



# Roman Catholic Diocese of Westminster Safeguarding service update



Spring 2023

## Foreword by Geraldine Allen

*Safeguarding coordinator for the Diocese of Westminster*

Dear Fathers and PSR's,

Thank you for your ongoing patience and support as the team work hard to implement changes in the DBS process and recruit new staff. Via the deanery meetings, PSR refresher training and clergy training sessions we are to meet as many of you as possible, as we value your feedback in order to improve the service we offer.

Wishing you a peaceful Easter!

Geraldine Allen- Safeguarding Coordinator

## Mgr. Seamus O'Boyle- Episcopal Vicar for Safeguarding

On the weather forecast this morning we were told that, although it is officially Meteorological Spring, it feels like we are still in the depth of Winter! Nature has a way of surprising us – as the current cold snap illustrates! The word 'Lent' comes from an Old English word for Spring – the time when the days lengthen. The month of March falls within these forty days of Lent which are meant to be a time of spiritual spring cleaning for us as Christians in preparation for Easter. Each month Pope Francis has a special intention for our prayers and reflection, and this year the March intention is for victims of abuse. Pope Francis says that 'the Church must serve as a model of safeguarding and must offer safe spaces for victims.' Such spaces should provide the opportunity for 'listening, accompanying, welcoming and healing.' Your ministry of care in your parish is part of what Pope Francis sees as the Church's vital mission to provide a safe environment. Thank you for what you do to help in this task!

'Let us pray for those who have suffered harm from members of the Church: may they find within the Church herself a concrete response to their pain and suffering.' (Pope Francis – March 2023)  
Have a happy Lent and an even happier Easter!

### *Inside this Issue*

1. Foreword by GA/ Mgr S.O.
2. Areas of PSR work
3. PSR information
- 4/5. Safer Recruitment: DBS
6. Training
7. Creating a safe environment
- 8/9. Creating a safe environment- warm spaces
10. Contact Details
11. Seasons Greetings



# 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 SAFEGAURDING"**

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](mailto: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).



## Celebrating our PSRs

Congratulations to our newly appointed PSRs in Kensington 1, Holloway, Highbury, Barnet, Hoddeson, Harrow on the Hill parishes. Please join us in wishing them a warm welcome to the new roles in their parishes and the Diocese, and in wishing them every success in their new roles!

A big thank you to all PSRs covering for their parishes whilst new PSRs are recruited, including Tower Hill, Potters Bar, Pinner, Pimlico, New Southgate, Isleworth, Hoddeson, Highbury, Fulham 1 parishes. Thank you for the work you are doing, your Parish Priest will be notified as soon as the new PSR has been appointed into the role so that you can complete a handover together if required.

And finally please join us in thanking our outgoing PSRs who are now resigning from their PSR roles in Hendon (West), Potters Bar, New Southgate, Pinner and Kenton parishes.

Thank you for all the work you have done in your respective parishes, your contributions and time put into the role is invaluable, and helps create a safe environment for all vulnerable parishioners and children attending Mass and activities in your parish. So on behalf of all the Safeguarding Team, thank you for making your parishes and church environments safer spaces to worship in!

## PSR recruitment and retention

PSRs have a vital role to play in the life of the parish since safeguarding underpins every aspect of the work you do. Unlike other volunteers who may have assigned hours in a given day, the PSR is often expected to be able to respond to safeguarding emergencies as they arise, as well as guide and direct parish staff in lead roles on safeguarding best practice. It is important that PSRs are supported by the parish leads and their parish priest, including practical support in order to fulfill their role. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility not just the PSR, and we realise that many parishes are having difficulty recruiting and retaining PSRs. It is important that the right message is given to prospective candidates before they are put forward such as checking they have necessary skills set for the role and, importantly, the time to commit to it. If you are a parish currently recruiting please share with your proposed candidate, encourage your candidates to look at our resources on the RCDOW website and feel free to contact the SGT for further advice and support.

