



Roman Catholic Diocese of Westminster Safeguarding service update



Winter 2022

Foreword by Geraldine Allen

Safeguarding coordinator for the diocese of Westminster

Dear Parish Safeguarding Representatives – this is just a brief newsletter to draw your attention to the changes that we have made to your part of the DBS process, setting up a Warm Spaces project and dates in your diary for Refresher training.

As I plan the work we will deliver in 2023, I am reminded of the central role that you play in promoting a culture of safeguarding in the Parishes. Thank you for all your hard work.

Wishing you a peaceful Christmas.

Kind Regards, Geraldine Allen

Mgr Seamus O'Boyle- Episcopal Vicar for Safeguarding

Thank you for all you do in the Parishes – it is such important work. Have a restful and blessed Christmas

Inside this Issue

1. Foreword by GA/ Mgr S.O.
2. Areas of PSR work
- 3/4. Safer Recruitment: Including DBS
- 5/6. Warm Spaces
- 7/8. PAMIS
9. PAMIS/CSSA Standards
10. FAQ'S
11. Contact Details
12. Seasons Greetings

PLEASE NOTE: The office Safeguarding office will be closed from Friday 23rd December and will reopen on the Tuesday 3rd January 2023.



4 AREAS of PSR's WORK



These are:

RESPONDING TO CONCERNS/ALLEGATIONS

PSRs are the first point of contact for the parish community should anyone wish to disclose a safeguarding concern. The PSRs are responsible to check their dedicated SG email address on a regular basis and at least once a week. Should PSRs become aware of any concern they have to pass this on to the central safeguarding team within the first 24 hours of learning about the concern. The email address can also be set up on the PSR's mobile phone as long as this is secured with safety access codes at all times to enhance third parties data protection.

SAFER RECRUITMENT

The process of safely recruiting anyone who wishes to work/volunteer in the parishes with groups of children and/or adults at risk, includes the initial processing of DBS applications including ID verification, interviews, and reference requests for example.

CREATING A SAFER ENVIRONMENT

An incredibly important part of a PSR's work to be carried out with the collaboration of parish priests, activity group leaders, parish admins and any volunteer in contact with vulnerable groups. It is about implementing safeguarding policies and procedures whenever a parish activity, especially for children and/or adults at risk, takes place. CSSA

(Catholic Safeguarding Standard Agency) is the web site to visit and the guidance "Creating a safer environment" should be a central piece of this work with which every person working/volunteering at the parish should be familiar with. This includes use of social media, photographing and videoing, off-site trips, bullying and more. It can be found at

<https://www.catholicsafeguarding.org.uk/national-safeguarding-standards/national-safeguarding-policy/practice-guidance/>

ADVANCING A "CULTURE OF SAFEGUARDING"

This part of the work aims at educating the parish communities with a basic understanding of safeguarding to keep everybody safe from harm and abuse. PSRs should encourage the community to enroll in safeguarding EduCare Online modules by contacting at safeguardingadmin@rcdow.org.uk to be registered and start/complete these safeguarding courses. Also safeguarding literature should be regularly distributed in the parish. This ranges from leaflets to support survivors of abuse with free counselling service (SAFE SPACES) to recognise and responding to abuse (HURT BY ABUSE) and local services available for couple domestic abuse services. A "safeguarding corner" in the parishes consisting of a small table, rotating stands and/or a wall plastic bag to keep the literature would be ideal. All safeguarding literature can also be downloaded from each diocesan parish micro website (About/Safeguarding).



PSR refresher training dates:

7th February - 10am - 12.30pm via Teams

20th June – 7pm - 9pm via Teams

Saturday 14th October 2023 – 10am – 12.30pm – In-person

WARM SPACES

We are aware that the CIS have published guidance about the setting up of Warm Spaces – see attached if you have not received it. It refers to consulting the Safeguarding Coordinator, so we thought it may be helpful to send out some guidance to read alongside the guidance.

With the cost of living crisis, we all want to do our part to help others in a time of need. In creating a safer environment in our parishes it's important each Parish considers their parishioners needs but also the staff and volunteers that will be supporting each event. When planning the event, look at risks as they apply to attendees and to volunteers/staff. Ensuring that risk assessments and procedures for the event are clearly communicated with all help to create a successful event and a warm welcome for all. Start by reading through the CSSA guidelines for planning an event. Attached is a copy of the shortened guide to help you with your initial risk assessment.

Planning the event:

- Do you have a risk assessment that takes into account both health and safety and safeguarding?
- What staff/volunteer roles will be needed to carry out the event?
- How will you make participants aware that all under 18 year olds must be accompanied by a parent/ carer and supervised by their appropriate adult at all times?

