



Stratton Team Ministry Safeguarding Policy

2026

“Every person has a value and dignity, which comes directly from the creation of male and female in God’s own image and likeness. Christians see this potential as fulfilled by God’s re-creation of us in Christ. Among other things this implies a duty to value all people as bearing the image of God and therefore to protect them from harm”

(Diocese of Bristol 2014)

Foreword:

This policy reflects the 10 Safeguarding Standards embraced by the Church of England 's Safeguarding Advisory Service Thirtyone:eight.

Those 10 standards are:

1. Having Good Governance
2. Having a Safe and Healthy Culture
3. Having a working Safeguarding Policy setting out standards and expectations
4. Safer Recruitment for all PCC members and parish volunteer teams involved with children and or vulnerable adults
5. Training and Awareness of Safeguarding
6. Working Safely
7. Managing workers
8. Working in Partnership with other organisations
9. Responding to Concerns
10. Working with those who may pose a risk.

(Thirtyone: eight 2026)

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SECTION 1

Details of the place of worship / organisation

Name of Place of Worship: Services are offered at: St Margaret's Church Stratton, St Mary Magdalene Church South Marston, Coleview Community Centre, and St Leonard's Church Stanton Fitzwarren,

Address: Administration St Margaret's Centre Parish office, Kenwin Close Stratton. SN3 4NY. Administrator Mrs. G Martin

Tel No: 01793 826505,

Email address: stmchurchoffice020@gmail.com

Web Site: www.strattonteamministry.co.uk

PCC Secretary: St Margaret's and St Mary Magdalene: Mrs. R Mitchell 01793 826505

PCC Secretary St Leonard's: Mr. M Curtis

Membership of Denomination: Church of England Bristol Diocese

Insurance Company: Ecclesiastical Insurance – Public liability

The following is a brief description of our place of worship and the type of work / activities we undertake with children / vulnerable adults:

Stratton Team Ministry is an Anglican Church with daily and Sunday Church services offered at St Margaret's Stratton (with Coleview) Church and Centre, St Leonard's Church Stanton Fitzwarren and St Mary Magdalene Church South Marston and South Marston Village Hall. We offer worship, pastoral ministry and have strong links with the schools, children, and the local community. Morning prayers are offered 3 days a week in the Pollard Room St Margaret's Centre and occasionally in the church.

Safeguarding processes in place:

- A Stratton Team Ministry Safeguarding Policy and the associated Guidance document is in place and is reviewed annually.
- There are Joint Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSOs) for the Stratton Team Ministry Dr M & Mrs. M Boshier: Contact 07799835437
- There are 'Eyes and Ears' representatives in St Leonard Stanton Fitzwarren and St Mary Magdalene South Marston for safeguarding referrals which will be passed to the two Stratton Team Ministry PSOs.
- All group leaders are trained to at least Foundation level and hold current DBS certificates.

The safeguarding 'eyes and ears' representatives in the parishes are:

St Leonards' Stanton Fitzwarren: Mr. Chris Pope and Mrs. Anne Pope and Deputies Mrs. E Hillman and Mr. D Thomas

St Mary Magdalene South Marston: Mrs. D Whitford

The Eyes and Ears serve both as collators of safeguarding issues to be passed on to the PSOs, and as Safeguarding Advisors in their own rights.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with Stratton Team Ministry Guide to Safeguarding 2026

Our commitment

As a Leadership we recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for all, but particularly children, young people and vulnerable adults. We acknowledge that children, young people, and vulnerable adults can be the victims of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect. We accept the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant of Human Rights, which states that everyone is entitled to “all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”. We also concur with the Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that children should be able to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and abuse. They have a right to be protected from “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child”. As a Leadership we have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance. We are committed to build constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding.

“The safeguarding and protection of children and adults at risk is the responsibility of everyone within a church community. The church community, including all its members, must be alert to risks and dangers and be prepared to report concerns and take action as and when necessary.

The child’s welfare is the paramount¹ consideration in matters of private and public law. The Diocese of Bristol will apply this principle in all areas of its work”

(Diocese of Bristol 2023)

We also recognise that:

- *Everyone has different levels of vulnerability and each of us may be regarded as vulnerable at some time in our lives*
- *All children, young people and adults who may be at risk (regardless of age, disability, gender, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, race religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation) have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse which can occur in all families and communities*
- *Working in partnership with children, young people, adults at risk and their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting their welfare*

(Diocese of Bristol Safeguarding Policy 2016)

¹ S.1 Children Act 1989

The policy and attached practice guidelines are based on the ten **Safe and Secure** safeguarding standards published by the Churches' **Child Protection Advisory Service Thirtyone:eight** and prepared in consultation with The Diocese of Bristol Safeguarding Officer.

This Safeguarding Policy is underpinned and supported by the following National Statutes, Church of England and Diocesan policies:

Protecting All God's Children (Safeguarding policy for children and young people, 4th edition, (2010)
Promoting a Safe Church (2006)
Promoting a Safer Church (2017), [Safeguarding Adults]; House of Bishops policy statement (2017): Practice Guidance
Safer Recruitment (2016)
Responding to Domestic Abuse, (2017)
Responding well to those who have been sexually abused (2011)
Safeguarding Records (2015)
Safer Recruitment (2016)
Learning and development Framework (2017)
Diocese of Bristol Safeguarding Policy (2015, 2016 & 2023)
Diocese of Bristol Allegations Management Procedure
Diocese of Bristol Ministering to those who may present a risk
Working Together (2010, 2013, 2015, 2018)
Care and Support Statutory Guidance (2014)
Care Act (2014) and Safeguarding
Practice Guidance Responding to, Assessing and Managing Safeguarding Concerns or Allegations against Church Officers (2017)
Practice Guidance: Key Roles and Responsibilities of Church Officer Holders and Bodies (2017)
Children's Acts (1989 and 2004)
Every Child Matters (2003)
National Service Framework (2004)
Common Assessment Framework (2000)
Information Sharing Guidance (2015)
Human Rights Act (1998)
Mental Capacity Act (2005)
Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2014)
Protection of Freedoms Act (2012)
Modern Slavery Act (2015)
Sexual offences Act (2003)
Health and Safety Act (1981)
Disability Discrimination Act (1995)
Safeguarding Records: Joint Practice Guidance for the Church of England and the Methodist Church (2015)
General Data protection Regulations (2018)
Thirtyone:eight 10 Safeguarding Standards (2026)

The Leadership undertakes to

- Endorse and follow all national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures,

in addition to the international conventions outlined above.

- Provide on-going safeguarding training for all its workers and will regularly review the operational guidelines attached.
- Ensure that the premises meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and all other relevant legislation, and that it is welcoming and inclusive.
- Support the Parish Safeguarding Officers in their work and in any actions, they may need to take to protect children and vulnerable adults.

We will develop a culture in our churches that:

- Enables a safe and caring community to provide a loving environment where there is a culture of 'informed vigilance' as to the dangers of abuse
- Enables and encourages concerns to be raised and responded to openly and consistently and protects children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable from actual or potential harm
- Ensures that victims and survivors of abuse are listened to and supported
- Ensures that all people feel welcomed, respected and safe from abuse
- Values, listens to and respects children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable, encouraging them to be active contributors to the church community
- Encourages adults who may be vulnerable to lead as independent a life as possible
- As part of the stewardship of Safeguarding, the PSOs and the Rector will meet every 3 months to discuss any safeguarding issues and to review all the procedures in the parishes to maintain a high level of safeguarding cover
- Will work with and support those who pose a safeguarding risk

When concerns are raised, we will:

- Respond without delay to every concern raised that a child, young person, or adult may have been harmed, or may be at risk of harm, through abuse or neglect
- Work with police, local authority and other partners in any investigation, including where allegations are made against a member of the church community
- Challenge any abuse of power, especially in a position of trust. If abuse has occurred, we will ensure: Informed and appropriate pastoral care is offered to any child, young person or adult who has suffered abuse, including support to make a complaint if so desired
- Ensure supervision is provided for any member of the church community known to pose a risk of harm to others
- Ensure appropriate pastoral care is provided to any member of our church against whom an allegation is made

SECTION 2

The signs and symptoms of abuse and the management of referrals are to be found in detail in the Guide to Safeguarding 2026

Principles of Safeguarding Management

Confidentiality

Stratton Team Ministry accepts the principle that only those with a need to know should be made aware of safeguarding concerns or other confidential information. All staff, ministers and volunteers are only expected to share confidential information appropriately and to ensure that written records and verbal information is shared responsibly and stored securely.

Consent:

Stratton Team Ministry accepts that all people have a right to make their own views and wishes known and that those wishes should be followed wherever possible.

Children and Young People:

Where there is a concern that a child is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect, they may ask those that know not to tell anyone. Stratton Team Ministry accepts that we cannot do this; these concerns must be reported to the appropriate authorities to enable the child or young person to receive appropriate help and support. Stratton Team Ministry asks all staff, ministers and volunteers to explain this to the children in their care when appropriate. Where there is concern that a child is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect, Stratton Team Ministry expects that parents and carers will be communicated with and will have their consent sought for information to be shared with the local authority or other agencies. This should happen **EXCEPT where there is a concern that to do so would place a child at increased risk or where a parent or carer may be involved in the sexual abuse of the child.**

In those circumstances, advice of the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer (DSO), Local Authority (LADO) or police should be sought before informing parents or carers of the concern.

Where the allegation is against an individual who may have access to other children or vulnerable adults the referral should be made without seeking consent from the parents or carers – how they are made aware of the concerns will be decided alongside the statutory agencies.

Adults:

Adults have the right to make their own decisions about their lives (Capacity Act 2005). Consent should be sought from an adult before information is shared about them. However, where an adult withholds consent for a safeguarding concern to be shared with statutory authorities (police and Local Authorities), this should be accepted **EXCEPT** where there may be others at risk e.g. if the abuse or neglect is happening in a care home or hospital and the abuser has access to other vulnerable adults or children, or where there is reason to doubt that the individual has capacity to make the decision or where there is imminent risk of serious harm (Mental Capacity Act 2005). Advice should be sought from the statutory services or DSO where there is doubt as to whether a concern should be referred

“A duty of confidence arises where information which is not already lawfully in the public domain is given on the understanding that it will not be shared with others. This understanding may be explicit, or it may be clear from the circumstances that there was a legitimate expectation on the part of the person giving the information that it would be held in confidence.

There is no breach of the duty of confidence where the person to whom the duty is owed has given consent to the disclosure. Where such consent has not, for whatever reason, been obtained, information may nonetheless be shared if this can be justified in the public interest. Where the information relates to the commission of a crime or where there is reasonable cause to believe that a child or adult may be at risk of serious harm if the information is not disclosed to the proper authorities, the public interest test is clearly satisfied.

In other cases, the key factors are necessity and proportionality. The person holding the confidential information must weigh up what might happen if the information is shared against what might happen if it is not, and make a decision based on a reasonable judgement as to whether the proposed sharing is likely to make an effective contribution to preventing or reducing a risk (e.g. of malpractice or incompetence) to which the public would otherwise be subjected.”