Attached is the current person specification for PSRs:

<https://rcdow.org.uk/att/files/safeguarding/forms/psr%20prospective%20candidate%20role%20description%20%20august%202015.pdf>

## SAFE RECRUITMENT: Including DBS

From Friday 10th February all DBS application for the Diocese of Westminster will be processed via PAMIS. This will mean less paperwork for applicants and PSRs to complete. Please see below for the updated list of forms:

INTRODUCING THE UPDATED DIOCESAN/CSSA SUPPLEMENTARY DOCUMENTS:

### The Diocesan/CSSA Forms

- **DBS 1** – Volunteer Registration Form
- **DBS 2** – Volunteer Reference Proforma
- **DBS 3c** – Identity Verifier Form (formerly DBS 3a/3b)
- **DBS 3c Guidance Notes**
- **DBS 4** – Self Declaration
- **DBS 4 Guidance Notes**
- **DBS 17** – Applicant consent for processing

In order to accept DBS applications for processing the following must be submitted to the Safeguarding Team via [dbssubmissions@safeguardrcdow.org.uk](mailto:dbssubmissions@safeguardrcdow.org.uk) or post:

- The correct number of Diocesan/CSSA Forms (see supporting documents below)
- Diocesan/CSSA documents completed in full.
- Where required: Legible copies of ID used for ID verification that matches the guidance provided and the number required.

When the application is accepted, the safeguarding team will:

- Respond to the PSR to accept the application
- Send the applicant an online DBS application on PAMIS for completion
- Enter the supplementary forms and ID information into PAMIS
- Countersign the application after the applicant completes their part of the application on PAMIS
- Notify the applicant and the PSR of the appointment.

# SAFE RECRUITMENT: INCLUDING DBS

## The Types of Volunteer checks are:

**New Volunteer** – A new volunteer will go through the DBS check as part of the wider safer recruitment process of checking suitability through discussion, application and references, appointment and induction.

**3 Year Renewal** – All volunteers in the Diocese are required to undergo a DBS check every 3 years

**3 year Recheck (using the update service)** – Similar to the renewal above, except instead of a new DBS certificate an update service check is done on an existing certificate.

Supporting documents to be sent to the [dbssubmissions@safeguardrcdow.org.uk](mailto:dbssubmissions@safeguardrcdow.org.uk) or via post:

### New Volunteer

ONLINE DBS APPLICATION VIA PAMIS

DBS 1 – Volunteer Registration Form  
DBS 2 – Volunteer Reference Proforma x 2  
DBS 3c – Identity Verifier Form  
Photocopies of ID matched to guidance

### 3 Year Volunteer Renewal

ONLINE DBS APPLICATION VIA PAMIS

DBS 3c – Identity Verifier Form  
Photocopies of ID matched to guidance

### 3 Year Volunteer Recheck (Using the update service)

\*Original Certificate may be requested by Safeguarding Team  
DBS 4 – Self declaration

ONLINE UPDATE CHECK VIA PAMIS

### New Volunteer

DBS APPLICATION VIA PAPER FORM

DBS 1 – Volunteer Registration Form  
DBS 2 – Volunteer Reference Proforma x 2  
DBS 3c – Identity Verifier Form  
Photocopies of ID matched to guidance  
DBS 4 – Self Declaration  
DBS 17 – Applicant consent for processing

### 3 Year Volunteer Renewal

DBS APPLICATION VIA PAPER FORM

DBS 3c – Identity Verifier Form  
Photocopies of ID matched to guidance  
DBS 4 – Self Declaration  
DBS 17 – Applicant consent for processing

### New Volunteer SVP

ONLINE DBS APPLICATION VIA PAMIS

SVP Request to recruit  
DBS 3c – Identity Verifier Form  
Photocopies of ID matched to guidance

If additional volunteer roles in the Parish  
DBS 1 – Volunteer Registration Form  
DBS 2 – Volunteer Reference Proforma x 2

Applications started in Ebulk will be actioned and completed with the same paperwork as before. **Please note a DBS 3a can be accepted for a DBS 3c if it was completed prior to the 10th February.** Please note you will not be able to start new applications in Ebulk as the option to do this has been removed. The webinar, PowerPoint presentation and RCDOW Safer Recruitment page updates have been emailed to your RCDOW accounts.

