

Safeguarding Guidance for Area Teams in the European Province

Introduction: Risk, responsibility, and our faith....

We would all like to think that a Religious Order would be “safe” and immune from the problems suffered in the “world’s organisations”. Unfortunately, this is not the case. The Church and Religious Organisations are particularly vulnerable, and it is easy to become complacent. We don’t want to believe that our Christian brothers and sisters could be engaging in or be victims of abusive behaviour. We hold a position of great trust and therefore a greater risk. Safeguarding is everyone’s business, and we must strive to be a community that faces these problems with courage and integrity.

Please refer to the TSSF Policy on the website for more details.

Responsibilities in the Areas

The Area Safeguarding Advocate (SA)

The SA is appointment with clear responsibilities [Area Team Handbook for details] to highlight the need for ‘informed vigilance’ and a safe working ethos. It is important that the SA is present as a member of the Area Team to offer advice, for example, to draw attention to good practice when events are planned or when appointments are being made [see ‘Safer Recruitment’ in Church of England policy- and Policy for Religious Communities]. In the absence of an appointment to this person these responsibilities rest with the Area Minister.

The role of the SA is limited to responsibility for raising awareness and seeking safe environments. It is the role of the Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP) to deal with specific cases, respond to disclosures and manage all matters of investigation. It is vital that all such matters are immediately passed to the DSP at ‘safe@tssf.org.uk’. In case of risk to persons the police and social services should be called without delay. The DSP informed immediately afterwards.

When there are questions about policy, process, or responsibility in the Third Order contact should be made with the Provincial Chapter Safeguarding Lead & DSP. Again, this inquiry or contact can be made via the email ‘safe@tssf.org.uk’. Further details are on the TSSF website. We are committed to follow a ‘one church’ safeguarding policy across the Church of England, and the Policy for Religious Orders.

Safeguarding in Practice

Vulnerable Adults

Safeguarding of risk extends beyond the age of minors. Adults can be regarded as vulnerable if they lack ‘capacity’ in specific ways. For example, those who require any kind of support provision because of health including mental health, those who are provided with social work support, etc.

Forms of Safeguarding abuse extend beyond physical and sexual abuse to include a range of behaviours which come under the title of Coercive Control

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Including, emotional, financial, verbal, through social media and spiritual. Domestic Violence and abuse should be considered also.

A note on Vulnerability. We need to be able to understand this in two distinct ways. Definitions of Vulnerable for the purposes of Safeguarding practice, are quite specific, see above. **Spiritual Vulnerability** often brings us closer to God and where we are vulnerable, we hope we can respond to Gods love and care. If we find ourselves, sick, mentally, or physically then of course this can bring us closer to God, but often it puts us in a position of the imbalance of Power mentioned below. Both considerations require us to be alert to abuse.

Safeguarding ‘concerns’ and what to do.

Disclosures and action; If there is a disclosure, directly from a victim or third party, make sure you listen, record in writing your conversation and report as soon as possible maybe to police/social services and local SA and DSP within 24hours. Make sure you listen, record in writing your conversation do not attempt to investigate or promise confidentiality. Please ensure that if anyone has suffered injury, that they seek medical help immediately.

In both cases above- if the victim or perpetrator are members of a church family, local church, parish, the local Parish Safeguarding Officer should be informed, who will in turn inform the Incumbent and or Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) please inform the DSP as well.

Safeguarding Training and Checks

When we, as an Order, place our sisters and brothers in positions of responsibility with that at we increase safeguarding risk. This is because those who wear such a ‘badge’ of trust in the wider church and public become more vulnerable. The risk of abuse, of any kind, increase when there is an imbalance of power of power on one side of a relationship, we often hear this as “Power & Control”.

The safeguarding ‘duty of care’ to manage that risk is the task of Area Teams. This is supported by Area Safeguarding Advocates and the DSP.

So, from this theory comes the practice agreed for the Church for practice in Religious Orders. [see Church of England Safeguarding Policies including Guidance for religious Communities]

Two level of risk management

1. Regulated Posts. These are the ‘required’ appointments of the organisation, for example, Area Minister, Area Novice Guardians, etc.
2. ‘Seasonal posts’ these are responsibilities that circulate in local areas, for example novice guardians, however we are in discussion for those posts to be regulated, who offer to support those moving towards profession etc.