(Information Sharing and Storage- the Basics for Parish Safeguarding Policy Diocese of Bristol 2015)

Freedom to Speak out - Whistleblowing

The Stratton Team Ministry has a clear procedure to offer support for any individual to expose wrongdoing or potential wrongdoing in words or actions.

Every member of the church community has the right to be able to report or divulge information confidentially, orally or in written form, which may be, or is, potentially harmful without fear of retribution.

The pathway for the divulgence of information should be initially through consultation with the Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSOs). Their contact details are displayed in the churches, in the St Margaret's Centre and on the Parish web site.

If the complaint is regarding a member of the clergy or paid officer, the pathway procedure is directly to the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer (DSO) and on to the Bishop. If the complaint is regarding the Parish Safeguarding Officers, it should go via the Rector to the DSO.

For any other member of the church, it should be directed to the PSOs.

All information will be treated confidentially. See more information in the Guide to this policy.

Data Protection - General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The Data Protection Act 1998 ("DPA") has now been superseded by the General Data Protection Regulation GDPR Act of May 2018. It applies to the processing of any information that relates to a living individual who can be identified from that information alone or when taken together with other information held by the same person or body. Such information is termed 'personal data' in the GDPR. Processing is widely defined and includes obtaining information, holding it (whether in paper or electronic form) and sharing it with others.

The GDPR sets out eight fundamental principles that must be observed when processing personal data. These can be summarised as follows:

1. Personal information must be processed fairly and lawfully.
2. It must be obtained for one or more lawful and specified purposes and processed in a manner compatible with that purpose or those purposes.
3. It must be adequate, relevant, and not excessive in relation to the purpose(s) for which it is processed.
4. It must be accurate and where necessary, kept up to date.
5. It must not be kept for any longer than is necessary for the purpose(s) for which it is processed (see Safeguarding Record Retention Periods).
6. It must be processed in accordance with the rights conferred by the GDPR on the person who is the subject of the information ('the data subject').
7. Appropriate measures must be taken to protect the information from unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction or damage.
8. The information must not be transferred to a country outside the European Economic Area unless that country has an adequate data protection regime.

The GDPR Act also provides that certain information is to be treated as 'sensitive personal data' in relation to which conditions apply. This includes information about a person's religious beliefs, racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, sexual life, physical or mental health, union membership or criminal record (including any allegation that a criminal offence has been committed).

GDPR Data Controller

This is an important role, managing personal information for the Parishes is undertaken by the Data Controller and is usually either the Incumbent or the whole PCC (For information go to: <https://www.parishresources.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Parish-Guide-to-GDPR.pdf>). The role is defined as a person/s who (either alone or jointly or in

common with others) determines the purpose for which, and the way, any personal data is processed. Before sensitive information is shared, please consult the Data Controller Mrs G Martin.

The Stratton Team Ministry Data Controller is Mrs. G Martin who can be contacted via the Church Office stmchurchoffice020@gmail.com

Persons Storing Safeguarding Information:

All data associated with safeguarding for Stratton Team Ministry is kept electronically on an independent memory stick deposited in the parish safe in the Church. The data on the memory stick is password protected and is stored in a sealed envelope. The PSOs and the Rector are the only members of Stratton Team Ministry who have the password for this memory stick, and access to it is restricted to those same people. Data is required by statute to be stored for 7 years- Some will need to be stored longer- see Church of England guidance 'Safeguarding Records: Joint Practice Guidance for the Church of England and the Methodist Church 2015' to keep or bin.

Stratton Team Ministry does not have access to secure email systems. Therefore, great care should be taken where email is used to ensure that confidential information is not open to being accessed by unauthorised individuals. Individual's confidential information should not be communicated via email.

The Parish Safeguarding Officers will keep records with regard DBS certification, staff and volunteer training.

Absentia Decision Making

In the event of prolonged absence of the Rector for any reason including illness or an Interregnum for the Team Ministry, any safeguarding decisions will be delegated to the Church Wardens in the first instance followed by the Area Dean and finally the Archdeacon.

Funerals

To preserve confidentiality and reduce possible difficulties associated with estranged and extended families, Stratton Team Ministry has adopted the following guidance and policy regarding information and details for funeral services:

"The church deals only with the next of kin as notified to us by the funeral directors. It is the church's policy not to give out any details of funerals, and we respectfully direct all enquiries to the next of kin and or the funeral director."

SECTION 3

Responsibilities of the PCC

Safe recruitment

Stratton Team Ministry is committed to implementing safer recruitment practice in the recruitment of all ministers, volunteers and employees and accepts and follows the Church of England Safer Recruitment Policy 2015. The vetting process uses the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Thirtyone: eight as part of the Church of England recommended Safer Recruiting process.

The delegated lead interviewer may choose to use Check List and Application Forms 6, 7 and 8 in the Guide to the Safeguarding Policy 2026 as an aide memoire for the sequencing of the recruitment process.

The suitability of an applicant to work with children or adults at risk is never solely dependent on the outcome of a DBS check and the full safer recruitment process will be used to determine suitability of the candidate for the role.

“Every parent, carer or family member has the right to expect the same standards of recruitment and professionalism irrespective of whether an individual is paid or works voluntarily. Some mistakenly believe that carrying out a DBS check is all that is needed, and it can be tempting for places of worship to take short cuts when a person is willing to help and is a familiar face. Those who have responsibility in this area need to understand a disclosure check is only part of the safer recruitment process”. (CCPAS word blog 2018)

All those who work with children and/or adults, and those who supervise those workers, i.e. PCC members are eligible for a DBS check, will be required to undertake that check prior to starting in any role whether employed or voluntary within the Diocese of Bristol as well as the complete Safer Recruitment process.

“A decision to appoint someone should be based on all information gathered i.e. their experiences, ability, suitability, and their motives for wanting to work with children or vulnerable adults. It should not be based on factors such as urgency of need, or immediate availability of the applicant. An assessment of each candidate interviewed may then be made. This will enable the organisation to arrive at a decision to appoint the candidate who gave the greatest confidence in their ability.” (CCPAS word blog 2018)

Those who are not eligible for a DBS check will be recruited in line with ‘Safer Recruitment’ practice including the use of applications forms, references, and interview where applicable.

Suitable induction, training and supervision will be provided to all those working with children and vulnerable adults.”

"It is important that there are clear lines of accountability so that any person in the organisation knows how to discuss and refer matters of concern. The managers of the workers need to demonstrate the highest standards of conduct and the practices that they want others to adhere to. This will include the willingness to attend training." (CCPAS word blog 2016)

(Diocese of Bristol Safeguarding policy 2016)

The Leadership will ensure all workers will be appointed, trained, supported, and supervised in accordance with government guidance on safe recruitment and by following the Church of England Safer Recruitment Policy 2016. This includes ensuring that the recruitment of staff and volunteers will be in line with the guidance given below:

- Recruitment of staff and volunteers will only be undertaken by those delegated such responsibility from the PCC
- Recruitment of staff and volunteers will only be undertaken according to the agreed process
- All recruited staff and volunteers will be made known to the PCC
- It is our best practice that no adults should work alone with vulnerable individuals. If that situation is unavoidable, only safely recruited and DBS certificated team members will be permitted to work unsupervised.
- The Parish PSOs should be consulted regarding the post and may serve on the interview panel for new appointments if necessary

The Safe Recruitment Process:

Every part of this process must be carried out to the satisfaction of the PCC who must ensure that:

- There is a written job description / person specification for the post
- Those applying have completed an application form and a self-declaration form (Examples can be found in Safeguarding Guide 2026 forms 3 & 4)
- A church Interview lead/coordinator will be appointed
- Those short listed have been interviewed
- Safeguarding has been discussed at interview
- Written references have been obtained, and followed up where appropriate
- A disclosure and barring check have been completed (we will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information)
- Qualifications where relevant, have been verified
- A suitable training programme is provided for the successful applicant
- The applicant has completed a probationary period
- The applicant has been given a copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns.
- There is a documented development plan for the newly appointed person, a

named supervisor, and a time limited review period for review meetings. The supervisor must document each review meeting and report progress to the PCC

It is the **responsibility** of the **Church Wardens** under the auspices of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) and with the authority of the Rector to use the '**safer recruiting**' process for all posts and roles both paid and voluntary within Stratton Team Ministry. The Church Wardens may delegate the responsibility of undertaking the appropriate DBS checks to the Parish Safeguarding Officer/s. In all cases this check must be undertaken for the roles designated as necessary by the Church of England.

If Stratton Team Ministry uses workers from outside of the UK, then appropriate background checks for those applying to work with children / vulnerable adults must be made. Individuals must have obtained '**fit person**' checks from their home country as well as references. The PCC must give consideration regarding their legal residence, nationality, and present location. This needs to be considered in the case of a person born outside UK, who is a long-term resident in UK, married to a UK citizen, having right of residence in UK. (Especially in case of dual-national Irish who can be here anyway).

The PCC also has a responsibility to ensure that:

- A named supervisor must be appointed by the PCC to oversee the initial probationary period for any recruit to a leadership post.
- A code of conduct is supplied to all new post holders
- In all recruitment the PCC will carefully select those with any responsibility within the Church (including voluntary workers) in line with the Safer Recruitment principles and checks (See Stratton Team Ministry Safer Recruitment Guidelines) and provide ongoing supervision, support, and training.

Related Policies controlled by the PCC

Reporting of a Serious Safeguarding Incident to the Charity Commission

1. The members of Stratton Team Ministry, as charity trustees, are responsible for reporting **ALL** Serious Incidents to the Charity Commission in a timely manner. The trustees delegate the reporting of Serious Incidents in accordance with these Resolutions.
2. The Charity Commission has approved specific Church of England guidance and templates for PCCs to use when reporting Serious Incidents to it ("**PCC Guidance**"). The PCC Guidance separates Serious Incidents into two types: safeguarding Serious Incidents and all other Serious Incidents. Safeguarding Serious Incidents are reported in a different way from how all other Serious Incidents are reported and so there are separate delegations for reporting safeguarding and non-safeguarding Serious Incidents.
3. If a safeguarding incident occurs within the Stratton Team Ministry (STM) the Parish Safeguarding Officer must inform the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer (**DSO**)

and respond to and manage the incident in accordance with the relevant House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policy and Guidance.

4. Where a non-safeguarding incident is identified, STM PSO or Rector should be informed immediately. STM, PSO or Rector is responsible for taking such immediate steps or actions as may be required to secure and protect churches in the Stratton Team Ministry's property, assets, and reputation, in accordance with any internal policies or procedures.
5. Below are two example template resolutions for the [PCC] to complete and adopt.
 - 1.5.1 Section 2 is a resolution to delegate responsibility for reporting safeguarding Serious Incidents to the Charity Commission and the National Safeguarding Team.
 - 1.5.2 Section 3 is a resolution to delegate responsibility for reporting non-safeguarding Serious Incidents to the Charity Commission.

