



The Church of England
National Safeguarding Standards
and Quality Assurance Framework

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Quality Assurance Framework

Why are we doing this?

Organisations often struggle with quality assurance: they tend to focus on only the safeguarding activity, rather than the impact. In busy environments it can be hard to step back and ask the question: 'what difference is our activity actually making to people's lives?'

Any organisation with safeguarding responsibilities needs to know, and to be able to demonstrate, how well it is fulfilling those responsibilities, in order to achieve three crucial organisational objectives:

1. To make sure that people are being protected and responded to with compassion and humanity.
2. To be transparent and accountable to key stakeholders (for example, victims and survivors of abuse, trustees, the wider community and public).
3. To inform resource and strategic planning in respect of safeguarding.

Organisations achieve these objectives by putting in place a systematic quality assurance framework (QAF).

What is the Quality Assurance Framework?

A safeguarding quality assurance framework is a systematic set of arrangements designed to enable an organisation to know how well it is performing its safeguarding responsibilities, and to then use that knowledge to drive that organisation's safeguarding planning and development.

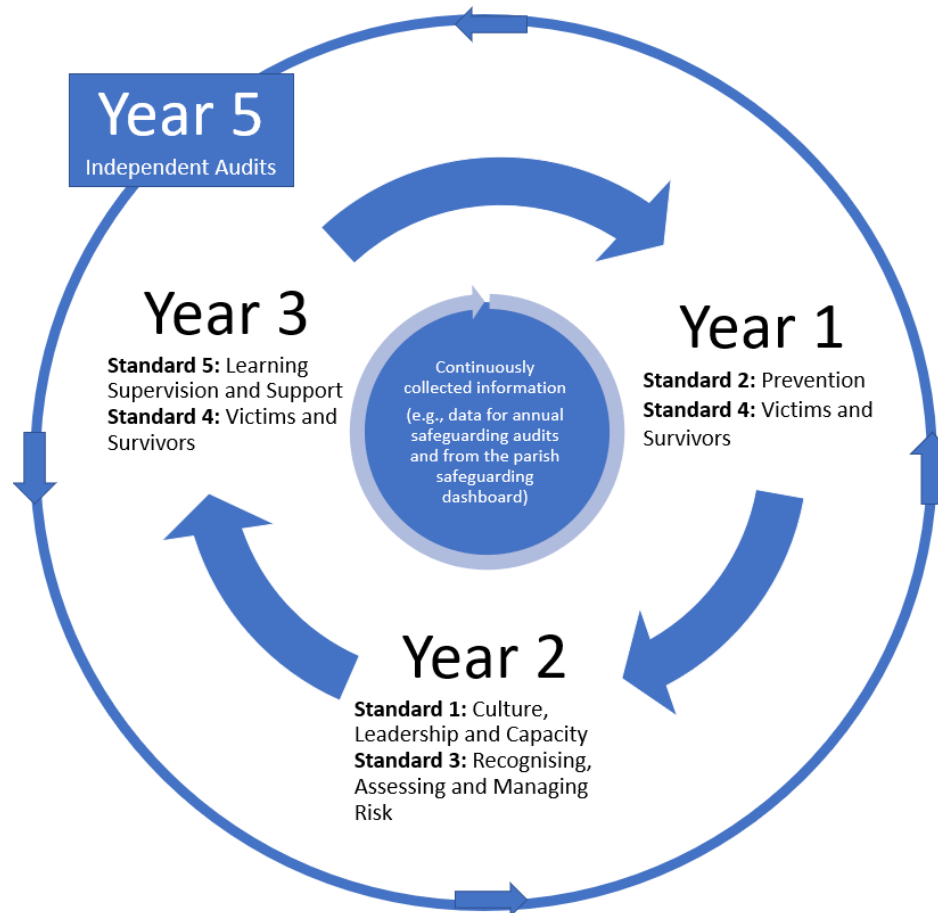
There are several elements in a quality assurance framework:

- Standards - broad statements of the quality the organisation wants to achieve in the most important dimensions of its safeguarding work.
- 'What good looks like' indicators - concrete statements which describe the evidence needed to indicate how well a standard is being met. For the Church's Standards, the 'what good looks like' indicators have been drawn from discussions with safeguarding professionals, feedback from victims and survivors of Church abuse, research evidence and the findings of the SCIE audits.
- Types of information - evidence of the extent to which a particular 'what good looks like' indicator is happening can be of three types: the quantity of something, the quality of something and the outcome of something. Of these, the outcome information is the most important as it is about the difference made to people's lives.
- Sources of information and methods of collection - a range of sources and ways of collecting data are required. For example, basic quantitative information might come from a case management or HR electronic system. Qualitative and outcome information might come from auditing of case records, surveys, focus groups and interviews of key stakeholders. Dioceses and cathedrals will have the support of the National Safeguarding Team's (NST) Research and Evaluation Leads to develop their skills in using some of these methods, and the NST will also be developing a range of quality assurance tools.

How is the Quality Assurance Framework used?

The safeguarding quality assurance cycle

Quality assurance activity needs to be planned over a three-year period as no organisation can gather all the information it might need all the time, nor in one go. For example, each year two standards could be chosen to review and explore in depth, as shown below, with the acknowledgement that there are some more regularly collected quality assurance information. It should also be remembered that the five-yearly independent audits will focus on the Standards. An example of this cycle in its entirety can be seen below.



Quality assurance governance

Quality assurance processes only have value if they drive continuous safeguarding improvement in the organisation. Quality assurance information should encourage discussion and reflection within the organisation. This enables the following questions to be considered: What is this telling us? What does this mean for us? What do we need to do?

For this process to work in practice, a clear governance framework needs to be in place for quality assurance. This framework would set out the Who? When? And How? As outlined below:

Who?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who is the quality assurance information reported to? For example, senior leadership teams, Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panels (DSAPs), Parochial Church Councils (PCCs)
When?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When is it reported?• How frequently is it reported?
How?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How is it discussed?• How is it used to inform strategic, operational, and financial planning?• How is the organisation held to account for the improvements required?

National Safeguarding Standards

Standard 1: Culture, Leadership and Capacity

Standard 2: Prevention

Standard 3: Recognising, Assessing and Managing Risk

Standard 4: Victims and Survivors

Standard 5: Learning, Supervision and Support

CULTURE, LEADERSHIP AND CAPACITY

Standard

1

What is the culture, leadership and capacity standard?

Church bodies have safe and healthy cultures, effective leadership, resourcing and scrutiny arrangements necessary to deliver high quality safeguarding practices and outcomes.

Standard

2

Standard

3

Why does it matter?

We know from other sectors that simply knowing and following procedures is not enough to do safeguarding well. To keep people safe, and respond well when abuse happens, organisations need to have healthy cultures and effective leadership. Organisations with unhealthy cultures will be more susceptible to unhealthy behaviour becoming abusive behaviour, and they will be unsafe spaces for people to disclose abuse or to get the response they need. Leaders have a key role to play in shaping culture.

Church bodies will not be able to provide effective safeguarding practice if they do not invest adequate resources in proportion to known need. Lack of investment can also result in a failure of duty of care to those in safeguarding roles which is not only bad for safeguarding but is also inconsistent with both Christian values and good employment principles.

To get safeguarding right, organisations need critical friends to provide challenge which adds value and impacts people's lives.

Standard

5

What does good look like?

Standard 1 is broken down into 12 'what good looks like' indicators.

These indicators help you know how well your organisation is meeting the Standard.



THE CHURCH
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CULTURE, LEADERSHIP AND CAPACITY

Standard

1

Standard

2

Standard

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Culture

1.1. A safe and healthy culture is promoted within the Church body and a review of its culture is undertaken regularly.

1.2. A culture characterised by the criteria set out in the “Responding Well to Victims and Survivors of Abuse” Guidance is fostered, which makes it a safe space for disclosure.