Practice:

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DBS (Disclosure and Barring) Checks:

Those Tertiaries who are appointed to *'regulated posts'* will require an enhanced, DBS Check. This can be administered through the agency of the Diocesan Safeguarding Department. The Area Safeguarding Representative is the right person to oversee this process and can discuss firstly, with the local Parish Safeguarding Officer. TSSF is expecting Dioceses to cooperate with this provision and is supported in this through our understanding with the National Safeguarding Team. These arrangements may be advised to the Diocesan team when making request for DBS checks. This is still 'bedding down' and so please refer any difficulties to the TSSF Safeguarding Chapter Lead/DSP.

Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scotland details on

<https://www.mygov.scot> a disclosure system for Scotland which differs from the rest of the UK.

Rest of Europe

Local arrangements will apply either with Diocese of Europe, if members are within the Anglican Chaplaincies, and those Churches and Parishes that do not come under the remit of the Diocese in Europe. Local safeguarding procedures must be followed.

Training:

Those tertiaries occupying 'regulated posts' require basic & foundation and if possible, leadership safeguarding training. This is typically face-to-face day course and is available through the Diocesan department under terms like DBS/PVG checking. Your local Diocese will be able to offer training so contact them in the first instance.

Tertiaries working with 'seasonal responsibilities' are required to undertake the basic & foundation Level of training. This is available *on-line* and so is convenient in most situations.

To maintain these arrangements, it is important that the Area Safeguarding Advocate is present at Area Team Meetings, which should include a standing item on all agenda for a safeguarding discussion. This will further assist with making sure that people are aware of 'safer working'. A local record of those who have completed training and have a DBS/PVG should be kept with dates of completion. If others within Areas would like to complete basic and foundation training as well, this can be found on the Church of England Portal. We would encourage this for as many people as possible to be aware (details below).

Enquirers:

When an enquirer completes the initial enquirer Form on the website this will include a reference to the Safeguarding responsibility accepted by the Order recognising a duty of care for the Order. This responsibility is acknowledged in that each enquirer will be asked to complete an additional document, the Confidential Safeguarding Declaration as a simple declaration that there are no safeguarding convictions of abuse are recorded against them. The enquiry Form will make clear that the contents

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of the Form will be shared with the relevant TSSF Officers in order that a welcome may be offered and a meeting with a novice guardian arranged. It is important that this is a joint working arrangement with the Provincial Novice and Formation Guardians.

Responding to Victims and Survivors of abuse in the Church

We must remember that those who have suffered/still suffering the effects of abuse, which may be historical or recent, of any kind of abuse deserve, a duty of care, to enable them to feel safe and secure in Churches and our Order. Support is available and this can be accessed via your Diocese or the DSP. Please think carefully before embarking on any “counselling” from non-qualified Tertiaries and always seek professional help. Pastoral care can & should be offered and is not to be confused with Professional help.

Documents: please consult the TSSF website for copies of The TSSF Safeguarding Policy, Guidance for Religious Communities, and this Area Guidance.

www.Tssf.org.uk

For Training Basic and Foundation (levels 1 & 2) This is free and easy to set up an account, the training is very good and can be for anyone all members of Area Teams are encouraged to access this. Or attend local Parish or Diocesan Training, for example if you donot have access to the internet. Levels Leadership & Senior Leadership, (levels 3 & 4) are face to face. Level 3 via your Diocese, and Level 4 Via the National Safeguarding Team – we can take part in this training as TSSF contributed to the content for Religious Communities. This is on Zoom. Provincial Officers/Guardians are encouraged to complete this, see DSP for details.

<https://safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org/>

www.mygov.scot

<https://safeguarding.ireland.anglican.org/contact/> covers Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland (Eire)

<https://europe.anglican.org/safeguarding/safeguarding>

Recommended reading for all tertiaries.

[file:///C:/Users/Aberffraw/Downloads/e-manual%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/Aberffraw/Downloads/e-manual%20(1).pdf) responding to Victims.

<https://chbookshop.hymnsam.co.uk/books/9780993294266/letters-to-a-broken-church>

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Escaping-Maze-Spiritual-Abuse-Christian/dp/028108131X?asin=028108131X&revisionId=&format=4&depth=1>

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<https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-e-manual/safeguarding-religious-communities>

For all enquiries please contact: Mandy Hughes Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP) European Province

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