B. DELEGATION of responsibility to report SAFEGUARDING Serious Incidents to the Charity Commission in accordance with the PCC Guidance

6. To facilitate the confidential and timely reporting of any safeguarding Serious Incidents to the Charity Commission, the responsibility for any decisions relating to the reporting of safeguarding Serious Incidents is delegated to STM PSO.
7. *The following responsibilities are delegated to the STM Parish Safeguarding Officers*
 - Responsibility for contacting the DSO, if they consider a safeguarding Serious Incident may have occurred and providing the DSO with any information required.
 - Responsibility for liaising with the DSO and reporting back to the Stratton Team Ministry on the management and reporting of the safeguarding Serious Incident by the DSO and the Diocesan Secretary (**DS**), including:
 - if the DSO and DS consider that the incident does NOT need to be reported to the Charity Commission, why this is the case, for agreement by the Stratton Team Ministry
 - whether the incident will be individually reported or included in the next bulk report
 - approval of a draft report for a high-risk incident (i.e. one which will be individually reported)
 - providing Stratton Team Ministry with a copy of any safeguarding Serious Incident reports submitted to the Charity Commission by the Diocesan Secretary (**DS**) on behalf of the Stratton Team Ministry.

C. The following responsibilities are delegated to the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer and the Diocesan Secretary:

- The DSO is responsible for deciding, in consultation with the DS, whether a safeguarding incident is sufficiently “Serious” to be reported to the Charity Commission and, if so, whether it should be reported individually or included in the next bulk report.
- The DSO is responsible for reporting back to the STM PSO on whether the incident is sufficiently “Serious” to be reported to the Charity Commission and, if so, whether the incident is to be individually reported or included in the next bulk report. If an incident does NOT need to be reported to the Charity Commission, the DSO should provide the STM PSO with an explanation of this decision, so the STM PSO can report back to the PCCs for agreement.
- The DSO is responsible for preparing the safeguarding Serious Incident Report. Where the report relates to a high-risk incident (i.e. one which is to be individually reported), the DSO is responsible for providing the draft report to the STM PSO for approval by the PCC/s.
- The DS is responsible for submitting safeguarding Serious Incident reports to the Charity Commission, on behalf of the Stratton Team Ministry PCCs
- The DS is responsible for sending copies of any Serious Incident reports submitted to the Charity Commission to the National Safeguarding Team and the STM PSO.

DELEGATION of responsibility to report all OTHER Serious Incidents to the Charity Commission in accordance with the PCC Guidance.

To facilitate the confidential and timely reporting of any Serious Incidents, the responsibility for the reporting of Serious Incidents is delegated to STM PSO or Rector

Photographs and Videos

It is the policy of Stratton Team Ministry that no one should take photographs of children or young people without the consent of the child’s parent or carer and the consent of the child where they are old enough to give consent.

- Where photographs are to be taken, consent will be gained from the parents and carers in advance in writing. This will stipulate who will take the photograph, for what purpose they may be used, how they will be stored and after what period they will be destroyed.
- All photographs for Stratton Team Ministry should be stored securely on devices belonging to the PCC. No photo or video should be left stored on personal photography or video equipment.
- No photo will be taken, shared, or used for any purpose, which shows a child in any state of undress.

- No child will be named in publicity related to photographs or video.
- Where an event may be photographed and is open to the public; signs will be displayed noting that photographs and video may be taken and inviting anyone not wishing to be in any photo used to make this known to a named person. The photographer/ videographer will be named on these signs and wear ID.
- Only those delegated with the responsibility by the PCC may ask for parental consent and arrange the taking of any photo or video.

Live Streaming Church Services

When required, Stratton Team Ministry will stream services live. It is the intention that no images of members of the congregation will be included in the streaming process. The camera will be fixed and focussed on the ministering team (Clergy, Licenced Lay Ministers, Readers and Intercessionaries). During the Eucharist and other occasions involving congregational movement, the camera will be refocussed onto a neutral image.

Those on the ministering team will be made aware that they will be recorded in advance of the service. They will therefore be able opt out of taking part in the service if they would prefer not to be on camera for any reason.

Communications and Social Media Policy

It is the policy of Stratton Team Ministry that no one employed on a paid or voluntary basis, serving as a PCC member or as a Licenced Minister will contact children or young people directly via social media, email, phone or text without the knowledge and consent of that child or young person's parent or carer.

- Where such contact needs to be made (for example a text to advise of a change of time for an activity) the child's parent or carer will be asked for consent in advance and the parent or carer will be copied into that information
- Very rarely contact may be made with a child or young person without the knowledge of the child's parents or carer (for example where there are serious safeguarding concerns for a child, and it would increase the risk to the child to contact the parent). In this case the person contacting the child must agree in advance with the Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSOs) that this is appropriate, a second adult should be copied into all communications e.g. PSOs or the incumbent and must keep a record of all communications and provide these to the PSOs for the case record.
- Where a group wishes to have a social media account to publicise or communicate regarding their group or activity, the following will apply:
 - The account shall not be a personal account belonging to any group member or leader; it will be a separate group account.
 - More than one adult will be the administrator for the account so that all content and messages will be seen by more than one adult and copied into all communications.
 - All users will be made aware that bullying, harassment, or other anti-social behaviour will not be tolerated. Information will be available to all users about how to raise a concern about the conduct of others.

- Steps must be taken to prevent people outside the group from having access to the names or personal details of anyone who is part of the group e.g. if a group Facebook or other platform page is used, the account settings should prevent group members being identified and any message sent to anyone other than the administrator.
- All those in leadership roles will ensure that the language is professional and appropriate e.g. not adding 'xx' to messages, not using nicknames that are not what the leader is called by everyone else, avoiding addressing others by endearments which would be ambiguous, such as 'love'.

Management of Workers – Codes of Conduct

As a Leadership Team we are committed to supporting all workers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. All workers have been issued with a code of conduct towards children, young people, and vulnerable adults.

The Leadership Team will use the guidance from the Home Office document '*Abuse of Trust Caring for Young people and the Vulnerable*'. This guidance is intended to apply to those caring for young people or vulnerable adults in both paid and unpaid work, including volunteers, regardless of whether they are public, private voluntary or volunteering sectors.

Clear boundaries must be developed by Stratton Team Ministry regarding the personal relationships that can develop.

Stratton Team Ministry has a clear '*Lone Workers*' policy which will be adhered to on every occasion when a minister or volunteer visits a church member alone. (See Appendix 3)

Activity Risk Assessments and Health and Safety Assessments

Every activity undertaken on behalf of Stratton Team Ministry must have a risk assessment to include Safeguarding and a Health and Safety assessment undertaken. The H&S representatives, the PSO and the activity organiser will undertake this assessment, which will, if agreed, be approved by the PCC. The H&S representatives will keep records of that assessment. Any 'on' or 'off' site youth activities should be organised within the framework of the Health and Safety and Safeguarding policies, and the PCC must ensure that activities are suitably covered by insurance and the insurance company consulted if there is any doubt. It is the responsibility of the PCC to review and update these assessments at least annually.

Church Activities i.e. Activities Sanction and Under the Auspices of the PCC

- All new activities associated with Stratton Team Ministry comply with the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures (refer also to the Guidelines document).
- The PCC must designate an individual member who will accept this responsibility on behalf of the PCC and make sure that all members of the church community

pass the relevant activity information through that person for checking.

- The Rector and the PCC to make sure that all safeguarding processes and checks are in place for any activity agreed by the Stratton Team Ministry.
- If the activity is outside that of the normal church range, the Church Insurers must be informed. The PCC will nominate a specific person to take on this responsibility.

Near Miss Events

There is a “Near Miss “policy (see Appendix 10). If it is deemed that a near miss has occurred, it should be evaluated, investigated and actions put in place to prevent reoccurrence.

Children Based Activities in the Stratton Team Ministry

5th Swindon Boys Brigade

The Boy’s Brigade is a stand-alone organisation with its own Safeguarding Policy, Risk Assessments and Operating Protocols. It is however embraced within the jurisdiction of Stratton Team Ministry and is overseen by the PCC. Safeguarding management resides under the auspices of National Boys Brigade Organisation, but the brigade must abide by the Stratton Team Ministry Safeguarding Policy and Guidance. The Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSOs) will annually inspect the Boys Brigade Safeguarding Policy to ensure that it is in line with the spirit and operating protocols applied to all Stratton Team Ministry church activities.

Bumps and Babes Group

This is a group for expectant mothers and very young babies. It is a weekly social gathering with refreshments available with the possibility of occasional visiting speaker input. It is led by a DBS authenticated leader and Deputy with a team of helpers. Responsibility for childcare remains with the parent/s

Church events open to the public.

When the church organises open events like fetes, there must be a recognition that there is a possibility for children to have become separated from their carers. There must be an identified area and staff for the management of these children either lost or found. Form 10 of the Safeguarding Guide 2026 should be used to document actions taken by the designated person responsible for staffing this area.

Church Activity Job Roles

Every activity within Stratton Team Ministry will have a clear job role/job description attached to it. These role descriptions will set out clear expectations for that activity / role and the expected boundaries. These descriptions will be approved by the PCC and **reviewed by the PCC annually**. Failure to adhere to the role may lead to a situation from which an accusation of negligence may arise. The Church’s insurance company may not then support any subsequent claim. It is the responsibility of the Team Leader/s under

the supervision of the PCC to ensure that team members are conforming to the specification of the role. The PCC must ensure that training and supervision is made available for all members of all teams if required. Any new team members should have a period of induction and review agreed with both the team leader and the PCC.

Complaints Policy

Stratton Team Ministry has a Complaints Policy. It will respond to written or oral complaints in a consistent and robust manner attempting to be fair and consistent with all parties concerned.

Complaints should initially be directed to the Rector in writing. The initial receipt of complaint will be acknowledged within 4 days. The Rector will then investigate in detail. Consultation with appropriate members of the church (PCC, Team Leaders, PSOs, Church Wardens) will be undertaken.

The Rector will then give a written or oral response to the complainant.

If the subject of the complaint is the Rector, then the initial complaint must be addressed to the Church Wardens. They, in consultation with the PCC might pass the complaint to the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer who will pass it to senior members of the Diocese invoking the **Church Disciplinary Measures** process if necessary.

Financial Matters

It is essential that all members of the parish understand that all financial matters are controlled and managed by the treasurer of the PCC. Any financial gifts, offerings or donations should be deposited with the Treasure for the PCC who will record them and submit for annual audit.

Case history of parishioner activities in other churches support occasions when often ill or disabled parishioners and residents of Care Homes ask a member of the church, often a pastoral visitor, to deposit 'collection envelopes' on the parishioner's behalf. This could put the pastoral visitor in a very difficult position with a potential for abuse accusation. Such requests should be directed to the PCC Treasurer to manage.

PCC Safeguarding Training

The Church of England and the Diocese of Bristol make it obligatory for all members of church PCC Trustees to undertake the following Safeguarding training as part of the council membership, and update that training every 3 years.

