

Safeguarding Policy

Created – August 2025

Revised – April 2026

Review date – August 2026

This policy incorporates that of the Saxmundham Benefice (as approved by the Bishop's Safeguarding Panel, March 2016) and should be read in conjunction with any Policy adopted by the volunteer's own church.

Sponsoring Church: SKC Church, Saxmundham

Priest with Pastoral Charge: Revd Dave Preece (01728 561047 email david@skc.church)

Benefice Safeguarding Officer: Julia Kinsey (01728-664085 or 07726-793888 email safeguarding@skc.church)

Systems Support Administrator: Doug Fletcher (07714 213502 email safeguarding@scpa.uk)

Suffolk Coastal Poverty Action (SCPA) recognises that the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults is paramount and that we have a duty of care when they are in our charge. We will do everything that we can to provide a safe and caring environment whilst they attend our activities. We will:

- ✓ Treat all children, young people and vulnerable adults and groups with respect and celebrate their achievements.
- ✓ Recognise that all clients may be vulnerable
- ✓ Recruit and select all those working with children, young people and vulnerable adults or groups on our behalf in accordance with Church of England Practice Guidance on Safer Recruitment.
- ✓ Provide a code of conduct for all staff to include the assessment of risk for key roles when working with children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- ✓ Respond to concerns and allegations without delay in accordance with Diocesan Safeguarding procedures.

Responsibility for Safeguarding- Responsibility for safeguarding lies with everybody involved with SCPA. However the primary channel through which safeguarding concerns and issues should be addressed is the Benefice Safeguarding Officer (of the sponsoring church). NB Not the Safeguarding Officer of your own church.

Concerns

If a child, young person or vulnerable adult is at risk of immediate harm, the police should be immediately informed – 999.

When there is a disclosure of harm or there are concerns about the welfare of any children, young person or vulnerable adult, all adults working within the Debt Centre are expected to notify the Systems Support Administrator (this is to enable the SSA to alert the Benefice Safeguarding Officer that a SCAP related concern is forthcoming).

Thereafter the person to whom the disclosure has been made should share their concerns with:

- The Benefice Safeguarding Officer or, if not available;
- The Bishop's Safeguarding Advisor (07785 621319 8am – 8pm) or, if not available;
- Suffolk County Council Customer First - 0808 800 4005 (Freephone from landlines and some mobiles).

The person to whom the disclosure has been made should not share their concerns with any other person.

Allegations Additionally, in accordance with diocesan safeguarding procedures, all allegations against staff or volunteers should be directly referred to the Benefice Safeguarding Officer at the earliest opportunity.

The Benefice Safeguarding Officer is responsible for:

- Helping to ensure that all those who work with children, young people or vulnerable adults on behalf of SCPA are aware of the Diocesan Safeguarding procedures.
- Helping to ensure that all those who work with children, young people or vulnerable adults receive diocesan safeguarding induction or safeguarding vulnerable groups training, as appropriate.

The SCPA leadership team is responsible for:

Ensuring that all workers are appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with government guidance on safe recruitment. This includes ensuring that:

- There are guidelines for good practice
- Safeguarding has been discussed prior to appointment.
- Criminal records disclosure has been completed (Disclosure & Barring Service – Enhanced Certificate)
- The applicant has been given and acknowledged receipt of a copy of the organisation’s safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns.

The SCPA Worker is responsible for:

1. Ensuring that they receive Safeguarding Training to an appropriate standard, as approved by the Benefice Safeguarding Officer. (see appendix for details of training offered by the diocese)
2. Attending Befriender Training when offered by SCPA.
3. Holding a current Enhanced Certificate for working with adults issued by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) no longer than 3 years ago. If you are in Anglican Church within the Diocese of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich this can be issued by your home church; otherwise it will be arranged with the SCPA DBS Administrator on behalf of the Benefice Safeguarding Officer.
4. Producing documentary evidence of compliance with items 1 and 3 above.

Safeguarding Code of Conduct for the debt centre

At SCPA we will

- ✓ Treat all children, young people or vulnerable adults with respect and dignity.
- ✓ Ensure that their welfare and safety is paramount at all times.
- ✓ Always act in a professional way and not accept bullying.
- ✓ Liaise openly (where it does not place a child, young person or vulnerable adult at risk) with parents and carers.
- ✓ Only use physical contact in an entirely appropriate manner.
- ✓ If possible, and certainly until the client is known to you, avoid being alone with clients in their homes. If considered to be safe, lone visits may be made but details of the visit should be notified to a trusted person beforehand.
- ✓ Avoid being alone with children and young people (unless it is absolutely necessary to do so).
- ✓ Listen to any disclosures/allegations/concerns that a child, young person or vulnerable adult has been harmed and follow the procedures outlined under concerns above.
- ✓ Ensure that all those working with children, young people or vulnerable adults receive the appropriate safeguarding training.

Non-Compliance with this policy will automatically lead to the person being suspended from working with SCPA pending investigation of the circumstances.

The following is a brief description of CAP and the type of work / activities we undertake with children / adults at risk:

Christians Against Poverty (“CAP”) is a national debt counselling charity, registered with the Charity Commission. It works in partnership with churches of all denominations from all over the UK, running debt counselling centres, job clubs, life skills groups and fresh start groups. Each Centre works within its own community helping people with debt problems, and helping people develop a sustainable financial future and confidence in their skills for life. These can be single adults, couples, families, elderly people, disabled people. Its service provision is mainly telephone based from its head office in Bradford.

Guidance when meeting or interviewing clients

General guidance for Debt Coaches & Befrienders

Personal safety when out and about

You should always have someone with you when meeting a client in their home, or other place not open to the public. If meeting in a public place, make sure you are aware of your surroundings and can seek assistance if needed.

You should carry a mobile phone in case of emergencies. It is also advisable to leave the contact details of the location of the visit and the expected time of return with your manager or a team member and tell someone before you go on the visit.

Your instincts are there to warn you so trust them. If something does not feel right, trust your instincts – you are not being paranoid – leave the situation immediately.

Equipment safety when out and about

Equipment should not be left on view in an unattended vehicle or location. You should also not put yourself in a position where you are solely responsible for equipment in an environment where doing so could put your personal safety at risk (e.g. carrying kit alone in an isolated location). Should you ever be challenged by someone, your personal safety is of greatest importance. Do not ever put yourself at risk in an attempt to stop equipment being taken.

APPENDIX

Training offered by the diocese:

Go to <https://www.cofesuffolk.org/for-parishes/promoting-a-safer-church/safeguarding-training/>

Scroll down & you will see a list of the modules; you should do the **Basic & Foundation courses**. Basic takes about one hour to work through; Foundation a bit longer.

Scroll down further to the section with a large blue heading **Basic Awareness Training** and find the title 'Click the icon for the online training portal' and the link to the training portal.

You will need to create an account & password (please remember them/note them somewhere, as you'll need them to access training in future).

Enter St. Johns as the church & diocese of 'St. Edmundsbury & Ipswich' and your role as 'Debt Centre Volunteer'

When you have completed **both modules** you will be able to print off certificates & you will get a confirmatory email. A copy of this must be sent to the SCPA Administrator at safeguarding@scpa.uk and to the Benefice Safeguarding Officer by forwarding the confirmatory email to Julia Kinsey at safeguarding@skc.church.