1.3. There is evidence of effective collaboration between safeguarding teams and other internal departments.

1.4. There is a functional DSAP (and equivalent arrangements in other settings), that provides effective oversight and challenge and can demonstrate it has contributed to improved safeguarding.

Leadership

1.5. During the selection process for leadership roles, the candidates’ competence in safeguarding understanding and behaviour is explored.

1.6. Those in leadership roles engage with and promote the welfare and voice of children, vulnerable adults, victims and survivors of abuse, as well as those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse.

1.7. Those in leadership roles actively seek to improve their own knowledge of current safeguarding matters and promote an active desire for continuous professional development in this area among those for whom they are responsible.

1.8. Church officers can see how their feedback to leaders has led to a change in leadership behaviour.

1.9. The views of those with professional safeguarding expertise are sought, listened to and respected.

1.10. Safeguarding issues are explored in a meaningful way through cathedral and parish visitations and reviews.

Capacity

1.11. A review of safeguarding needs and demands is undertaken regularly, covering the five key safeguarding standards of the National Safeguarding Quality Assurance Framework, which then informs consequential financial and resource plans.

1.12. The level of resourcing received enables members of safeguarding teams to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities by working their contracted hours.



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CULTURE, LEADERSHIP AND CAPACITY

Standard

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Standard

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Standard

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Tools, resources and guidance

Quality Assurance Tools and methods to evaluate the extent to which the Standard is being achieved

- Responding Well to Victims and Survivors of Abuse Healthy Cultures Tool
- 'Responding Well Healthy Culture' survey
- Safeguarding culture review focus group
- DSAP observation tool
- Quality Assurance Framework basic excel tool

Resources to support the delivery of the Standard

- Safeguarding Pastoral Principles
- Thirtyone:eight culture dice
- "Escaping the Maze of Spiritual Abuse: Creating Healthy Christian Cultures" – 2019 book written by Lisa Oakley and Justin Humphreys
- "Martin Buber's I and Thou: Practicing Living Dialogue" – 2003 book written by Kenneth Kramer

Relevant House of Bishops' Safeguarding Guidance and Code of Safeguarding Practice

- [Responding Well to Victims and Survivors of Abuse](#)
- [Key Roles and Responsibilities of Church Office Holders and Bodies Practice Guidance](#)

PREVENTION

Standard

1

Standard

2

Standard

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Standard

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Standard

5



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What is the prevention standard?

Church bodies have in place a planned range of measures which together are effective in preventing abuse in their context.

Why does it matter?

We know from the testimonies of victims and survivors, and from research, that abuse damages an individual's life on many levels. It also causes damage to Christian communities and the Church as a whole, undermining its mission to the world.

Levels of Church-related abuse can be reduced by individuals and Christian communities taking conscious preventative steps. Those who abuse will avoid Church communities where prevention is strong and target those where it is weak.

A passion for prevention should flow naturally from our values of love and compassion for people.

What does good look like?

Standard 2 is broken down into 11 'what good looks like' indicators.

These indicators help you know how well your organisation is meeting the Standard.

PREVENTION

Standard

1

Recruitment and People Management

- 2.1.** Requirements as set out in “Safer Recruitment and People Management” House of Bishops’ guidance are followed where appropriate and evidenced in all recruitment and management processes and associated files (e.g., HR).
- 2.2.** Individual reviews or supervision meetings actively discuss safeguarding understanding and behaviour, and foster positive practice, all of which are also evidenced in records.

Standard

2

Standard

3

Messaging

- 2.3.** A range of good materials and methods are used to promote safeguarding that are suitable for all audiences (e.g., children and young people).
- 2.4.** Meaningful and appropriate discussions about safeguarding are regular at leadership, staff, volunteer, congregational, and children and youth meetings and activities.
- 2.5.** Good safeguarding practice is developed, adopted and shared.
- 2.6.** The needs, experiences and voices of children, vulnerable adults, and survivors have been considered in prevention planning.
- 2.7.** Action is taken to raise awareness of different kinds of abuse (e.g., domestic and spiritual abuse) and contemporary safeguarding issues (e.g., modern slavery, county lines).