Safeguarding Basic Awareness (C0)

Safeguarding Foundation (C1)

Safeguarding Leadership (C2)

Domestic Abuse Awareness

Every member of the PCC must hold an enhanced in date DBS certificate

SECTION 4

Pastoral Care

Supporting Those Affected by Abuse

The Leadership is committed to offering pastoral care, working with statutory agencies as appropriate, and support to all those who have been affected by abuse who have contact with or are part of the place of worship / organisation.

The Clergy, PSOs, and Stratton Team Ministry lay members will ensure that church members who require support, advice, or referral will receive it. The Ministry will use external agencies as and when it is deemed that extra/ more professional specialist advice is required.

A Cautionary Thought on Abuse, Trauma and Identity

"People are affected by abuse in different ways. It may take many years, indeed decades, before someone who has been hurt by abuse can acknowledge to themselves and to others in full consciousness the wrong done to them. Once that first step has been taken, there is then likely to be a further process taking many years before something like healing and restoration can be said to have occurred. Indeed, for some it may seem that point never really comes at all, while for many, it will always feel precarious."

The Gospel, Sexual Abuse and the Church (2016)

Child Sexual and Criminal Exploitation

A definition of child sexual exploitation:

Exploitation occurs more often than we think or care to acknowledge. Would all members of the church be aware and keep a look out for the younger members of the parish? If an exploitation possibility occurs, please refer to one of the PSOs.

"Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity:

- a. In exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or*
- b. For the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual.*

Child exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur using technology".

(Child Sexual & Criminal Exploitation Team (2020) Working with Those Who May Present a Risk

“When someone attending the place of worship / organisation is known to have abused children or is known to be a risk to vulnerable adults or has had an allegation made against them which is yet to be investigated the Leadership will follow the Diocese of Bristol guidance “Ministering to those that may present a risk”. This involves supervising the individual concerned and offering pastoral care, but in its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and vulnerable adults, set boundaries for that person which they will be expected to keep.”

(Diocese of Bristol Safeguarding Policy 2016)

Parishioners on a Diocesan Safety Plan

“Advice will be sought from the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer (DSO) and appropriate risk assessments and action plans will be put in place. An ‘Safety Plan’ will be created for the individual in joint consultation with the DSO, the Rector and the PSO and implemented as directed. The Diocesan Safeguarding Officer will review this Safety Plan annually. This will ensure that the leadership can manage the risk appropriately by creating clear codes of behaviour that the individual must follow. This will protect the offender and the ‘at risk’ groups.”

(Diocese of Bristol Safeguarding Policy 2016)

Any member of the parish who has a ‘Safety Plan’ with the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer can expect of right, to have an annual review of that Safety Plan and attached Risk Assessment, which may, after discussion, be annulled.

“If a member of a church community comes to notice as having a conviction or caution for offenses against children or vulnerable adults, or has been barred from working with children or vulnerable adults, or is considered a potential present risk to either group (for example if an allegation has been made but the outcome is as yet unknown) we will seek to implement a written agreement, where it is safe to do so in line with advice from the local Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements group (MAPPA). The agreement will contain safeguards for the individual and children and/or adults at risk.

Stratton Team Ministry will work with statutory authorities where appropriate to ensure adequate risk assessment and management of any agreement. (See ‘Ministering to Those that may Present a Risk’ and ‘Risk Assessment’ Guidance’).”

(Diocese of Bristol Safeguarding Policy 2016)

Victims of Domestic Abuse

Stratton Team Ministry in conjunction with the Church of England is committed to the raising of awareness about Domestic Abuse and its impact on individuals, children, the wider family, and the community. (See Appendix 7)

It will work to ensure that:

- *The safety of individuals suffering abuse or seeking help is the priority, and to be aware of the need for confidentiality within the bounds of good safeguarding practice*
- *Teaching and worship reflect awareness-raising about Domestic Abuse, uses appropriate language and says clearly that Domestic Abuse is wrong.*
- *Inappropriate behaviour is challenged, this needs to be done in an extremely careful way, in a way that does not place any individual including a victim at increased risk.*
- *Clergy and clergy spouses have the same access to support and resources as others who are experiencing domestic abuse. In addition, the Diocesan Bishop will appoint a **Bishop's Visitor** whose role is to support the clergy or the clergy's spouse at the time of the breakdown of the relationship, and for as long after as required".*
(Responding to Domestic Abuse 2017)

Sexual Harassment (See policy Appendix 8)

Stratton Team Ministry Sexual Harassment Policy aims to protect men and women in our church from unwanted sexual advances and give them guidelines to report incidents. We will also explain how we handle claims, deal with the perpetrators of sexual harassment and help victims recover.

We won't tolerate sexual harassment in our church in any shape or form. Our culture is based on mutual respect and collaboration. Sexual harassment is a serious violation of those principles.

What is Sexual Harassment?

Sexual harassment has many forms of variable seriousness. A person sexually harasses someone when they:

- Insinuate, propose, or demand sexual favours of any kind.
- Invade another person's personal space (e.g. inappropriate touching.)
- Stalk, intimidate, coerce, or threaten another person to get them to engage in sexual acts.
- Send or display sexually explicit objects or messages.
- Comment on someone's looks, dress, sexuality, or gender in a derogatory or objectifying manner or a manner that makes them uncomfortable.
- Make obscene comments, jokes or gestures that humiliate or offend someone.
- Pursue or flirt with another person persistently without the other person's willing participation. Also, flirting with someone at an inappropriate time (e.g. in a team meeting) is considered sexual harassment, even when these advances would have been welcome in a different setting. This is because such actions can harm a person's professional reputation and expose them to further harassment.

Listening Service

The most extreme form of sexual harassment is sexual assault, and Stratton Team Ministry can offer a listening, pastoral advice service to any member of the parish who

is a survivor of Domestic Violence or abuse. The survivor should contact the Rector. All contact will be undertaken anonymously on a strictly confidential basis.

Caring for those involved in Managing Safeguarding in the Stratton Team Ministry

It is important that the PCC recognise the load sometimes carried by those who manage Safeguarding for the Stratton Team Ministry. Those involved could be Parish Safeguarding Officers, Clergy, Licensed Lay Ministers, 'Eyes and Ears' or Mental First Aiders. Emotional support, supervision and confidential burden sharing for these volunteers should be available at Parish level via the Rector and at Diocesan level via the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.

Mental Health First Aider (MHFA)

Stratton Team Ministry has a Mental Health First Aider who is available to give support to members of the parishes who are in mental crisis. Contact with the MHFA can be made via the Rector, through the parish web site, the Parish Office, and the Parish Safeguarding Officers. There is a clearly defined job specification and operating protocol.

Our church will support parishioners who want to press charges against offenders.

SECTION 5

Practice Guidelines

See Associated Guidance Handbook 2026

As an organisation/place of worship working with children, young people, and adults at risk we wish to operate and promote good working practice. This will enable workers to run activities safely, develop good relationships, and minimise the risk of false accusation.

As well as a general code of conduct for workers we also have specific good practice guidelines for every activity we are involved in.

Working in Partnership

The diversity of organisations and settings means there can be great variation in practice when it comes to safeguarding children, young people, and vulnerable adults. This can be because of cultural tradition, belief and religious practice or understanding, for example, of what constitutes abuse.

We therefore have clear guidelines regarding our expectations of those with whom we work in partnership, whether in the UK or not. We will discuss with all partners our safeguarding expectations and have a partnership agreement for safeguarding. It is also our expectation that any organisation using our premises, as part of the letting agreement will have their own policy that meets Bristol Diocese / Thirtyone: eight safeguarding standards.

Good communication is essential in promoting safeguarding, both to those we wish to protect, to everyone involved in working with children and vulnerable adults and to all those with whom we work in partnership. This safeguarding policy is just one means of promoting safeguarding.

When Stratton Team Ministry is working with partners it is important to have clear guidance on safeguarding expectations. This is particularly important when working with partners who are based in other countries.

It is the expectation of Stratton Team Ministry that in a joint venture, when children or young people are working on sites recognised as those of Stratton Team Ministry ***the responsibility for all safeguarding will be that of Stratton Team Ministry***. When members of Stratton Team Ministry are working at another Church or venue with another body, ***safeguarding will be that body's responsibility***.

Stratton Team Ministry will expect:

- All adults working on a regular basis with children and vulnerable adults will have a current DBS. Certificate.
- A clear articulation of our standards and expectations of behaviours taking into consideration beliefs and practices of other countries should the activity involve children from outside the UK.
- The purpose of the activity is known and agreed by both organisations.
- All leaders are aware of the safeguarding referral procedures should they be necessary.
- That all leaders have a clear and unambiguous guide of behaviour to protect both them and the children from suspicion
- Parents have been informed and have agreed in writing to their children taking part (failure to do so will result in that child being barred from taking part in the activity)
- Clear boundaries are in place for all activities both for the leaders and the participants.
- There is also an expectation that any other organisation/s using the premises of Stratton Team Ministry will have, as part of the lettings agreement, their own Safeguarding Policy that meets the Bristol Diocese Safeguarding standards.

Hire of Church Premises

Organisations and individual users meeting in facilities owned or managed by Stratton Team Ministry will be expected to adhere to this safeguarding policy or where they work regularly with children, young people or adults who may be vulnerable, to have their own safeguarding policy.

Stratton Team Ministry is responsible for overseeing users and ensuring that agreed hire process and forms are in use. This will include obtaining a copy of the hirers safeguarding policy where relevant and providing a copy of this policy.

The hirer organisation's safeguarding policy should be examined by the PCC as part of the hire agreement and recorded as seen, by the activity organiser, and the Rector.

Appendix 1 Leadership Safeguarding Statement

The Leadership Ministers and PCC recognise the importance of its ministry /work with children, young people, and adults in need of protection and its responsibility to protect everyone entrusted to our care.

The following statement was agreed by the leadership/organisation:

"This place of worship/organisation is committed to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults and ensuring their well-being".

Specifically:

- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect of children and young people (those under 18 years of age) and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.
- We believe every child should be valued, safe, and happy. We want to make sure that children we have contact with know this and are empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm.
- All children and young people have the right to be treated with respect, to be listened to and to be protected from all forms of abuse.
- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, psychological, financial, and discriminatory abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.
- We recognise the personal dignity and rights of vulnerable adults and will ensure all our policies and procedures reflect this.
- We believe all adults should enjoy and have access to every aspect of the life of the place of worship/organisation unless they pose a risk to the safety of those we serve. We undertake to exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of all those who will work with children and vulnerable adults.

We are committed to:

- Following the requirements for UK legislation in relation to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and good practice recommendations.
- Respecting the rights of children as described in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Implementing the requirements of legislation regarding people with disabilities.
- Ensuring that workers adhere to the agreed procedures of our safeguarding policy.
- Keeping up to date with national and local developments relating to safeguarding.
- Following any denominational or organisational guidelines in relation to

safeguarding children and adults in need of protection.

