

Safeguarding Report for the APCM 2026

Safeguarding in Church life is now accepted as a very necessary part of the structures in the life and provision of Church ministry and ministry outreach. There are few people who would dispute the need for a safeguarding overview.

Thankfully, those who seek to abuse children and vulnerable adults are in the minority, they do exist in numbers, and they seek out churches and other organisations where safeguarding practice is weak. Their activities go on in secret and they are generally very skilful at gaining trust. It must be noted that, although public and general awareness is often focused on children, it is now more common to receive referrals regarding vulnerable adults.

Whilst some people may question why their role requires Basic Awareness training and resist it, it is important to remember that most volunteers within the church potentially come into contact with children or vulnerable adults where there may be safeguarding concerns. The short online Basic Awareness training helps volunteers to recognise safeguarding situations and is also the stepping stone to Foundation and Leadership training, should the role require it.

I would like to thank the members of the PCC and those who take certain ministry roles for their prompt and helpful responses when I have asked them to complete applications for DBS checks and to complete training modules. Thanks also to Caroline, PCC Secretary for her support for my role.

I can report that an action from last year is now being actively progressed; this is the digital storage of safeguarding records. This not yet a 'live' system at St Pauls, but I hope when it is ready the whole benefice will benefit.

Priorities for 2026/27

To ensure that all DBS requirements and training requirements remain up to date and current.

To introduce 'Cause for Concern' Forms across the Benefice, these will be available digitally and in hard copies for people to complete if they have safeguarding concerns; it is hoped that these forms will go some way to continue the aim towards tighter and more consistent record keeping.

For each church in the Benefice to consider raising a safeguarding lead from the congregation/s, the local knowledge and relationships I believe will be of greater benefit than the remote service All Saints have been receiving from me.

Annual Safeguarding Statement

I can confirm that the PCC has complied with its duty under Section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have regard to the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults).

Anne Hignell

21st April 2026