Standard

4

Standard

5

Activities

- 2.8.** Risk is managed for all church activities. Assessments and management plans identify potential safeguarding risks to both those delivering and those receiving activities.
- 2.9.** Lone working is avoided, however, when it is necessary and unavoidable, appropriate precautions are taken to keep everyone safe.
- 2.10.** There is active discussion and understanding about appropriate boundaries (e.g., touch, in respect of passing the peace and hugs by the Welcome Team).

Buildings

- 2.11.** Staff and volunteers are aware of the safeguarding risks that are associated with the layout of their church building (e.g., access to toilets and potential blind spots).



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PREVENTION

Standard

1

Standard

2

Standard

3

Standard

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Standard

5

Tools, resources and guidance

Quality Assurance Tools and methods to evaluate the extent to which the Standard is being achieved

- Safer Recruitment and People Management Self-Assessment Tool
- Prevention library
 - Online resource that will allow church bodies to easily select and show what is being done, as well as being a space to share resources

Resources to support the delivery of the Standard

- Parish Safeguarding Dashboard

Relevant House of Bishops' Safeguarding Guidance and Code of Safeguarding Practice

- [Code of Safer Working Practice](#)
- [Safer Environment and Activities](#)
- [Safer Recruitment and People Management](#)



THE CHURCH
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RECOGNISING, ASSESSING AND MANAGING RISK

Standard

1

Standard

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Standard

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Standard

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Standard

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What is the recognising, assessing and managing risk standard?

Risk assessments, safety plans and associated processes are of a high quality and result in positive outcomes. The assessment and management of risk is underpinned by effective partnership working.

Why does it matter?

Effective risk assessment and management keep people safe and can save lives. They are not tick-box exercises. They require skilled analysis and judgment from experienced professionals. Seeking a position of 'safe uncertainty' is the realistic aim.

Safeguarding professionals need to focus on safeguarding risks. Non-safeguarding matters should be triaged to others, as appropriate. It is unsafe practice for organisations to treat non-safeguarding situations as safeguarding.

What does good look like?

Standard 3 is broken down into 12 'what good looks like' indicators.

These indicators help you know how well your organisation is meeting the Standard.

RECOGNISING, ASSESSING AND MANAGING RISK

Standard

1

Recognising Risk

3.1. Concerns that constitute a safeguarding matter are appropriately identified, reported and responded to in accordance with House of Bishops guidance/Code and statutory guidelines.

3.2. Collaborative discussions are undertaken to help identify safeguarding cases, as opposed to cases that are best dealt with elsewhere (e.g., through HR processes).

Standard

3

Information Management

3.3. All concerns are recorded in a clear and concise manner and provide a narrative of the case managers' actions and rationale for decision-making.

3.4. All personal information is stored and shared in ways which are compliant with data protection legislation and the GDPR.

3.5. When required, information sharing arrangements are in place and are abided by.

3.6. The sharing of safeguarding information is not conducted through personal (non-work provided) forms of communication.

Standard

4

Standard

5

Risk Assessments

3.7. Risk assessments are effective in preventing further harm and are informed by national training and tools.

3.8. Risk assessments of respondents are undertaken in respect of their own wellbeing and risk of harm, and a trained Link Person is offered, who ensures that their support needs are met.

3.9. Support is offered to others who are affected by safeguarding concerns and allegations (e.g., including family and friends of both victim and respondent, the parish community).

3.10. Where needed, in order to manage risk, a Church Safety Plan is put in place, with agreed review points that reflect the assessed risk level.

3.11. The quality of dialogue within Core Groups is effective in identifying and managing risk.

Partnership Working

3.12. Safeguarding teams can demonstrate regular and collaborative contact with all relevant statutory agencies, relevant Church bodies, and any other safeguarding partnerships in their locality, which enables risk to be appropriately assessed and managed.