Safe Recruitment of volunteers and staff:

- Do the roles need to be DBS checked? Although an individual may have an opportunity to come into contact with children or vulnerable adults, this is not sufficient to be entitled to an Enhanced DBS check. Eligibility to apply for a DBS check depends on the specific role a person will perform whilst conducting their duties within an organisation.
- Do you already have volunteers in the parish that are DBS checked for the child or adult activity?
- If you have roles that need to be DBS checked allow time for the check to take place. Up to 8 weeks minimum.
- The Event Coordinator has responsibility to check insurances and DBS are in place ,that all staff are aware of their role
- Any volunteers who are responsible for transporting parishioners to the event by arrangement of the Parish will need to be DBS checked. If it is a personal arrangement e.g.. Volunteer drives their neighbor then a DBS is not required.
- Refer to the Accessible Transport Policy - GOV.UK website for all advice on transport.

Safe Practice of volunteers and staff:

- Along with the risk assessment, ensuring:
 - Volunteers work in pairs or more from opening to closing.
 - Avoid meeting one on one with parishioners outside of the event space and that they know who to report concerns or issues during the event.

WARM SPACES

For event co-ordinators:

- Signpost participants to appropriate local services such as Citizens Advice Bureau, Local Authority.
- That all volunteers DBS', car insurances etc are checked and cleared before commencing
- That all volunteers are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities and know their obligations to best safeguarding practice.
- Where possible use volunteers who already have an enhanced parish DBS cleared for the specific role they are appointed - check with your PSR.
- Make sure your venue has the Diocese Safeguarding posters displayed including who to contact in case of an emergency.
- Refer to the Creating a Safer Environment manual for further guidance, and liaise with your PSR and the Diocese Safeguarding team

● Responding to allegations and concerns:

- Supporting people with their wellbeing, faith and lifestyle can sometimes lead to disclosure. Please ensure that all that you have a named person for safeguarding, and that your staff and volunteers are aware of who this person is.
- All allegations and concerns must be reported; if you are unsure of what action to take, please see advice from our web-page Reporting a concern about a child or adult at risk If you have information of a safeguarding nature where a child or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger or requires immediate medical attention call emergency services on 999.
- If you would like further information, resources and guidance on how to create safer environment in your parish please check the Diocese of Westminster website: Creating a safe environment. With appropriate measures we can ensure a truly warm welcome for all who visit our parishes.

Introduction of working with PAMIS - The way we process DBS applications is changing in 2023

From 1st February 2023 the safeguarding team will process applications via PAMIS rather than Ebulk. We've listened to your feedback and want to ensure we make the process of applying for DBS applications as easy as possible for both Parish Safeguarding Representatives/Safeguarding Leads and the volunteers we are supporting. We also recognise the vital contribution you make to ensuring safer recruitment in the Diocese and we want to ensure that volunteering is rewarding for all.

What this means for PSR Duties: Submitting DBS Applications/Rechecks/Update service requests.

The new process for submitting DBS applications will be as below:

Safer Recruitment- Including DBS

STEP 1

- In partnership with the Parish Priest and/or lead person ensure that volunteers have been given details about the role and their suitability has been confirmed either by a formal or informal discussion
- TOP TIP: In your regular meeting with your Parish Priest/Lead Person for recruitment look at the volunteers needed to deliver the programmes for the parish and ensure you start the process at least 3 months before they are needed.
- Provide volunteers with the Diocesan forms to complete and the guidance on acceptable ID documents (to know which forms use the application checklist).
- TOP TIP: If possible give the applicant a 2 week deadline for returning the forms so that you don't need to chase them.

Step 2

- Check that all forms are accurately completed by the applicant and returned.
- For new applicants this includes:
 - Sending and receiving references
 - Getting references approved by the person with recruitment responsibility for the role
 - TOP TIP: Let the applicant know that you are sending reference requests and ask them to follow up with their referee after a week if they have received the reference and completed it. Getting the applicant involved with seeking the references will help get the task done as soon as possible.
- For St Vincent De Paul Volunteers this includes the Request to initiate a DBS form provided by St Vincent de Paul in place of the references.
- Ensure the role is clearly stated so the right level of check can be made by the Safeguarding Team. See the RCDOW website for a list of role descriptions to support this task.

