



Safeguarding Strategic Plan

October 2022

This strategic plan (the '**Strategy**') has been prepared and adopted by the Abbey Trustees with input from the Safeguarding Sub Committee of Trustees and Safeguarding Coordinator. The Safeguarding Sub Committee and Safeguarding Coordinator take collective responsibility for monitoring compliance with the Strategy and for ensuring that it is implemented throughout the activities of the Diocese.

As part of the Safeguarding Coordinator's report tabled at each Trustee meeting the Safeguarding Coordinator will explain what is being done to ensure the effective implementation of the Strategy. The Board of Trustees will have the opportunity to ask questions and/or make any changes to the Strategy as required.

Introduction

Every human being has a value and dignity which we as Catholics acknowledge comes directly from God's creation of people in his own image and likeness. We believe therefore that all people should be valued, supported and protected from harm.

We are required at all times to comply with the law of England of Wales, including in relation to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of all those who are employed by the Abbey and are otherwise involved in or come into contact with the Abbey through its activities.

As a registered charity, we are also required to act and use our resources only where to do so supports our charitable purpose and is for the public benefit. This includes an obligation to identify and minimise any detriment or harm resulting from our work.

We are further required to comply with the Charity Commission's guidance, including its guidance on safeguarding duties for charities¹. In accordance with this guidance, protecting people and our safeguarding responsibilities are key priorities for the Abbey.

Our vision, mission, and values

To develop a culture whereby those that worship, work, or visit Buckfast Abbey can do so without the fear of harm, abuse or exploitation. Whilst focusing upon the Standards of the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency, our priorities will include, but not be limited to;

- The prevention of abuse
- Promotion of Safeguarding
- Increased accountability and assurance
- Promoting the voice of the child/adult
- Increasing Trauma Informed practices
- Engaging further with those who have been harmed.

Statement of principles

In accordance with our commitment to best practice, we commit to the following principles in all areas of our work:

- Zero-tolerance approach to harm, abuse or exploitation of those coming into contact with the Diocese.
- Promotion of wellbeing of all those coming into contact with the Abbey (and in particular of children and adults at risk).
- Respect for equality and diversity in all internal matters and external engagement.
- Promotion of an inclusive culture that tolerates differences of opinion and values the health and wellbeing of others.
- Honesty, openness, and transparency in all work with the Abbey.
- Promotion of a culture where concerns can safely be reported and dealt with in accordance with the Abbey's policies and procedures.
- Commitment to support any person affected by behaviour which is non-compliant.

Purpose

We note that recent changes to safeguarding guidance and practice must be implemented in the Abbey's management of safeguarding risks. Whilst we acknowledge that the Charity Commission's safeguarding focus is inherently process-driven, our role is to ensure that the processes we have in place in our

safeguarding policies and procedures are also reflected in the day-to-day actions of all of our trustees, staff and volunteers.

We are committed to taking safeguarding seriously by putting proactive measures in place and by ensuring any incidents that do arise are dealt with appropriately and lessons are learned for the future.

We do this by:

1. reinforcing our commitment to people protection and safeguarding through our Codes of Conduct;
2. devising policies and procedures to effectively implement the Strategy and Codes of Conduct and ensure that the welfare of all persons coming into contact with the Abbey through our activities is protected at all times (see ‘Connected policies and procedures’ below); and
3. monitoring the effectiveness of our safeguarding strategy, policies and procedures on an ongoing basis.

Objectives for 2023

Objective	Responsibility
1. Ensure that new safeguarding governance policies and procedures are approved by the Trustees and effectively embedded.	Safeguarding Coordinator Safeguarding Sub-Committee of Trustees
2. Ensure that safeguarding is adequately resourced, including recruitment of staff for new roles if required.	Safeguarding Coordinator HR Manager and C.O.O
3. Complete the Safeguarding Training Plan so that trustees, staff and volunteers understand their roles and how to implement the safeguarding governance policies and procedures. *	Safeguarding Coordinator
4. Carry out a safe recruitment audit, to include an assessment of job descriptions within the Abbey and whether they may be eligible for a Standard or Enhanced DBS check (with or without a check of the Barred Lists) and ensuring that we are up-to-date with DBS checks on new and current trustees, staff and volunteers who are eligible (as required by the Commission’s latest guidance on safeguarding duties).	Safeguarding Coordinator, COO, Chair of Safeguarding Committee and HR Manager.
5. Ensure that the Abbey’s partners (such as connected organisations, grant recipients and funders) are aware of our safeguarding policies and procedures and that a commitment to implement appropriate safeguarding requirements is included	Safeguarding Coordinator