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RECOGNISING, ASSESSING AND MANAGING RISK

Standard

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Tools, resources and guidance

Quality Assurance Tools and methods to evaluate the extent to which the Standard is being achieved

- Risk assessment tool
- Ongoing risk management (Church Safety Plan) tool
- Core Group tool

Resources to support the delivery of the Standard

- “Assessing and Managing Risk in the Church Context” drop-in sessions

Relevant House of Bishops’ Safeguarding Guidance and Code of Safeguarding Practice

- [Practice guidance: Responding to, assessing and managing safeguarding concerns or allegations against church officers](#)
- [Safeguarding Children, Young People, and Vulnerable Adults](#)

VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS

Standard

1

Standard

2

Standard

3

Standard

4

Standard

5

What is the victims and survivors standard?

Victims and survivors experience the timeliness and quality of Church bodies' responses to disclosures, and their subsequent support, as positively meeting their needs, including their search for justice and helping their healing process.

Why does it matter?

Church bodies need to respond well when abuse happens. Poor responses can compound the trauma victims and survivors have already experienced, and delay or prevent them from healing and moving forward.

Responding well requires a healthy culture marked by love and compassion, where understanding of trauma informs how people respond, and various forms of concrete support are provided in a timely manner.

Above all, this standard is about the manifestation of Christian love, hope and healing.

Whilst this Standard is primarily for victims and survivors, those with more broader safeguarding issues (for example, mental health and homelessness) often use our services, and those who do should also expect to be responded to with the same manifestations outlined above.

What does good look like?

Standard 4 is broken down into 9 'what good looks like' indicators.

These indicators help you know how well your organisation is meeting the Standard.



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VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS

Standard

1

Engagement

4.1. Victims and survivors are invited to actively engage with Church bodies. Effective working partnerships are then established in the delivery of safeguarding activities and developments.

Standard

2

Standard

3

Disclosure

4.2. When reporting abuse, victims and survivors are heard, understood, respected, taken seriously, genuinely cared for, and met with belief.

4.3. The response to safeguarding disclosures is victim and survivor-centred and trauma-informed.

4.4. Victims, survivors and Church officers are made aware of the routes to disclosure and the process that will be followed if someone reports abuse, including how personal information, data, and dignity are protected.

4.5. Safeguarding concerns are acted on appropriately, transparently and in a timely manner, keeping victims and survivors informed of progress throughout.

Standard

4

Standard

5

Support

4.6. The requirements set out in the “Responding Well to Victims and Survivors of Abuse” House of Bishops’ Guidance are fulfilled. This can include, but not be limited to, the offering of a Support Person, therapeutic support, spiritual and pastoral support and, where appropriate, an apology.

4.7. Victims and survivors of non-Church based abuse, or abuse within churches other than the Church of England, are appropriately supported in accessing relevant support services.

4.8. Those who seek support around broader safeguarding issues (e.g., mental health, homelessness) are appropriately engaged with and supported in accessing relevant local support services.

4.9. When the Bible and Christian theology is used with victims and survivors, it is used sensitively, with their consent, in order to provide care and support only.



THE CHURCH
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VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS

Standard

1

Standard

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Standard

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Tools, resources and guidance

Quality Assurance Tools and methods to evaluate the extent to which the Standard is being achieved

- Victim and survivor experience survey
 - A survey to ascertain the experience of Victims and Survivors regarding the timeliness and quality of Church bodies' responses to disclosures and their subsequent support, as positively helping the healing process and meeting their needs

Resources to support the delivery of the Standard

- “Broken by Fear, Anchored in Hope: Faithfulness in an age of anxiety” a 2020 book written by Rob Merchant
- “Letters to a Broken Church” a 2019 book written by Janet Fife and Gilo
- “To Heal and Not to Hurt: A fresh approach to safeguarding in the Church” a 2019 book written by Rosie Harper and Alan Wilson

Relevant House of Bishops’ Safeguarding Guidance and Code of Safeguarding Practice

- [Responding Well to Victims and Survivors of Abuse](#)

LEARNING, SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT

Standard

1

What is the learning, supervision and support standard?