- Supporting the safeguarding officer/s in their work and in any actions, they may need to take to protect children/vulnerable adults.
- Ensuring that everyone agrees to abide by these recommendations and the guidelines established by this place of worship/organisation.

Stratton Team Ministry recognises that those in positions of trust and responsibility, in the Church, as elsewhere, may be subject to temptation to abuse their power and exploit or harm others. We seek to take action to deal with any abuse.

Allegations of abuse or misconduct in relation to children (under 18) by church officers will be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), as well as other statutory bodies as appropriate, and investigated in accordance with his/her advice. Allegations of abuse or misconduct in relation to adults (18 and over) by church officers will be referred to the police and/or Local Authority where appropriate and investigated in accordance with their advice. Where appropriate allegations of this nature will be managed according to the Church of England '[Risk Assessment](#)' guidance and or the appropriate disciplinary and or complaint procedures.

We also recognise that:

- Children's Social Services (or equivalent) has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a child.
- Adult Social Care (or equivalent) has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a vulnerable adult.
- Where an allegation suggests that a criminal offence may have been committed then the police should be contacted as a matter of urgency.
- Where working outside of the UK, concerns will be reported to the appropriate agencies in the country in which we operate, and their procedures followed, and in addition we will report concerns to our agency's headquarters.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

We will review this statement and our policy and procedures annually.

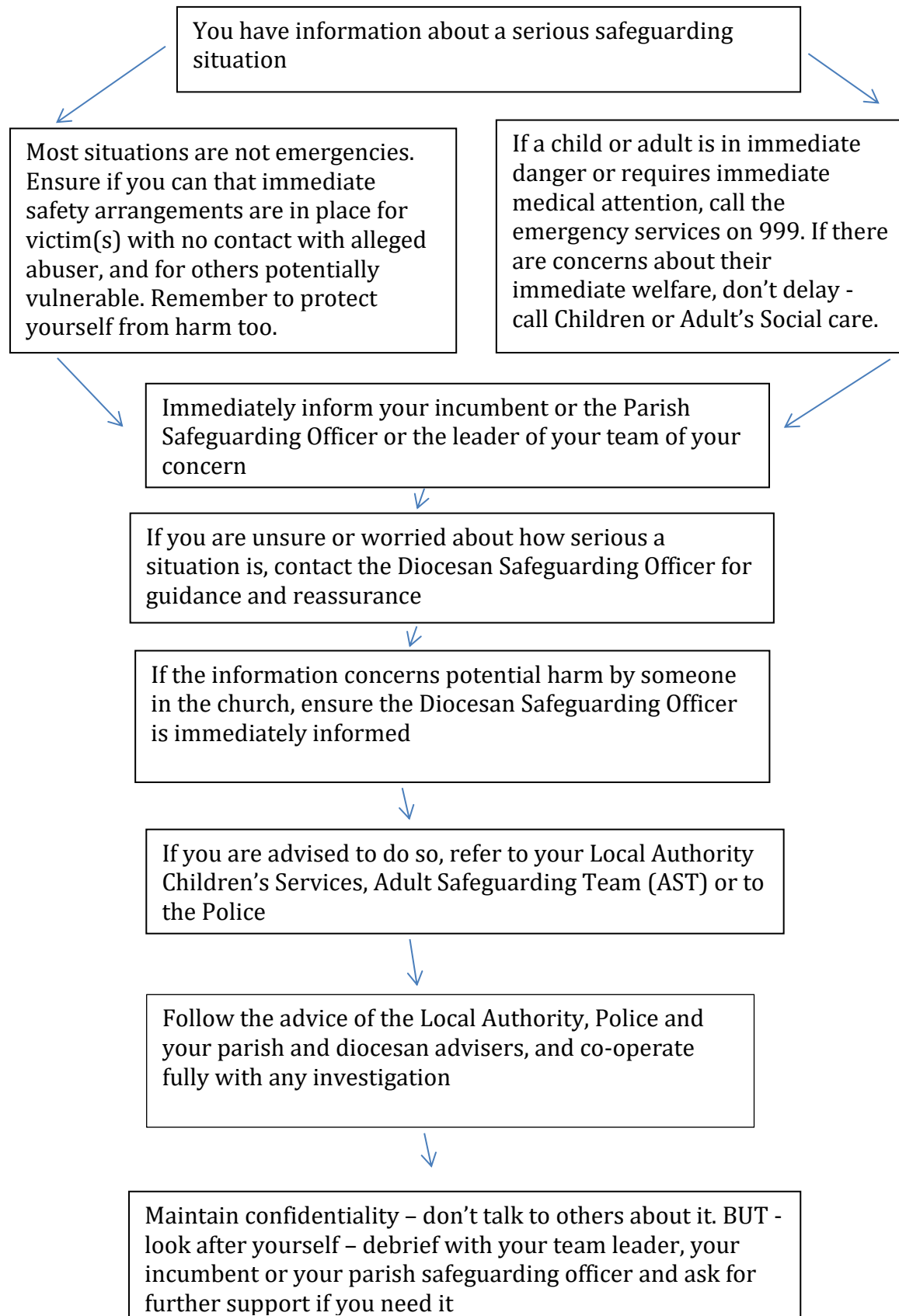
If you have any concerns for a child or vulnerable adult, then speak to one of the following who have been approved as safeguarding officers for this place of worship/organisation.

Mrs. Mary Boshier Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO)

Dr. M A Boshier Deputy Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO)

A copy of the full policy and procedures is available from the Parish Safeguarding Officers, The Rector, the PCC c/o St Margaret's Church Office (stmchurchoffice020@gmail.com) and at the back of all churches in the Team Ministry.

Appendix 2 Responding to Referrals of Abuse



Appendix 3 Stratton Team Ministry Lone Working Policy

As lone workers we are under the responsibility of our church during our work hours, and the environment in which we work must be as safe as it can be. Our PCC must accept responsibility for lone worker safety when we knock on someone's door to make a home visit.

In organisations that take a responsible view, there will be an understanding that lone workers are especially open to risks, which cannot always be managed.

(Lone Working www.peoplesafe.co.uk 2015)

Personal Safety for Clergy and Volunteers

Measures in Place to Reduce Those Risks

1. Avoid working alone. Do not assume that having a mobile phone and a back-up plan is enough safeguard. **The priority is to plan for a reduction of risk. E.g. lock the door of the church if you are in there alone but remember to take the key out of the lock so that in an emergency, access with a key from outside is possible.** Make sure that a second key is available and knowledge of with whom it is lodged.
2. Take all reasonable precautions to ensure their own safety, as they would in any other circumstances.
3. Before working alone, an assessment of the risks involved should be made in conjunction with the Team Leader
4. Where required, members must ensure that they sign in and out of building registers if these are used. E.g. PCC meetings
5. Members must inform their Team Leader or other identified person when they will be working alone, giving accurate details of their location, and following an agreed plan to inform that person when the task is completed. This includes occasions when a member expects to go home following an external commitment rather than returning to their base.
6. Agree a distress code word which may be used if the lone worker feels threatened.
7. If a person does not report in as expected an agreed plan should be put into operation, initially to check on the situation and then to respond as appropriate using emergency contact information if necessary.
8. Arrangements for contacts and response should be tailored to the needs and nature of the team and discussed with the Team Leader. Issues to consider include:
 - *Staffing levels and availability*
 - *Developing links with residential establishments to follow their safeguarding practices and recognise the identified risks.*

9. Where members work alone for extended periods and/or on a regular basis, managers must make provision for regular contact, both to monitor the situation and to counter the effects of working in isolation.
10. Members working away from their home should ensure that they always have access to a mobile phone. Members are responsible for checking that the mobile phone is charged, in working order and with enough credit remaining with the relevant provider.

Note** It is the members own responsibility to undertake an appropriate risk assessment and take the necessary precautions bearing in mind the situation and environment (If in doubt, consult the Team leader before the visit is undertaken)

Assessment of Risk

1. In drawing up and recording an assessment of risk the following issues should be considered, as appropriate to the circumstances:
2. The environment – location, security, access.
3. The context – nature of the task, any special circumstances.
4. The individuals concerned – indicators of potential or actual risk.
5. History – any previous incidents in similar situations.
6. Any other special circumstances.
7. All available information should be considered and checked or updated as necessary. Where there is any reasonable doubt about the safety of a lone worker in each situation, consideration should be given to sending a second worker or making other arrangements to complete the task.

Planning

1. Member's safety should be considered when choosing locations for courses etc.
2. Team Leaders should be fully briefed in relation to risk as well as the task itself.
3. Communication, checking-in and fall-back arrangements must be in place. Members should ensure someone is always aware of their movements and expected return time.
4. The Team Leader is responsible for agreeing and facilitating these arrangements, which should be tailored to the operating conditions affecting the member.

Members working at home

1. Members working from their own homes should take every reasonable precaution to ensure that their address and telephone number remain confidential, if they so wish.
2. Members working from home should be in regular contact with their Line Manager or other designated person if working at home for extended periods.
3. Managers should be particularly aware of the importance of such arrangements for members that live alone.
4. Members working from home should be aware that even ex-directory and mobile numbers will show up on Caller Display and can be retrieved on 1471. To prevent the person, you call accessing your number dial 141 before their number or check the instructions for your mobile phone.

Practice Guidance

'Reasonable precautions might include.

1. Checking directions for the destination
2. Ensuring your car, if used, is road-worthy and has break-down cover.
3. Ensuring someone knows where you are and when are expected home avoiding where possible poorly lit or deserted areas.
4. Taking care when entering or leaving empty buildings, especially at night
5. Ensuring that items such as laptops or mobile phones are carried discreetly.

Personal Safety

1. Personal Safety.

- a) There are several things you can do to avoid trouble in the first place. The organisation has a responsibility as an employer to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of members, but employees also have a duty to take reasonable care themselves.
- b) This is not about raising anxiety levels but about recognising potential dangers and taking positive steps to reduce risk, for yourself and for service users in your care.

2. Be aware of the environment.

- a) Know what measures are in place where you work: check out alarm systems and procedures, exits and entrances, and the location of the first aid supplies.
- b) Make sure that your car and mobile phone are in good working order, and that electrical and other mechanical equipment is safe to use. Check the instructions for use and ensure that faults are reported /dealt with.
- c) If your work takes you into areas which are isolated, poorly lit at night or known for high crime rates arrange to check in when the visit is over.
- d) If a potentially violent situation occurs, be aware of what might be used as a weapon against you, and of possible escape routes.
- e) Try to maintain a comfortable level of heating and lighting in buildings you control.

3. Be aware of yourself.

- a) Think about your body language. What messages are you giving?
- b) Think about your tone of voice and choice of words. Avoid anything which could be sarcastic or patronising.
- c) Think about what you are wearing. Is it suitable for the task? Does it hamper your movement? What signals does it send out? In a potentially risky situation, does a scarf or tie offer an opportunity to an assailant?
- d) Be aware of your own triggers – the things that make you angry or upset.