Step 3

- Once you have all the paperwork (including references or request form if needed) arrange an ID verification appointment with the applicant. To ensure the documents remain within date for submission this should be the final step after everything else is received.
- TOP TIP: Completed forms and copies of ID should be stored in a locked place within the Parish Office and kept until notification of appointment is received. After appointment notification the documents should be destroyed in line with GDPR guidelines.
- Verify the original ID documents for application, sign the Identity Verification form and submit copies of the ID to the Safeguarding team.
- Send all documents and clear copies of the ID to dbssubmissions@rcdow.org.uk
- TOP TIP: ONLY the ID documents listed in the guidance can be used and these are set by the Disclosure and Barring Service and CSSA. Encouraging people to check they can provide ID as listed in the guidance when applying will prevent delays once the process starts. A reminder that at least one document must show current name, one must show date of birth and lastly current address. For any name changes one of the following must be provided Marriage Certificate, Decree absolute, Deed poll certificate or Birth Certificate.

Safer Recruitment- Including DBS

Step 4

The Safeguarding team will check the application:

- If the application is accepted the PSR will be notified via reply email. It will then be placed in the queue for countersigning and submission to DBS.
- If the application is incomplete the application will be returned to the PSR and will need to be resubmitted when complete.
- If there are any queries about the role the PSR will be contacted to clarify and asked to respond within 14 days otherwise the application will be rejected and returned to the PSR.
- If there are any queries with the ID documents, the applicant will be contacted and asked to respond within 14 days otherwise the application will be rejected and the PSR notified.

Step 5

- The Safeguarding Team will contact the applicant and the PSR to notify of appointment when the DBS completes and all safer recruitment checks have been carried out. Please note this may take longer if there are any additional checks required.
- In addition to appointment emails, the Safeguarding Team will send Parish Reports in the last week in January and in the last week in July each year highlighting the number of rechecks due or overdue.

Safer recruitment is essential to ensuring volunteering in our parishes is robust and sustainable. The aim of the new process is to ensure there are fewer delays or amendments and we get it right first time, our team included. To put it into context 44% of the applications received in 2022 required 1 or more amendments (618 applications) and we have over 316 Parishes, Curia departments and partners that we work with.

Commonly asked questions

How will I know I have everything needed to complete the application to avoid delays?

You can use the application checklist attached. We're preparing a checklist email template for new applications, rechecks and update service checks. This will be made available on the website by the end of December and emailed next week.

What will happen to Ebulk?

We will stop using Ebulk to start applications and will be revoking access in January 2023. All applications started in Ebulk will be completed as long as all documentation to be able to countersign is received.

How will I start the online DBS application in PAMIS?

This will be done by the Safeguarding team. The online DBS application will only be started once all the required documents have been received at the Safeguarding office via email or post. The safeguarding team will directly email the applicant to notify them that the online application has been initiated and ask them to complete it.

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Safer Recruitment: Including DBS/ CSSA STANDARDS

How long will it take?

A DBS application can take up to 6-8 weeks with the Disclosure and Barring Service. At certain times of the year we receive large volume of applications for volunteers from a variety of parishes and we process these in the order in which they are received. We recommend allowing 3 months for the application to be processed from receipt at our office to appointment.

How will I know what is happening with an application?

The first notification will be sent via email to the PSR email account when the application has been accepted for countersignatory. The second notification will be sent via email to the PSR email account when the appointment has been confirmed. If you would like to speak with us about several application at once please make an appointment to speak with the team so we can ensure we have all the information to hand. We have made sure that every Friday morning we are available for bookable appointments, but if that time is not suitable to you we can arrange another time.

Will there be training offered to support the transition to PAMIS?

We will have a webinar refresher available online for Safer Recruitment Process and Data protection In January, February, March and April. We will be offering in person document awareness training to support you with verifying ID in March, May and June. We also have the appointment system as discussed in the previous question to assist you with queries relating to multiple applications.

(CSSA) Safeguarding Standards-Catholic Standards Safeguarding Agency

There are 8 standards which require church bodies to:

1. Embed safeguarding in the Church body's leadership, governance, ministry and culture
2. Communicate the Church's safeguarding message
3. Engage with and care for those who report having been harmed
4. Effectively manage allegations and concerns
5. Manage and support subjects of allegations and concerns (respondents)
6. Implement robust human resource management
7. Provide and access training and support for safeguarding
8. Quality assure compliance to continuously improve practice

<https://rcdow.org.uk/safeguarding/resources-and-links/>

The standards operate as a coherent whole, which together form an overarching framework within which all church bodies are expected to operate. They represent the expected level of practice that is to be applied by church bodies for the purpose of safeguarding the children and adults with whom the church has contact. More details can be found on the CSSA website.

Parish Self-Evaluation & Audit Documents

1) If you are completing an evaluation of your Parish or require support for an upcoming Parish audit, you should request a Parish report to track the recruitment of your volunteers. For a copy of the Parish report for your parish, please email dbsadmin@rcdow.org.uk to receive a copy.

