with their policy for scrutiny, or agree to follow the church's Safeguarding Policy.

DOCUMENTATION

Copies of all documentation relating to Safeguarding issues will be held by the PCC Safeguarding Officer and will be treated as confidential. He/she will also be responsible for administering and monitoring the safe

recruitment policy including a record of training courses attended and DBS applications and renewals as they arise.

SURVIVORS OF ABUSE

The Diocese offers Authorised Listeners to care for the survivors of abuse and such survivors may be directed to that service by the Incumbent or Safeguarding Officer as appropriate. This is intended for the support of those abused in the past and does not replace the duty to report current abuse.

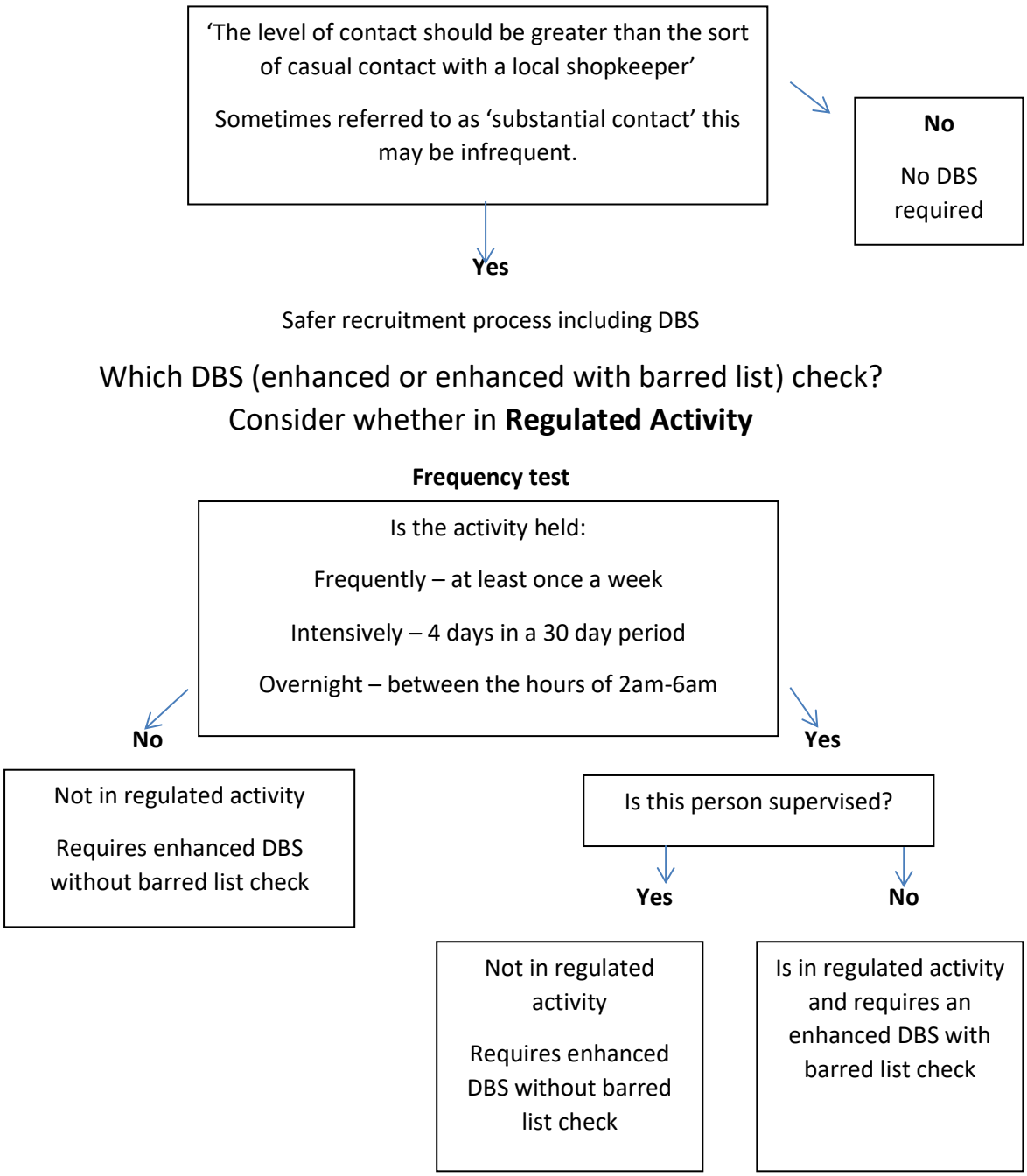
THE SHARING OF SAFEGUARDING KNOWLEDGE WITH OTHER SETTINGS

Parish staff may have knowledge of safeguarding issues concerning children and vulnerable adults in their care through their involvement in other organisations. While boundaries of confidentiality must be respected those staff members would not be expected to ignore that knowledge personally in their work for the PCC. Should specific concerns arise, that knowledge may be shared in confidence with the Safeguarding Officer seeking first the permission of the employee's line manager. The Diocesan Safeguarding Department has ruled that there is no expectation that other organisations share confidential knowledge with the Safeguarding Officer in a general way. The Safeguarding Officer may share information about specific concerns arising through church activities with the Safeguarding Officer of an overlapping organisation.

NATIONAL CHURCH SAFEGUARDING GUIDANCE

The current Church of England Safeguarding e-manual (separate chapters updated individually) can be found here: The Safeguarding E-manual | The Church of England *[link checked Oct 2026]*

Working with children – which DBS check?



Working with vulnerable adults – which DBS check?

