

Criminal records checks and safeguarding training requirements for churchwardens and PCC members

The Diocese of Ely is fully committed to ensuring that our churches are safe places for everyone, especially for children and adults at risk of harm. The *Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016* requires that all relevant people (which includes licensed and lay ministers, church wardens, and PCCs) within the Diocese of Ely must have due regard to the House of Bishops guidance concerning safeguarding. A duty to have 'due regard' to guidance means that the person under the duty is not free to disregard it but is required to follow it unless there are cogent reasons for not doing so.

All our churches must be places of safety and welcome for children and adults at risk of harm. To this end, the Diocese of Ely strives to achieve best practice in relation to safeguarding by robust and whole-hearted commitment to fulfilling national church policy – not just to the letter but also in spirit.

The *Practice Guidance: Safer Recruitment* (2016) is clear that all members of any PCC which sponsors and approves work with children or adults at risk of harm will be eligible for an enhanced criminal record (“DBS”) check. These checks need to take place after elections to the PCC at the APCM, and it should be made clear to all nominees prior to any election that all appointments will be subject to the appropriate checks.

The *Practice Guidance: Safeguarding Training and Development* (2017) recommends that PCC members should undertake the C0 Basic Awareness online training module. Anyone who has safeguarding responsibilities or who has contact with children or adults at risk of harm is required to undertake the C1 Foundation module, and anyone who has leadership responsibilities (either for safeguarding, or for activities involving children or adults at risk of harm) is required to undertake the C2 Leadership module.

What level of training you need to do will depend on your role in the church: for example, a PCC member who holds no other role within the church would only be required to complete the Basic Awareness course, whereas a PCC member who also leads children’s activities would be required to complete the Basic Awareness, Foundation and Leadership courses. Of course, the higher level modules are open to you even if you are not required to complete them.

I am very grateful to you for all that you do to sustain and grow the life of the church in your parishes, and for your co-operation with me in ensuring that our churches are safe places where all may flourish.

