

procedures and denominational requirements. This is particularly heightened when it comes to safeguarding, with the need to communicate and manage what can be sensitive matters between members of the clergy, paid and volunteer officers, and church members. A clear commitment to safeguarding will ensure that LEPs are able to operate to high standards of practice and take the necessary actions to make our churches safer spaces for all.

## 1. Supporting Good Practice within LEPs

This guidance recognises the diversity that can exist both organisationally and structurally between denominations, which can comprise an LEP. Nevertheless, clear decision making, effective joint working and appropriate communication between LEP member churches is needed to ensure the safety of all who are involved with the church and its activities.

Safeguarding officers have a commitment to providing churches with professional and timely safeguarding support. Each denomination has its own policies and procedures and requires churches to adopt these at a local level.

In an LEP setting, agreement on which denomination's safeguarding policy to follow is crucial to

There are some pragmatic considerations that can help with this decision:

- Which denomination does the church most closely identify with?
- Which denomination provides the ordained member(s) of clergy at the point of deciding the policy?
- Where does the church go to for support on other governance matters?
- Does the decision-making model of the church fit more closely with any one denomination?
- Who owns the building and what are the requirements of the church insurer(s)?

It is recommended that at the point of deciding upon a policy (for ratification by the denominations' relevant authorities – see below), the rationale is included at the point of submission for approval.

The trustees of the LEP should adopt the safeguarding policy and guidance of one of the participating denominations and apply that in all aspects of safeguarding practice.

The safeguarding policy and procedures (and any subsequent amendments) must be ratified by the relevant authority of each participating denomination. A copy of, or electronic link to, the ratified policy must be sent to the safeguarding officer nominated by the relevant authority for each participating denomination. Safeguarding teams of all member denominations need to be informed which policy the LEP has adopted, and once that decision is made, the LEP must adhere to the adopted policy.

Safeguarding teams in each denomination must understand and work within the policy and procedures an LEP has adopted, particularly where these procedures are different to their own. They will of course liaise with their denomination upon any matters of concern but should take advice on matters of policy from the denominational safeguarding team who are responsible for the safeguarding policy.

If there is any doubt regarding eligibility for DBS checks, advice should be sought from the denominational safeguarding team or from DBS outreach service. Contact details can be found here: The DBS Regional Outreach service – GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

## 5. Safeguarding training

Each denomination provides safeguarding training. In an LEP, its clergy, trustees, lay workers, employees and volunteers must attend the safeguarding training in accordance with the adopted policy. Records of training completed should be held by the LEP, and be available to the relevant body of each individual's denomination. Some denominations may additionally require their ministers to undertake their own denominational safeguarding training unless a reciprocal agreement is in existence.

## 6. Risk assessment

When the need for safeguarding risk assessments arise, an LEP will follow the risk assessment process set out in the adopted policy and procedures and consult with the relevant denominational safeguarding team. This also includes occasions where a safeguarding contract is necessary.

In some denominations, the final decision on a risk assessment is made by the church safeguarding team.

they are unable to take the necessary steps to act in relation to a minister they accredit, or have ordained or licensed. If there is any doubt as to whether data can be shared, advice must be sought from the relevant data protection professional.

Collaborative working between denominational safeguarding teams is critical where safeguarding allegations relate to the behaviour or conduct of an ordained minister of the LEP. Each denomination has its own clearly defined procedures for dealing with the investigation of concerns raised about ordained or accredited ministers, which may vary between denominations. Therefore, those investigating or supporting an LEP to investigate a safeguarding concern will need to work within the LEP's own safeguarding policy and also adhere to the relevant ministerial disciplinary rules, which may comprise legal processes established by a different denomination.

In practice, this means that in any case where there is an allegation or complaint in relation to an ordained minister working in an LEP who is accredited and/or ordained by another denomination, that denomination's safeguarding officer must be informed and communication must continue through the investigation and risk assessment process. The requirements of the policies and procedures (including disciplinary procedures) of the denomination of which the minister is a member must be followed. Likewise, regular contact between the participating denominations should be maintained until the conclusion of any proceedings.

Data protection and information-sharing agreements need to make clear reference to the necessity and lawful basis on which to share information between denominations in such situations (see point 8 below). If there is any doubt as to whether data can be shared, advice must be sought from the relevant data protection professional.

