

The use of chaplaincy buildings by other churches and groups

INTRODUCTION

This note sets out the Diocesan requirements to be followed by Chaplaincies for allowing any third party (ie non chaplaincy) groups to use any your churches (or other buildings) for which you are responsible by virtue of ownership or lease/rental agreement

The requirements cover:

- Safeguarding irrespective of the use; plus
- Use for Worship; and
- Other uses

SAFEGUARDING

Irrespective of the nature of the use, if the activity involves, or might involve, children or adults who may be vulnerable, then the following safeguarding requirements must be applied. If you are unsure if the intended activity should be covered then please ask your Chaplaincy Safeguarding Officer (CSO) for guidance.

What do you need to do?

The person in the chaplaincy who is responsible for arranging the bookings must do the following things:

- Have your Chaplaincy Safeguarding Policy displayed (or available) in a prominent position.
- Always bring your Chaplaincy Policy to the attention of the Third Party's group leader.
- Require the third Party to agree to follow your safeguarding policy by completing the Diocesan Third Party Safeguarding Declaration Form.

NB for family groups using your premises for a 'one-off' family event, such as a wedding reception or party, then a written agreement is not necessary.

- If you are concerned that they are less than enthusiastic about following your policy then their request to use your premises must be declined.
- There is **no** requirement to physically 'police' the use of your premises when third parties are using them:

- By agreeing with your terms as set out above they have given an undertaking to comply with your requirements and that they will comply with these.
- If there are any concerns then the chaplaincy will need to question the continued use by that third party.
- Any areas of doubt must always be checked with the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.

What if there is a problem?

If you become aware of any safeguarding concerns involving the group (whether or not these are linked to the activities taking place in your chaplaincy premises) then you must inform your CSO without delay. The CSO will then handle the matter.

WORSHIPPING GROUPS

1. The Diocese in Europe is governed by the same norms as the rest of the Church of England including the Ecumenical Relations Measure, 1988. Under this measure, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York designate a list of Churches to which this measure applies. Such Churches can be permitted to worship in a Church of England building in the Diocese in Europe provided the appropriate safeguarding requirements are complied with.
2. Under article 27 of the Diocese in Europe's constitution, the Archbishop of Canterbury *may*, at the request of the Bishop, designate other churches for the purpose of the ecumenical relations of the Diocese in Europe even if they are not designated under the Ecumenical Relations Measure in relation to the Church of England as a whole. Any Church so designated can be permitted to worship in a Church of England building in the Diocese in Europe provided the appropriate safeguarding requirements are complied with.
3. A Church in communion with the Church of England can be permitted to worship in a Church of England building in the Diocese in Europe without further steps or authorisation provided the appropriate safeguarding requirements are complied with.
4. A community which is part of a Church based mainly outside the country, which is recognised by a member Church of the Anglican Communion, may be permitted to worship in a Church of England building in the Diocese in Europe provided the appropriate safeguarding requirements are complied with. .
5. In the case of churches, covered by paragraphs 1 – 4, the signing of a use agreement may be helpful for both parties to avoid any misunderstanding.
6. Subject to the overriding requirements in respect of Safeguarding (see the beginning of this note), any other denomination/group which is not covered in paragraphs 1 – 4 can be permitted to worship in a Church of England building in the Diocese in Europe only if a faculty is obtained, following the procedure for Bishop's faculties. The Diocesan Registrar will advise on the current procedures to be used noting that the process to request the faculty will include the following steps:

a) **Determination of Beliefs and Assessment of the Integrity of the Leadership**

The host chaplaincy must seek assurance that the guest church or group stands within the mainstream of Trinitarian Christian orthodoxy. This may involve the examination of a statement of faith. A reference point for testing this statement should be the basis for membership of the national council of churches or equivalent ecumenical instrument in the country of the host

church. Where this is not possible, reference can be made to the Churches Together in England (CTE) standard:

CTE unites in pilgrimage those churches...which, acknowledging God's revelation in Christ, confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures and, in accordance with God's will and in the power of the Holy Spirit, commit themselves: to seek a deepening of their communion with Christ and with one another in the Church, which is his body, and to fulfil their mission to proclaim the gospel by common witness and service in the world to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The host chaplaincy must also be assured that its buildings will at no time be used for teaching that constitutes an explicit attack on the Christian faith of the Church of England, or a Church in Communion with it.

An assessment of the integrity of the leadership of the guest church or group is also advisable. Other local churches may be able to assist with this assessment.

b) Determination of legal status

The host chaplaincy must seek assurance as to the legal status of the guest church or body. Only officially registered churches or groups, or those with some authorised permission to function as a religious body can be permitted to use the buildings.

c) Chaplaincy Council

The Chaplaincy Council of the host chaplaincy should pass a resolution agreeing to the request for faculty for the use of the building by the guest church or group.

d) The request for a faculty

- The Chaplain will write to the suffragan bishop
- to confirm that a satisfactory review of the beliefs and of the integrity of the leadership of the guest church or group has been completed,
- to confirm that the guest church or group has legal authorisation,
- to forward a copy of the resolution of the Church Council in favour of the request of a faculty.

e) Episcopal checks

The lead bishop will write to the appropriate ecclesiastical authority of the guest church or body to confirm that the minister of the group is in good standing.

7. Reviewing and Ending a Use Agreement

It is good practice for there to be a joint host chaplaincy/guest church group meeting at least twice a year, to review the arrangements to deal with problems and possibilities.

There may be some circumstances in which the beliefs and practices of the host chaplaincy and the guest church are or become incompatible. In these cases, there may be no alternative but to cancel the arrangements.

Any changes in leadership in the guest church should result in a new agreement being drawn up and signed.

OTHER (IE NON-WORSHIPPING) GROUPS

Noting the overriding requirements in respect of Safeguarding (see the beginning of this note), the use of Chaplaincy premises by other (ie non-worshipping) groups is at the discretion of the Chaplain and the Chaplaincy Council. However it is good practice to ensure that the aims and objectives of such groups are not in conflict with the teaching of the Church of England before agreeing to such use.

The signing of a Use Agreement may be helpful for both parties to avoid any misunderstanding.
