

Appendix 7: Charity trustees and safeguarding

Within our churches some local church officers are also charity trustees. As trustees they have a duty of care and responsibility for ensuring the safe and effective running of the charity including taking the necessary steps to safeguard vulnerable groups. They also need to make sure that protecting people from harm is central to the charities culture. A charity should be a safe and trusted environment for all.

Safeguarding should be a key governance priority for all charities, regardless of size, type, or income, not just those working with groups traditionally considered at risk. It is an essential duty for trustees to take reasonable steps to safeguard beneficiaries and to protect them from abuse.¹

This appendix is a quick summary guide. For more information, please refer to the Charity Commission website which has lots of useful information to help trustees to understand their safeguarding responsibilities. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-duties-for-charity-trustees>

Here are some of the key responsibilities:

- 1. Policies:** You should have safeguarding policies and procedures that all trustees, staff and volunteers are aware of and follow. You should appoint a local safeguarding lead.
Are you and all relevant people familiar with the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Handbook and is it implemented effectively in your church? Are you displaying the individual church policy document in your building, have you appointed a safeguarding lead, and do you regularly discuss safeguarding in your church meetings?
<https://panel.cymru/en/policies-and-information>
- 2. Safer recruitment and DBS checks:** You should make sure that those who are working or volunteering with vulnerable groups are suitable and safe. You should follow a safer recruitment procedure which includes DBS checks. These checks should be repeated regularly. (Our current policy is every four years). Trustees themselves are eligible to do a DBS check if their charity works directly with vulnerable groups even if they themselves are not personally doing this work.
Are your volunteers recruited safely and do you have DBS checks for all roles that are eligible? See Section 2 of the Handbook for more information or look on the panel website for safer recruitment and DBS information.
https://panel.cymru/images/DBS_flowchart_-_checklist_07_2020_min.pdf
<https://panel.cymru/en/recruiting-volunteers>
- 3. Responding to concerns:** You should know how to recognise and respond to safeguarding concerns, complaints, and allegations in an appropriate manner.
Are you, and all those working directly with vulnerable groups, aware how to report your concerns to the panel safeguarding officer and to relevant statutory organisations such as the police or social services as soon as concerns are suspected or identified? https://panel.cymru/images/responding_to_a_concern_flow_chart.pdf
- 4. Reporting serious incidents to the Charity Commission:** Trustees are required to report all appropriate incidents to the Charity Commission. This would include things such as an allegation of abuse related to the charity. The trustees of an excepted charity have the same responsibility as a registered charity. If you are unsure, the Charity Commission helpline and website can help.
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-report-a-serious-incident-in-your-charity>
- 5. Training:** You should make sure all staff and volunteers receive regular safeguarding vulnerable groups training.
Have all trustees and those working directly with children and vulnerable adults attended training in the last 4 years? This will help with many of the responsibilities noted above <https://panel.cymru/en/training>

Following the safeguarding policy and procedures produced for you by the Interdenominational Safeguarding Panel, attending safeguarding training and ensuring that DBS checks are completed for all who are eligible will help you to fulfil your safeguarding responsibilities as trustees.

¹ Charity commission 2022