in any contractual arrangements entered into by the Abbey	
6. Keep up-to-date with safeguarding record-keeping requirements, including recording incidents in the Safeguarding Electronic Management System, updating the Safeguarding Risk Registers.	Safeguarding Coordinator
7. Carry out a review of safeguarding-related serious incidents (as defined by the Commission) and how they were handled (in some cases an external review will be appropriate, for example where it cannot be guaranteed that an internal review will be impartial, or where the incident is sufficiently important).	Safeguarding Coordinator as agreed with Sub-Committee of Trustees.

SWOT analysis

Strengths:

- Our Safeguarding Coordinator has direct experience working with children and adults at risk. There is also experience in working in safeguarding within both Religious and Diocese settings.
- Our Safeguarding Commission consists of professionals with current, relevant multi-agency experience.
- The Abbot and Board of Trustees are visibly supportive of the Abbey`s safeguarding strategy and the plan to make improvements.
- The Safeguarding and management team have fostered good relationships with staff and volunteers.

Weaknesses:

- The electronic management system for DBS updated manually is not linked to E-Bulk management or National Database.
- Further membership within the Sub-Committee of Trustees would be advantageous especially regarding police and survivor involvement.

Opportunities:

- The full staff membership at Buckfast are engaged with the issues and are enthusiastic to assist with implementation of the safeguarding strategy.
- The Abbey has strong links with other dioceses and other faith groups in the community including membership of SWESF (South West Ecumenical Safeguarding Forum)

Threats:

- The retention and recruitment of members of the Safeguarding Sub-Committee, who have extensive experience in dealing with safeguarding matters, is proving increasingly difficult.

Connected policies and procedures

The Abbey has adopted or committed to adopting various policies and procedures to ensure that our commitment to the protection and welfare of those who come into contact with the Abbey is enforced in practice and well-governed.

All who work for and with the Abbey commit to observing and implementing our safeguarding strategy and measures in a manner appropriate to their role.

The table below sets out the relevant policies and procedures and who is responsible for what in relation to each document:

Policy/procedure	Responsibilities
Safeguarding Policies and Procedures	Safeguarding Coordinator and Safeguarding Sub-Committee of Trustees are responsible for securing their effective operation and for monitoring whether changes to policy are required.
Safeguarding Codes of Conduct	Safeguarding Coordinator responsible for monitoring whether changes are required and advising the Trustees accordingly. HR and Safeguarding Office are responsible for ensuring every trustee, staff member and volunteer receives a copy and is aware of the necessity of its observance.
Safeguarding Management Plan	Safeguarding Coordinator and Safeguarding Sub-Committee responsible for updating the plan and considering priorities.
Safeguarding Risk Assessment and Risk Register	Safeguarding Coordinator and Sub-Committee of Trustees to complete the Risk Register following the identification of risks and proposed mitigation and contingencies. Board of Trustees responsible for reviewing at each meeting.

Safeguarding Training Plan	<p>Safeguarding Coordinator responsible for monitoring Plan and organising training.</p> <p>Safeguarding Coordinator responsible for collecting and collating feedback and reporting to the Safeguarding Sub Committee and Trustees.</p>
Serious Incident Reporting Register	<p>The Secretary to the Trustees is responsible for completing the Register.</p> <p>Board of Trustees has oversight of serious incident reporting.</p>
Low Level Concerns	<p>Low level concerns policy completed and reviewed annually.</p>

Strategy review

This Strategy was adopted in October 2022. It will be referred to on an ongoing basis to ensure that it is being implemented. The Strategy will be reviewed and revised on an annual basis, as and when a safeguarding serious incident occurs or when necessary due to a change in legislation, policy, or guidance – whichever comes first.