All those engaged in safeguarding related activity in Church bodies receive the type and level of learning, professional development, support and supervision necessary to respond to safeguarding situations, victims and survivors, and respondents, effectively.

Standard

2

Standard

3

Standard

4

Standard

5

Why does it matter?

Safeguarding is a constantly evolving process. The nature of safeguarding challenges change, whilst research advances our understanding of what works. All those involved in safeguarding need to participate in continuous learning. What matters in safeguarding is not the tick-box completion of training, but a learning journey that results in changes of behaviour, by connecting with people at the level of their beliefs and values.

For learning to result in behavioural change, it needs to be embedded, nurtured and developed through reflective supervision. Reflective supervision is an essential component of safe and effective practice because of the complexities of safeguarding situations, and the impact that dealing with them has on individuals.

Clergy are at the forefront of dealing not just with safeguarding situations, but a range of other traumatising human situations. These will all impact on them. Clergy will experience significant secondary trauma, which could have a negative effect on their safeguarding responses, as well as their personal and family lives. Because of this, it should be ensured that their emotional and psychological needs are met.

What does good look like?

Standard 5 is broken down into 10 'what good looks like' indicators.

These indicators help you know how well your organisation is meeting the Standard.



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LEARNING, SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT

Standard

1

Safeguarding Learning

5.1. The delivery of safeguarding learning is rooted in the values and mission of the Church, following the models described in the Safeguarding Learning and Development Framework. It is evaluated to assess impact on behaviour.

5.2. Church officers ensure they are up to date with their safeguarding learning and development requirements, in line with their roles and responsibilities.

5.3. A continuous professional development programme is in place for those who deliver safeguarding training to provide support and feedback to enable them to deliver effectively.

Standard

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Standard

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Standard

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Standard

5

Supervision and Support of Safeguarding Roles

5.7. Those in safeguarding roles are provided with an induction programme, which gives them the confidence and knowledge required to enable them to operate in their role effectively.

5.8. Those in safeguarding roles report they are well supported, feel part of a team within their setting, have strong connections with other safeguarding professionals and a healthy work-life balance.

5.9. Diocesan Safeguarding Advisors (DSA), Cathedral Safeguarding Advisors (CSA) and other members of safeguarding teams receive supervision from an appropriately experienced and trained supervisor, using a nationally agreed supervision model.

5.10. A continuous professional development programme is in place for safeguarding professionals and used to develop their expertise and application of the latest developments in safeguarding.

Clergy Support

5.4. Clergy are provided with the type and quantity of support that will meet their emotional and psychological needs arising from the traumatic impact of their work.

5.5. Ordinands are prepared for the safeguarding challenges they subsequently experience in parishes.

5.6. Ministerial Development Reviews take place regularly and explore safeguarding and identify areas for growth and development.



THE CHURCH
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LEARNING, SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT

Standard

1

Standard

2

Standard

3

Standard

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Standard

5



THE CHURCH
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Tools, resources and guidance

Quality Assurance Tools and methods to evaluate the extent to which the Standard is being achieved

- Safeguarding Learning Tools:
 - Template for auditing governance for the delivery of safeguarding learning
 - Observation checklist for auditing safeguarding learning delivery
 - Key practice issues to look for when observing someone facilitating safeguarding learning activities
 - Facilitators checklist for self-auditing the delivery of safeguarding learning
 - Key practice issues for facilitators to reflect upon after facilitating safeguarding learning activities
 - Peer audit checklist for peer audit of delivery of safeguarding learning
 - Key practice issues for peer auditors to reflect upon after observing safeguarding learning activities
- Clergy preparation for Safeguarding Survey
 - To establish how suitably prepared Ordinands are for the safeguarding challenges they subsequently experience in parishes.

Resources to support the delivery of the Standard

- Safeguarding virtual library

Relevant House of Bishops' Safeguarding Guidance and Code of Safeguarding Practice

- [Safeguarding Learning and Development Framework](#)

Authoring Information

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