The webinar is no more than 30 minutes and you can watch it at a time that best suits you. Below is a link with the PowerPoint presentation

# Training

## Do you have a Religious Sister working or helping in your parish?

Please let us know what parish you are in, the Sisters name and a contact email address, so that they can be offered up to date Diocesan Safeguarding training, just email [safeguardingadmin@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:safeguardingadmin@rcdow.org.uk)

## PSR email signature template

As PSR for your parish, please ensure you are using the correct PSR email signature on your RCDOW PSR email account.

**Please copy and paste this email signature template below into your Outlook email signature settings, so that it is automatically added to all email correspondence you send from your PSR RCDOW email.**

Having a clear email signature like the one below reassures all those contacting you of your role in parish and that those approaching you with sensitive information that you are the right point of contact.

**[Insert your name]**

**Parish Safeguarding Representative - PSR**

**[Insert your Church name eg. Our Lady of Lourdes]**

**[Insert Parish name eg. Willesden Green] Parish**

**[Insert your PSR RCDOW email address ending 'rcdow.org.uk']**

### **February 2023**

Volunteer Guide to DBS Application

PSR Guide to DBS Application

Email Checklist for DBS submissions

Parish Report

### **March 2023**

Document Awareness Training

### **2023**

Bite size training webinars

## Document Awareness Training Dates

Increase your confidence in ID verification lead by the Metropolitan Police. All sessions held at Vaughan House 46 Francis Street, London, SW1P 1QN

- Thursday 30 March 2023 – 10am-12pm
- Thursday 25 May 2023 – 10am-12pm
- Tuesday 27 June 2023 – 10am-12pm

To book your place please email [dbsadmin@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:dbsadmin@rcdow.org.uk)

If you would like to know more about any other training, please visit the RCDOW website and look under, **Parish Safeguarding Representatives - PSRs** and **Safeguarding training**. The links for these are listed below:

<https://rcdow.org.uk/safeguarding/psr-parish-safeguarding-representative/>

<https://rcdow.org.uk/safeguarding/traning-dates/>

# Creating a safe Environment

## Creating a safe environment:

Sacrament of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion:

As we approach the spring, many of your churches will be preparing children and young people for their Sacrament of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion. These services and the catechists which precedes them are always worth thinking about from a safeguarding perspective.

I have noticed that many of the subjects covered in the preparation of first Holy Communion can invite disclosure of worries or abuse. I have had conversations with several PSRs and catechists reporting how topics such as rules and rule breaking, saying sorry and forgiveness have led to children in their groups disclosing for example physical abuse by corporal punishment at home. Have your catechists think about the subjects they are planning to cover in each session and be mindful of what it could bring up for children who are struggling at home. Ensure that they are confident in how to report any concerns that might come up.

As important moments in family life, families will likely want to film and photograph First Holy Communion services in the church. It may be worth refreshing yourself on the safe working practice guidance for filming and photography. You can find this guidance here: [https://www.catholicsafeguarding.org.uk/parish-resources/in the Creating A safe Environment document, section 9](https://www.catholicsafeguarding.org.uk/parish-resources/in-the-Creating-A-safe-Environment-document-section-9). As Ever, should you have any questions or concerns about any of this, contact the safeguarding team at [safeguarding@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@rcdow.org.uk)

Also, there is the small possibility that Reconciliation services being a space where disclosures come to light in the confession setting, there are some things to be aware of (taken from the CSSA 'Practice Guidance Management of Concerns and Allegations' - <http://www.catholicsafeguarding.org.uk/national-safeguarding-standards/national-safeguarding-policy/practice-guidance/>): **"Disclosure of abuse and the Sacrament of Reconciliation**

**7.1** Disclosures of abuse within the Sacrament of Reconciliation are to be responded to in accordance with current sacramental practice.

**7.2** The Sacrament of Reconciliation offers the penitent the seal of absolute confidentiality; in this context alone is the priest bound to keep secret what is disclosed. Where there is involvement of an interpreter, e.g. during the Confession of a deaf person, a duty of complete confidentiality is extended to this person. Information gained in the context of the sacramental confession may not be used in any other forum.

**7.3** If the priest is subsequently contacted by the penitent, outside of the Seal of the Confessional, the Seal of Confession still applies to what was disclosed in the original Confession. However, the priest must make it clear to the penitent that the Seal of Confession no longer applies to anything disclosed subsequently outside Confession. Although the priest cannot use any knowledge gained from the original Confession or act on it, he must explain that he has a responsibility to take all reasonable steps to protect children or adults who may be at risk of abuse.