2) To ensure your parish is following the 8 CSSA Safeguarding Standards, please click here to see the Standards on the CSSA website.

And to read the CSSA guidance on preparation for Parish audit, please click here.

3) To help you with the Safe recruitment of volunteers, paid staff, PSRs, residents at the Presbytery, visiting priests and temporary volunteers, please use this Safer recruitment tracker checklists to ensure each stage of the recruitment process has been completed:

Parish Safer Recruitment Checklist
PSR Safer Recruitment Checklist

4) To help prepare your Parish for Audit, please also complete this checklist of tasks, with this Parish Self-Evaluation Tool.

5) For more information on the Parish Audit process, please see this document on the Diocesan Internal Audit Programme.

Frequently asked questions

Questions:

Q: Do volunteers have to complete online training?

Q: What are the children/adults ratios for parish activities?

Q: Can 15 years old volunteer in the parish and if so, what actions do we have to take to ensure this is done safely?

Q: Can we create a parish activity with a group of 16-25 years old?

Q: Can my parish priest be my referee?

For any additional clarification please write to:

Answers:

A: Encouraging virtually all volunteers to complete Online safeguarding courses (EduCare) is helpful to promote the 'Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility message which is very important to equip everyone about understanding how to recognise and responding to concerns and create a safe environment that aim at keeping everyone safe from harm and abuse both in and out of church Environment. We highly recommend that especially volunteers who work in close contact with groups of vulnerable like children, young People and/or at risk complete the 'Child Protection' and safeguarding Adults' ones.

A: Please refer to the 'Creating a safe environment' guidance, Chapter 3, page 8. <http://www.catholicsafeguarding.org.uk/national-safeguarding-standards/%20national-safeguarding-policy/practice-guidance/>
(Creating a safe environment)

A: Children and young adults are often encouraged by their parents and parish community to volunteer. This is a very positive thing however, before the volunteering starts, please ensure that you have obtained parental written consent where it is outlined about what/when/where/for how long the volunteering is going to happen, who the (couple) appropriately safely recruited adult supervisors will be and please do obtain signed/dated code of conducts from both the young people and the adults and keep this on record for the duration of the volunteering period.

A: No, we strongly recommend you do not mix groups of children (anyone below the age of 18) with adults because there may be potential risks associated with this. Please do contact us at any time by calling 02077 989358 or emailing safeguardingsupport@rcdow.org.uk for more advice.

A: The parish priest of the parish where the applicant is applying for a role cannot be their referee however, a priest of a different parish that perhaps the applicant used to frequent could act as a referee for the applicant.

safeguardingsupport@rcdow.org.uk

CONTACT DETAILS

The Central Safeguarding Team

Episcopal Vicar for Safeguarding:

Name: Rev Monsignor Séamus O'Boyle
Email: seamusoboyle@rcdow.org.uk
Phone: 020 7226 3277

Safeguarding Coordinator:

Name: Geraldine Allen
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Phone: 020 7798 9359 / 07889 805 284

Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator:

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Safeguarding Officer:

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Safeguarding Officer:

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Safeguarding Officer (Review):

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Safeguarding Office Manager:

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Phone: 07936935707

Safeguarding Team Administrator:

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Phone: 07394 560926

Senior DBS Administrator:

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Email: veronicaofficer@rcdow.org.uk
Phone: 020 7798 9352 / 07803 634 239

DBS Administrator:

Name: Alex Dance
Email: alexanderdance@rcdow.org.uk
Phone: 07874 878712

DBS Administrator:

Name: Johanna Ashley
Email: johannaashley@rcdow.org.uk
Phone: 07874 861 060

Parish Safeguarding Support Officer:

Name: Maria Eid
Email: mariaeid@rcdow.org.uk

Other Contacts

Catholic Safeguarding Standard Agency (CSSA)

Email: admin@catholicsafeguarding.org.uk
Phone: 020 7901 1920
Website: <https://www.catholicsafeguarding.org.uk/>

Report any safeguarding concerns, past or present:

Email: safeguarding@rcdow.org.uk

For EduCare Online training support and all other queries:

Email: safeguardingadmin@rcdow.org.uk

For Safer Recruitment & DBS Queries:

Email: dbsadmin@rcdow.org.uk
Phone: 020 7798 9352

For PSR Support & Creating a Safe Environment

Queries: Email: safeguardingsupport@rcdow.org.uk

May this Christmas season bring you closer to all those that you treasure in your heart. Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New year!



Images in this newsletter kindly provided by children and young people of RCDOw parishes. THANK YOU to them all and the adults who helped in organising and delivering this lovely parish communities project.