4. Be aware of other people

1. Take note of their non-verbal signals.
2. Be aware of their triggers.
3. Don't crowd people – allow them space.
4. Make a realistic estimate of the time you will need to do something, and don't make promises which can't be kept, either on your own or someone else's behalf.
5. Be aware of the context of your meeting – are they already angry or upset before you meet,
6. Show that you are listening.

Appendix 4 Code of Conduct

Those who will be undertaking work involving with vulnerable groups, vulnerable adults, or children, will be asked to hold an Enhanced DBS check. The Enhanced DBS check searches the Police National computer and highlights any spent and unspent convictions, cautions, warnings and reprimands the individual may have on their record during their living time in the UK. The Enhanced Plus DBS which will be requested for all involved in delivering Regulated Activities (Personal) care check also searches for the applicant's name on the vulnerable adults and children barred lists, to check that they have not been banned from working in regulated activity with either vulnerable group.

If an individual appears on either list, or both lists they are not allowed to work with the group in question. It is the responsibility of the employer to carry out these checks to ensure that they do not employ anyone or allow someone to volunteer with the vulnerable group. The employer must also refer anyone they believe may pose a threat to either the vulnerable adults or children's groups. This code of conduct embraces the work of the document "Promoting a Safer Church 2017":

Stratton Team Ministry has a code of conduct that relates to all forms of abuse between individuals within a relationship of trust.

- All paid and volunteer workers in Stratton Team Ministry agree to follow this code of conduct.
- It is important that there is a culture of dignity and respect towards those being cared for
- All members of Stratton Team Ministry will listen to children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- All members of Stratton Team Ministry will respect the boundaries and privacy of those being cared for
- Stratton Team Ministry makes clear in all that it says and does that there is a paramount need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and protect them from all forms of exploitation by those looking after them within a relationship of trust.
- All members of Stratton Team Ministry will know how to deal with issues of discipline in line with the Ministry's code of conduct.
- All members of Stratton Team Ministry will develop an awareness of disability issues as well as issues of equality and inclusion.
- All members should ensure that they understand the Stratton Safeguarding Policy and the good working practice outlined both in the policy and in the supporting guidance handbook.
- All members of Stratton Team Ministry must be clear that any behaviour which might allow a sexual relationship to develop between the person in a position of trust and the individual or individuals in their care should be avoided; and that any sexual relationship within a relationship of trust is unacceptable so long as the relationship of trust continues.

Appendix 5 Stratton Team Ministry DBS Fair Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy

As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Disclosure Service to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust, the Diocese of Bristol undertakes to comply fully with the DBS Code of Practice and to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of disclosure based on conviction or other information revealed.

We make every subject of a DBS Disclosure aware of the existence of the Code of Practice and make a copy available on request.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from working with us. It will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of your offences.

A Disclosure is only requested after a thorough assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a Disclosure is required, all application forms, job adverts, and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that a Disclosure will be requested in the event of the individual being offered a position.

Where a Disclosure is to form part of a recruitment process, we encourage all applicants called for interview to provide details of any unspent criminal record at an early stage in the application process.

Unless the nature of the position allows Stratton Team Ministry to ask questions about your entire criminal record, we only ask about "unspent" convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

Where the nature of a position does allow us to ask questions about your entire criminal record excepting any "protected" information we will ask you to complete a "Self-Disclosure Form" before asking you to apply for a DBS disclosure. (Further information about what information should be disclosed is available from DBS in their 'DBS Filtering Guide',

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/266123/Filtering_guide_v2.3.pdf). This enables us to discuss with you at an early stage any information which may cause you to be unable to progress to confirmation in role. We request that this information is sent under separate, confidential cover to the person within the organisation who is responsible for processing your DBS disclosure application and we guarantee that this information will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of a recruitment process.

Where a caution, conviction or additional information is disclosed by you or on a DBS disclosure your consent will be sought to forward a copy of the document to the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer (DSO).

The DSO will contact you to discuss the information and the circumstances in which the caution, conviction or concern arose. The DSO may need to speak to statutory bodies or

individuals and will seek your consent to do so. The DSO will provide a written risk assessment to the recruiter, which includes a recommendation of safe to proceed, proceed with amendments to roll or not safe to proceed. You will be provided with a copy of that assessment.

The recruiter will then communicate to you a decision regarding whether they are able to continue with the appointment process.

Failure to reveal information that is relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment or voluntary work. Failure to consent to risk assessment will result in any offer of employment or voluntary work being withdrawn. This policy stands for all members and volunteers recruited by Stratton Team Ministry.

Quality Assurance and Appeals:

To ensure that this process is followed according to Church of England agreed policy and practice (see National Church of England 'Practice Guidance: Risk Assessment for individuals who may pose risk to children or adults' June 2015) the Diocesan Secretary as Bishop's Staff Safeguarding Lead will be made aware of all risk assessments conducted within this process.

Should the individual subject to this process feel that they have been treated unfairly or that the process is contradictory to Church of England practice guidance, they may appeal.

The individual subject to risk assessment states in writing that they wish to appeal. If the individual initially states verbally that they wish to appeal any party in producing a letter stating their reason for appeal may assist them.

- Independent Chair of Diocesan Safeguarding Steering Group (DSSG) notified of appeal. (Write to: Independent Chair, DSSG, Diocese of Bristol, Hillside House, 1500 Parkway North, Stoke Gifford, Bristol BS34 8YU).
- Independent Chair identifies panel of three individuals taken from DSSG membership (not to include Diocesan Secretary).
- Individual subject to assessment is invited to submit any documents or a statement to the Independent Chair that they wish to be considered by the panel.
- DSO provides Independent Chair with anonymised material (investigation report/ risk assessment/ agreement/ action plan dependent on case).
- Independent Chair reviews and forwards anonymised material to the individuals on the panel. Chair will request any additional information required from individual subject to risk assessment or the DSO or others.
- Panel members individually review material.
- Independent Chair convenes a panel meeting in person or by teleconference at which the appeal and information submitted are considered.

- The panel will consider the information submitted alongside the guidance 'Practice Guidance: Risk Assessment for individuals who may pose risk to children or adults' June 2015 and any other relevant Church of England policy or guidance and any legislation relevant. The panel will then reach one of the following conclusions:
 1. The meeting is adjourned, either whilst additional information is obtained or for consideration.
 2. The appeal has no grounds and is therefore dismissed.
 3. The appeal has grounds and recommendations are made for amendments to the implementation of the risk management plan or agreement.
 4. There has been a breach of relevant policy or poor professional practice- in which case a recommendation may be made to the relevant line manager for appropriate procedures to be followed.

The individual subject to investigation, the DSO and the commissioning body will be informed of the panel's decision in writing. The Commissioning body will then be responsible for considering, with support of the DSO any panel recommendations.

A report will be made to Bishop and to next DSSG with case summary, panel recommendations and actions taken.

Appendix 6 Handling of Disclosure Information

Storage and Access: DBS Disclosure Certificates must never be kept on an applicant's personal file. They will be stored separately on the password protected memory stick kept in the parish safe. Access is strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties. The Rector and PSOs hold the password.

Handling: In accordance with Section 124 of the Police Act 1997, disclosure information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. A record should be kept of all those to whom Disclosures or Disclosure information has been revealed and it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

Usage: Disclosure information must only be used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent has been given. A disclosure certificate must be for the correct workforce only and at the correct level. I.e. a person recruiting for a role in the child workforce at enhanced level should not ask to see a certificate for child and adult workforce at enhanced plus level as the certificate may include information that the recruiter is not entitled to see.

Retention: Once a recruitment (or other relevant) decision has been made, a disclosure certificate should not be kept for any longer than is necessary. This is generally for a period of up to six months, to allow for the consideration and resolution of any disputes or complaints. If, in very exceptional circumstances, it is considered necessary to keep Disclosure information for longer than six months, consultation should be made with the umbrella body Thirtyone:eight. Advice can then be given regarding the Data Protection and Human Rights of the individual. The above conditions regarding safe storage and strictly controlled access would still apply in these circumstances.

Disposal: Once the retention period has lapsed, Disclosure certificates must be suitably destroyed by secure means, i.e. shredding, pulping, or burning. Whilst awaiting destruction, Disclosure certificates must not be kept in any insecure receptacle (e.g. waste bin or confidential waste sack). No copies of the Disclosure certificate may be kept, in any form. However, a record can be kept of the date of the issue of a disclosure, the name of the subject, the type of disclosure requested, the position for which the disclosure was requested, the unique reference number of the disclosure and the details of the recruitment decision taken.

"This policy stands for all members and volunteers recruited by the Bristol Diocese Board of Finance (BDBF), all those holding a Bishops Licence, those employed by the Diocesan Bishop and candidates for BAP and Ordination.

This policy does not apply to staff and volunteers recruited by parishes, Bristol Cathedral, or other organisations within the Diocese of Bristol. Each of these needs to confirm that they have adopted their own version of this policy prior to accessing the Thirtyone:eight E bulk DBS system. provided through BDBF."

Appendix 7 Stratton Team Ministry Policy for Responding to Domestic Abuse

All forms of domestic abuse are wrong and must stop. We are committed to promoting and supporting environments which:

- Ensure that all people feel welcomed, respected, and safe from abuse.
- Protect those vulnerable to domestic abuse from actual or potential harm.
- Recognise equality amongst people and within relationships.
- Enable and encourage concerns to be raised and responded to appropriately and consistently.

We recognise that:

- all forms of domestic abuse cause damage to the survivor and express an imbalance of power in the relationship.
- all survivors (regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity) have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Domestic abuse can occur in all communities.
- Domestic abuse may be a single incident, but is usually a systematic, repeated pattern which escalates in severity and frequency.
- Domestic abuse, if witnessed or overheard by a child, is a form of abuse by the perpetrator of the abusive behaviour.

Working in partnership with children, adults and other agencies is essential in promoting the welfare of

We will endeavour to respond to domestic abuse by:

In all our activities –

- Valuing, listening to and respecting both survivors and alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse.

In our publicity –

- Raising awareness about other agencies, support services, resources and expertise, through providing information in public and women-only areas of relevance to survivors, children and alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse.

When concerns are raised –

- Ensuring that those who have experienced abuse can find safety and informed help.

- Working with the appropriate statutory bodies during an investigation into domestic abuse, including when allegations are made against a member of the church community.

In our care –

- Ensuring that informed and appropriate pastoral care is offered to any child, young person or adult who has suffered abuse.
- Identifying and outlining the appropriate relationship of those with pastoral care responsibilities with both survivors and alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse.

If you have any concerns or need to talk to anyone, please contact the Rector

Appendix 8 Sexual Harassment Policy

Our sexual harassment policy aims to protect men and women in our church from unwanted sexual advances.