**7.4** When the nature of the abuse disclosed is criminal, the Penitent should be directed to bring the matter to the attention of the statutory authorities and informed that the Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator can help in making any necessary contacts

**7.5** Survivors and victims of abuse can be encouraged to seek help outside the sacrament and, to pass on the information to an appropriate person. The Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator can help in making any necessary contacts. It is not the priest's role to engage in counselling in the context of the sacramental confession, even if he is appropriately professionally qualified to do so, since this leads to a confusion of roles and might give rise to conflicts of interest."

# Creating a Safe Environment-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. Insert doc. 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.



# Creating a Safe Environment-Warm Spaces

## 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 any concerns or issues to during the event.
- 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.

# CONTACT DETAILS

## The Central Safeguarding Team

### **Episcopal Vicar for Safeguarding:**

Name: Rev Monsignor Séamus O'Boyle  
Email: [seamusoboyle@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:seamusoboyle@rcdow.org.uk)  
Phone: 020 7226 3277

### **Safeguarding Coordinator:**

Name: Geraldine Allen  
Email: [geraldineallen@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:geraldineallen@rcdow.org.uk)  
Phone: 020 7798 9350 / 07803 634 236  
Phone: 020 7798 9359 / 07889 805 284

### **Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator:**

Name: Monawara Bakht  
Email: [monawarabakht@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:monawarabakht@rcdow.org.uk)  
Phone: 020 7798 9096 / 07738 183 832

### **Safeguarding Officer:**

Name: Frederick Coombs  
Email: [frederickcoombs@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:frederickcoombs@rcdow.org.uk)  
Phone: 020 7798 9186 / 07851 250 897

### **Safeguarding Officer:**

Name: Eithne Atterbury  
Email: [eithneatterbury@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:eithneatterbury@rcdow.org.uk)  
Phone: 07851 250 899 / 020 7798 9096

### **Safeguarding Officer (Review):**

Name: Lydia Bowles  
Email: [lydiabowles@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:lydiabowles@rcdow.org.uk)

### **Safeguarding Officer (Review):**

Name: Shirley Hosgood  
Email: [shirleyhosgood@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:shirleyhosgood@rcdow.org.uk)

### **Safeguarding Office Manager:**

Name: Rika Pfaff  
Email: [rikapfaff@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:rikapfaff@rcdow.org.uk)  
Phone: 07936 935 707 / 020 7798 9359

### **Safeguarding Team Administrator:**

Name: Stephanie Uwalaka  
Email: [stephanieuwalakaseck@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:stephanieuwalakaseck@rcdow.org.uk)  
Phone: 07394 560 926 / 020 7798 9356

### **Senior DBS Administrator:**

Name: Veronica Officer  
Email: [veronicaofficer@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:veronicaofficer@rcdow.org.uk)  
Phone: 020 7798 9352 / 07803 634 239

### **DBS Administrator:**

Name: Alex Dance  
Email: [alexanderdance@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:alexanderdance@rcdow.org.uk)  
Phone: 07874 878 712 / 020 7798 9358

### **DBS Administrator:**

Name: Johanna Ashley  
Email: [johannaashley@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:johannaashley@rcdow.org.uk)  
Phone: 07874 861 060

### **Parish Safeguarding Support Officer:**

Name: Maria Eid  
Email: [mariaeid@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:mariaeid@rcdow.org.uk)

## Other Contacts

### **Catholic Safeguarding Standard Agency (CSSA)**

Email: [admin@catholicsafeguarding.org.uk](mailto: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](mailto:safeguarding@rcdow.org.uk)

### **For EduCare Online training support and all other queries:**

Email: [safeguardingadmin@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:safeguardingadmin@rcdow.org.uk)

### **For Safer Recruitment & DBS Queries:**

Email: [dbsadmin@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:dbsadmin@rcdow.org.uk)  
Phone: 020 7798 9352

### **For PSR Support & Creating a Safe Environment**

**Queries:** Email: [safeguardingsupport@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:safeguardingsupport@rcdow.org.uk)

*May spring visit your life with messages of peace and a moment of happiness! Happy Spring!*



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