Our Churches Rules on Sexual Harassment:

- **No one has the right to sexually harass our church members;** Any person in our church who is found guilty of serious harassment will be reported to the police or to the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer. Also, if representatives of our contractors or vendors sexually harass our members, we will demand that the company they work for takes disciplinary action and/or refuse to work with this person/company in the future.
- **Sexual harassment is never too minor to be dealt with.** Any kind of harassment can wear down individuals and create a hostile environment. We will hear every claim and punish offenders appropriately.
- **Sexual harassment is about how we make others feel.** Many do not consider behaviours like flirting or sexual comments to be sexual harassment, thinking they are too innocent to be labelled that way. But, if something you do makes your colleagues uncomfortable, or makes them feel unsafe, you must stop.
- **We assume every sexual harassment claim is legitimate unless proven otherwise.** We listen to victims of sexual harassment and always conduct our investigations properly. Occasional false reports do not undermine this principle.
- **We will not allow further victimisation of harassed employees.** We will fully support employees who were sexually harassed and will not take any adverse action against them. For example, we will not allow others to retaliate against them.
- **Those who support or overlook sexual harassment are as much at fault as offenders.** Clergy and the PCC especially are obliged to prevent sexual harassment and act when they have suspicions or receive reports. Letting this behaviour go on or encouraging it will bring about disciplinary action. Anyone who witnesses an incident of sexual harassment or has other kinds of proof should report to The PSOs, Rector or the Church Wardens.

How to Report Sexual Harassment

If you are being sexually harassed (or suspect another person is being harassed), please report it to The Rector, PSOs or Church Wardens. In serious cases like sexual assault, please call the police and inform them that you plan to press charges. We acknowledge it's often hard to come forward about these issues, but we need your help to build a fair and safe environment for you and your church members.

If you want to report sexual harassment within the Stratton Team Ministry, there are two options:

- **Ask for an urgent meeting with your** Rector, PSOs or Church Wardens Once in the meeting; explain the situation in as much detail as possible. If you have any hard evidence (e.g. emails), forward it or bring it with you to the meeting.
- **Send your complaint via email.** If you address it to your Rector, PSOs or Church Wardens please attach any evidence or information that can be used in the investigation. Rector, PSOs or Church Wardens will discuss the issue and contact you as soon as possible.

If you report assault to the police, our church will provide any possible support until the matter is resolved. In any case, we will ensure you are not victimized and that you have access to relevant evidence admissible in court, like security video footage or emails (without revealing confidential information about other church members.)

Speak up, we listen.

Sexual harassment can exhaust those who endure it. Speaking up about this issue is often tough for fear of not being heard.

Please don't let these fears deter you. Our church will do everything possible to stop sexual harassment and any other kind of harassment from happening, while supporting harassed church members. We need to know what's going on so we can act on it. And by raising your voice on this issue, you help us create a happy church and thrive.

<https://resources.workable.com/sexual-harassment-policy>

Appendix 9 Safeguarding Emergency Grab and Go Guide

This is a short guide for use in an emergency safeguarding situation

Helpful numbers:

Emergency services 999

Parish Safeguarding officers Dr and Mrs Bosher 07799835437

Thirtyone: eight Church Child Protection service 03030031111

The out of hours emergency number 03030031111

Bristol Diocesan Safeguarding Officer (Adam Bond) 0117 9060100, mob 07543504977

Local numbers for Swindon and Wiltshire:

The Swindon Borough Council (SBC) Children's Social Services office telephone number (office hours) is **01793 466903** The out of hours emergency number is **01793 436699**.

The Swindon Borough Council Adult Social Services office telephone number (office hours) is **01793 463555**.

- The out of hours emergency number is **01793 436699**.
- Local Authority Designated Officer (**LADO**) **01793463854**
- The SBC Adults with Learning Disabilities No **01793 466724**
- The SBC Adults with Mental Health Issues: **01793 835787**
- The Police Child Protection Team telephone number is **999 or 101**.
- **Concerns for children (under18):** Wiltshire Council Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub. Daytime number **0300 456 0108**. Out of hours Emergency Duty Service: **0845 607 0888**
- **Concerns for adults (Over18)** Wiltshire Council Social Care Help Desk **0300 456 0111 (daytime)**. Out of hours Emergency Duty Service **08456 607 0888**

Not sure whether to report a concern? Please do! It is better to report something that you didn't need to than stay quiet about something that turns out to be important.

Domestic Abuse Helplines

Contact details for Domestic Abuse support that can be signposted to are available on the safeguarding pages of the Diocesan website but are also listed below for information.

National Domestic Violence Helpline 0808 2000 247 (24 Hour)

Local Domestic Abuse Support

Bristol - **Next Link** www.nextlinkhousing.co.uk 0117 925 0680

South Gloucestershire - **Nextlink** <https://www.nextlinkhousing.co.uk/southglos/> 0800 4700 280

Swindon Domestic Abuse Support Service (SWA) 01793 610610 (24 hours). Other Support Services:|

The Men's Advice Line, for male domestic abuse survivors – 0808 801 0327 (run by Respect)

The Mix, free information & support for under 25s in the UK – 0808 808 4994

National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline – 0800 999 5428 (run by Galop)

Live Free from Fear Helpline – 0808 8010 800 (run by Welsh Women's Aid this helpline supports men and women and provides support in English and Welsh)

Samaritans (24/7 service) – 116 123

Responding to Referrals of Abuse (See flow Chart Appendix 2)

Under no circumstances should a worker carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse. Follow the procedures above and refer to the most appropriate agency

Some signs and symptoms of possible physical or sexual abuse in children and vulnerable adults

- Injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them.
- Injuries that occur in places not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc.
- Injuries that have not received medical attention.
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming.
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained abdominal pains.
- Bruises on babies, bites, burns, fractures etc. which do not have an accidental explanation.
- Cuts/scratches/substance abuse.
- Any allegations made concerning sexual abuse.
- Excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour.
- Age-inappropriate sexual activity through words, play or drawing.
- Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults.
- Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home.
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams, or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations.
- Eating disorders - anorexia, bulimia.
- Emotional changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clinging.
- Depression, aggression, extreme anxiety.
- Nervousness, frozen watchfulness.
- Obsessions or phobias.
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults
- Attention-seeking behaviour.
- Persistent tiredness.
- Running away/stealing/lying
- Neglect.
- Under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food.
- Untreated illnesses.
- Inadequate care.

Maintain confidentiality – don't talk to others about it. BUT - look after yourself – debrief with your team leader, your incumbent or your parish safeguarding officer and ask for further support if you need it.

Actions after a referral

RECOGNISE: What action to take when concerned about possible abuse

- In an emergency, call emergency services on 999.
- Otherwise, consult the person to whom you are responsible.
- Decide together whether to seek advice or make an immediate referral to the police or social services and contact the DSAs, to notify them.
- Keep a record of what happened, your concerns and your actions.
- Only tell others who need to know.
- Always do **something**, don't just make a note of it.

RESPOND: to safeguarding concerns

- You may need to respond to observed concerns not only disclosures.
- Listen
- Do not ask closed questions or try to investigate.
- Try to resolve ambiguities in what you are being told.
- Open questions: **Tell me, Explain to me, Describe for me (TED)**
- Treat 'historic' (i.e. non-current situations) as if they were current.
- Do not promise confidentiality - tell them we need to share this.
- Assure them they are not to blame and have done the right thing.

Tell them what you will do and that they will be kept informed.

RECORD the information you are given.

- Write down exactly what is seen, said, or heard and make clear where you have added your views!
- or interpretation
- **WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHO, HOW**
- Always sign and date anything you record.
- Where you are recording a conversation:
- Use the person's own words.
- Allow the person the time they need and ask only open questions.

REFER: Information Sharing

Key Principles

- Confidential information can and should be shared appropriately.
- Be open and honest with the person from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be, shared.
- Always share with consent where possible.
- Consent can be overridden in certain circumstances.
- Actions and decisions must always be recorded.

Appendix 10 Near Miss Protocol

There are circumstances in life when you, as a decision maker, choose a particular course of action to achieve a positive outcome for a particular problem. On most occasions, the decision/s made achieve the desired effect. Occasionally, there are situations when, on reflection, a different course of action might have been taken which led to a negative outcome. Sometimes luck is on your side, and a poor decision is mediated by external factors or events which eventually bring about the positive outcome required.

The rationale for this policy is to explore the reason for decision making, the causative reasons for the near miss, the recording of that near miss, the learning from it and dissemination of information to reduce the possibility of a re-occurrence.

Decision making for any circumstance:

Rationale

There are many occasions every day when one makes decisions. These events sometimes occur because of accidents, social situations, people, material defects or mechanical/electrical malfunctions. Sometimes the decision is the correct one, sometimes, on reflection a different response would have been better.

First step in the action process for the development of a protocol

When one of these events occurs, you identify the problem then take steps either to resolve or ameliorate it to some degree.

Circumstances and Causative factors

There are a range of different contributors which might have a bearing on the 'near' miss:

Individuals

Materials and fabrics (failure or malfunction)

Actions of others

Your experience and expertise

Patterns of repeating behaviour

Operating protocols and systems

There will be different levels of near miss, and it will be up to the H&S representative and PSOs to create an awareness of the event, decide on the severity of the incident, the outcome and next level of action required. We must take into consideration that people have different thresholds of fear or concern and make sure that we all agree the threshold level for initiating action.

The key is to ensure that all members of the church community feel comfortable with reporting the incident, and that whistle blowing is to be encouraged if parishioners or Church officers are involved.

Examples:

H&S:

a. A piece of fabric drops off the building immediately in front of you as you are walking through the church yard. Fortune has a part to play in this scenario but sitting behind it is a lack of vigilance or inspection of the fabric of the church. Church action is to instigate or increase the inspection of all buildings associated with the church.

Safeguarding:

a. An elderly parishioner has become quiet, withdrawn, and weepy at the Sunday service. This is not noticed by the church community, but fortunately her regular carer has reported it to Social Services. The plight of the elderly lady is explained as having had a difficult time with a relative. What action if any is required by the church community?

b. A child at the church fete wanders out of an open door into the car park. On reflection, is there a door fault, or a slight loss of concentration on behalf of the parent or the group leaders?

c. There has been a man hanging around the church during services and shouting

d. Members of the PCC have noticed that one of their members has displayed and continues to display odd and uncomfortable behaviour in the presence of the elderly or children.

Groups of near misses:

a. H&S

These are those near misses which result in some form of Health and Safety issue. These issues should be managed by and be the responsibility of the PCC H&S representatives.

b. Safeguarding issues

These should be reported to, and managed by, the Joint Parish Safeguarding Officers

In addition, there needs to be a central record kept of all near misses.

Decision making processes and outcomes:

For any circumstance where a decision /action is required, all the factors above are brought to bear. Inevitably in the stress of the occasion, sometimes a full consideration of all the factors cannot be given in the time available. Consequently, decisions on courses of action may not be as sound as those made in the stressless environment with the luxury of time.

The most important actions are that we learn from the event, prevent a reoccurrence by asking the question "What could we have done better" and to take a positive corrective action.

Appendix 11 Diocesan Safeguarding Warnings

There are often several times during year when the Diocese Safeguarding Team contact the Stratton Team Ministry regarding criminal offenders who may pose a threat to the church community. In all circumstance, the information should be treated as confidential and only circulated to those who need to know and have authority to take appropriate actions. If the Stratton Team Ministry receive such warnings from the police or the Diocese, the following actions should be taken.

- PSOs receive the information
- The PSOs issue warnings with photo, if possible, to the Incumbent, Curate, Eyes and Ears, Church Wardens indicating what action is required
- If the offender is identified, the Church Wardens under Church Cannon have the authority to ask the person to leave church premises. (It will be advisable that two Church Wardens undertake this action together)
- If difficulties arise, the standing advice will be to call the police via 999
- The PSOs should be informed who will advise the Diocese of the event

Appendix 12 Critical Incident Plan

This plan was developed by the Stanton PCC, but with their permission, has been adopted for use across the Stratton Team Ministry. The implementation of the plan must remain flexible depending on the circumstance, but the framework of action is here.

Dealing with an unauthorised Intruder

If you disturb someone who has broken into the church or gained entry by some other unauthorised means DO NOT confront the criminal(s). Your job is not to confront the individual(s), but to gather information. If you disregard this and confront the individual(s), there is a distinct possibility that you could become the victim of an assault.

Suggested action:

- Go to the nearest telephone and dial 999. By doing this you will get a fast response.
- If you can, try to get a description of the offender, but remember, brief, simple details are the best. Getting the following information would be very helpful:
 - Male or Female
 - Approximate age
 - Height
 - Build
 - Colour and style of clothing
 - Any distinguishing features?
 - Are there any accomplices?
 - Is a vehicle being used?
 - The registration number or part of the number would be ideal
 - If you can't get the registration details, then, the colour and type of vehicle
 - If a van, any logo on the side or back?
 - Which direction did either person(s) or vehicle go?

Arriving after a Break-in:

If you arrive at the church and find there has been a break-in telephone the Police. Do nothing until the police arrive - preserve the scene. This may seem strange, but as far as the Police are concerned, it is very important. Sometimes Police work can be sophisticated. It may well be that the Scenes of Crime Officer or photographer can play their part in the investigation. The first Police Officer to arrive will advise you what to do. REMEMBER: DO NOT TOUCH OR CLEAN ANYTHING. PRESERVE THE SCENE OF THE CRIME

Menacing Person/Threatening Behaviour/Weapons Threat:

If there is a potentially dangerous person gaining access to the church:

- Call 999 when it is safe to do so.

- Notify Church Officers, as they should take control of the situation.
- Remain calm and co-operate with the person(s).
- Make no sudden movements.
- If safe to do so, evacuate the area.
- If the threat is outside the building, lock the building immediately.

Bomb Threat

Emergency actions if there is a threat of explosion from a bomb:

- If the threat of explosion is immediate, evacuate all people from the premises at once
- If there is a telephone call, and the caller indicates there's some time before the bomb will go off.
- Try to get as much information as possible about the location and description of the bomb and the caller. If you can, write things down.
- Stay on the line as long as the caller continues to provide useful information.
- Evacuate the premises.
- Call 999 and convey as much information about the situation as you can.
- All bomb threats and warnings received by telephone or email should be reported to the church officers.

Discovery of a Suspicious Item

If you find an item you suspect is a bomb, DO NOT touch, attempt to move or disturb the item:

- Call 999.
- Do not use a mobile phone or electrical devices anywhere near the suspicious package.
- Evacuate the building

Media Communications

Emergency situations attract media attention. For that reason, media crisis communications concerning church emergencies are to be handled by the designated church representative. See responsibility section for designated person/s. Individuals should pass any information they may have to the designated person/s, who will act as spokesperson, so that the media will receive accurate and identical information.

Harassing/Obscene Telephone Calls

If you receive harassing telephone calls concerning the church or in connection with church activities, the best way to handle the situation is to immediately hang up without saying anything to the caller. If the caller does not receive any response, he/she will usually stop calling.

If the calls are threatening in any way, or are continuous, please contact the person nominated in responsibility section of this policy immediately. Please give this designated individual the following information:

- Your name, telephone number, and address.
- The date and time of the harassing calls.
- Content of the calls.

If the harassing or obscene messages are left on your answering machine, save the messages in case they are needed as evidence.

Some callers can become abusive, and if you are not able to talk the caller into reasonable telephone behaviour, it might become necessary to terminate the conversation.

- Display empathy for the caller's predicament.
- Remain calm and reasonable.
- Forewarn the caller that unless the abusive language is discontinued, you will hang up. Example: "I'm sorry you feel the way you do. However, this conversation is going nowhere, so if we can't get back to a reasonable conversation, I will hang up".

RESPONSIBILITIES

Overall Authority: The Rector for the Stratton Team Ministry.

Local responsibilities:

St Leonards – St Leonards PCC

St Margarets and St Mary Magdalene – Stratton PCC

It comprises of:

- Incumbent
- Churchwardens
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Deanery Synod Members
- Health & Safety Officer
- Elected Members

Emergency Evacuation Officers:

Normally this will be the responsibility of the Churchwardens and by Duty Sides persons, who are deputised in their absence.

Nominated Persons (Child and Vulnerable Adults Protection):

The appointed Parish Safeguarding Officers and the 'Eyes and Ears' team for St Leonard's Parochial Church Council and St Mary Magdalene

Key Holders to the Church, Church Safes and Bell Tower:

See separate document - St Leonard's Church Appointed Persons.

First Aiders:

A list of any appointed first aiders is posted in the churches at the first aid point. Also see separate document - St Leonard's Church Appointed Persons

Managing Medical Emergencies

Background:

We recognise that medical emergencies can affect people of all ages, from toddlers to teenagers to the elderly.

An appropriate first aid kit is kept in the vestry. Checks are made during our annual safety inspection to make sure that nothing is missing and that expiry dates have not been reached.

Several regulars at church are trained to provide First Aid. Certifications are kept up to date.

In accordance with our Health & Safety policy, any accident or medical incident that occurs on church property is fully documented. An accident report book is kept in the vestry. The record will include a full description of the incident including names of any witnesses. After the event the PCC's Health and Safety Officer will explore any lessons learned and recommend whether any corrective actions should be put into place.

All "welcomers", sides people and churchwardens are made familiar with the contents of this document.

Prevention is key – our Health and Safety Policy aims to provide the safest possible environment.

Arrangements:

The following actions will be taken if, because of illness or accident, anyone at church requires assistance:

The leader of the service or an officer of the PCC will ask for someone with appropriate medical experience or First Aid training to come forward and take the lead role in assessing the situation and to take appropriate action which might include telephoning emergency services.

Taking advice from the person taking the lead role, the leader of the service will judge whether/how the service should continue or whether to call a "time-out" (and clear the church building to ensure space and privacy for assessment of the casualty and administration of immediate first aid). This will certainly be the case if Emergency

Services are summoned. Having given immediate support and any necessary First Aid, (and if there is no need to involve emergency services) then the person taking the lead role will decide what follow-up actions should be taken, including the making of arrangements for transport home if appropriate.

Appendix 13 DBS Certificated Church Leaders

Rector Rev E Mead

Curate Rev C Stansfield

Lay Ministers: Dr. L Lodwick, Mrs. A Burston

Church Wardens for Stratton: Mrs. A Jenkins, Mr. I Jones

Deputy Church Wardens for Stratton: Mr. D Horne, Mrs. J Lewis

Church Warden South Marston: Mrs. D Whitford

Church Wardens Stanton Fitzwarren: Mrs. E Hillman, Mr. C Pope

Bell Tower Captain: Mr. W Hiscocks, Mrs. W Sears

Bumps and Babes Leader and Deputy; Mrs. B Smith and Mrs. A Domm

Choir Leader: Dr A Breakspear

Parish Safeguarding Officers: Dr M Boshier, Mrs. M Boshier

Safeguarding Eyes and Ears: Mrs. A Pope, Mr. C Pope, Mrs. D Whitford, Mr. D Thomas, Mrs. E Hillman

All members of Stratton and South Marston and Stanton PCCs

References

Bristol Dioceses Safeguarding Policy 2015, 2016, 2023

Bristol Diocese Information Sharing and Storage- the Basics for Parish Safeguarding Policy 2015

Capacity Act 2005

Care Act 2014

CCPAS Model Safeguarding Policy 2013

CCPAS Safe and Secure

CCPAS 'In Focus' 2015

CCPAS Word blog 2018

Church of England 2015 SG1 course material

Church of England policies:

- *Protecting All God's Children 2010 Safeguarding Children*
- *Promoting a Safer Church 2006 (Safeguarding Adults) & 2017*
- *Safer Recruitment 2015*
- *Responding to Domestic Abuse 2006*
- *Responding Well: to those who have been sexually abused 2011*
- *Safeguarding Records: Joint Practice Guidance for the Church of England and the Methodist Church 2015'*
- *Working Together 2015*
- *Fair Recruitment of Ex-offenders' policy*
- *Managing Serious Safeguarding Situations*
- *Responding Well*

Critical Incident Plan (2022) M Curtis and Stanton PCC

Data Protection Act 1998

GDPR 2016

Home Office document '*Abuse of Trust Caring for Young people and the Vulnerable*'

Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor advice

Lone Working www.peoplesafe.co.uk 2015

Police Act 1997

The Faith and Order Commission (2016) *The Gospel, Sexual Abuse and the Church*, Church House publishing

Thirtyone:eight (2026) *10 Safeguarding Standards*

Sexual Harassment <https://resources.workable.com/sexual-harassment-policy>

Diocesan Support

The Bristol Diocese may be contacted on 0117 906 0100

The Diocesan Safeguarding Officer is Mr Adam Bond 0117 906 0100, mob 07543504977

The Diocesan Safeguarding Administrator is Mrs K Caithness 0117 906 0100

The Diocesan Safeguarding Training and Development Officer is Mrs H Styles 0117 906 0100

The Diocesan Safeguarding Case worker is Mr N Papuca 0117 906 0100

Policy Review Date

The Stratton Parish Safeguarding Officers and DBS Lead Recruiters will review this policy annually. It will then be agreed annually by the Rector and PCC, signed and distributed as below.

Last Reviewed: The first full PCC meeting following the APCM May 2026

Next Review date: The first full PCC meeting following the APCM May 2027

Policy Agreed by PCC/Rector May 2026 Stratton and South Marston

Policy Agreed by PCC/Rector May 2026-Stanton

Policy and Guide Distribution List

Electronic Copies

Rector

Curate

Babes and Bumps Leader and Deputy

LLMs X2

Church Wardens and Deputies (Stratton with South Marston, St Leonards,)

PCC Secretaries X2

PSOs X 2

PCCs Stratton and South Marston and Stanton, all members

Church Web site

Eyes and Ears – Mr and Mrs C Pope, Mrs. D Whitford, Mrs. E Hillman, Mr D Thomas

Bell Tower Captains X2

Hard copies

Parish Office

Parish Safe together with Parish Safeguarding Guide

1 copy of each document to be made available in each Parish Church

Dr. M Boshier

Parish Safeguarding Officer

May 2026