Raphael Pilgrimage Safeguarding Guidance

Registered Charity No. 1098328 · www.raphaelpilgrimage.org.uk

All links were checked as current Jan 2026

Introduction

Safeguarding is a term used to describe how we protect vulnerable adults who travel with us on Pilgrimage from abuse or neglect. As helpers, we also need to have systems in place to protect ourselves from false accusation.
It is the responsibility of the Pilgrimage Trustees to ensure all measures are taken to protect our assisted Pilgrims, both whilst in Lourdes and at home. We have a duty of care to report any suspected abuse or neglect to the Local Authority.
There are many forms of abuse and fall into these categories:

- **Physical** – hitting, slapping, pushing, giving a person the wrong or no medication and restraining someone.
- **Domestic** – including psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional.
- **Sexual** – rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo and any sexual acts the adult did not consent to or was pressured into consenting.
- **Psychological** – emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of outside contact, humiliation, intimidation, verbal abuse, harassment, cyber bullying or isolation.
- **Financial or material** – this includes theft, fraud, internet scamming, exerting pressure on someone regarding their financial arrangements, the stealing of property.
- **Slavery** – slavery, human trafficking and forced labour.
- **Discriminatory** – harassment or insults because of someone's race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.
- **Organisational** – this includes neglect or poor care in an institution or care setting.
- **Self-neglect** – someone who isn't caring for their own personal hygiene, health or surroundings.

Abuse can take many forms and may not fit into any of the above categories or may fit into more than one.

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)
This helps employers and charities make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups.

As a small charity with limited contact with potentially vulnerable assisted pilgrims or helpers the current Government guidance allows for us to utilise DBS certificates issued for other organisations, ideally though, a Raphael DBS is obtained via Fr Leo Heaken and Salford Diocese.
Please see information below:

Accepting a previously issued DBS check
The employers (Trustees) can decide whether to accept a previously issued DBS check. Each applicant needs to be reviewed and they (Trustees) should consider the following before making a decision:

- The applicant's criminal record or other relevant information may have changed since its issue
- The level of that check may not be right for the position we are recruiting for
- Trustee's need to check that the original application position and workforce are correct for the role.
- The police disclose information on an enhanced DBS certificate based on child or adult workforce, for which the criminal record check was originally applied for.
- The information revealed was based on the identity of the applicant, which was validated by another Registered Body
- That the identity details on the certificate match those of the applicant

If the above are met, Raphael can accept a DBS certificate obtained by another organisation e.g. work or volunteer role.

Raphael Pilgrimage can accept non-working pilgrims without a DBS certificate, but they should not provide support to an assisted pilgrim.

The UK Guidance was updated on 23/01/2026 and can be accessed here:

Working with adults in the charity sector and overseas aid organisations - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

If you do not have a valid Disclosure and Barring Service Certificate
Volunteer helpers (particularly new to Raphael) without a valid Pilgrimage DBS certificate can still help on the pilgrimage ***but should always work under constant supervision of a volunteer with a valid DBS certificate.***

In order to work in as safe a manner as possible, all Pilgrims offering to help on the Raphael Pilgrimage ***who provide direct personal care*** to assisted pilgrims should have a Disclosure and Barring Service check (either via Raphael or provide a certificate from another workplace or organisation) – the eligibility criteria can be found here:
GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Implementation

Raphael Pilgrimage will also be working in partnership with the Safeguarding Team from Salford Diocese who will provide a checking service. Detailed instructions on what you need to produce can be found on:
DBS eligibility guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Salford Diocese have indicated they are happy for volunteers who do not live in the Salford Diocese to have their forms and identification verified locally and they (Salford) will process the forms. Alternatively, a helper can speak to their local Parish Safeguarding Rep who ***may*** be able to complete the process which is free of charge.

Who can ask for a DBS check
Only employers or voluntary organisations and licensing bodies can request a DBS check. Applicants cannot request criminal records check on themselves. Instead, they can request a basic disclosure from Disclosure Scotland (you don't have to be from Scotland to do this).

How to get a DBS check

- Information on how to obtain a DBS Check and what is needed can be found on: DBS check: application process for volunteers - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- The applicant can commence the application process as soon as they know they want to volunteer with Raphael.
- All application forms are on-line and can be viewed by the verifier as well as yourself.
- The applicant will need to contact their local Parish Safeguarding Rep or one of the Parish Safeguarding Reps within the Salford Diocese via Fr Leo Heakin, plan a time to visit (this can be done via video call, with all required documentation to enable them to confirm on the application form that the details are correct.
- Copies of the applicant's original documentation must be seen by the Safeguarding Team at Salford Diocese, together with a passport photograph of the applicant. Again, this can be done by scanning your documents and emailing them to the verifier and can be email letters if your address is within the document.
- Once submitted the applicant will receive their certificate in the post. This can take up to 8 weeks.

- If the applicant has subscribed to the DBS update service, the DBS will be automatically updated every 3 years, and the nominated Safeguarding Officer for Raphael Pilgrimage can check their certificate online if required.
- If the applicant has not subscribed to the DBS update service the above process will need to be completed every 3 years. This may need to be completed again if you move house.

How long a DBS check is valid?
A DBS check has no official expiry date. Any information included will be accurate at the time the check was carried out. It is up to an employer (in this case Raphael Pilgrimage) to decide if a new check is needed.
Applicants and the nominated Raphael Safeguarding Officer (Vacant position) can use the DBS update service to keep a certificate up to date or carry out checks on a potential helpers' certificate.
If the applicant has not subscribed to the DBS update service or applied for a new DBS Certificate, they may not be able to provide personal care for assisted pilgrims travelling with Raphael Pilgrimage.

Types of criminal records check
There are 3 types of check. DBS check applicants must be 16 or over.

Standard
Checks for spent and unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands, and final warnings.
Enhanced
This includes the same as the standard check plus any additional information held by local police that's reasonably considered relevant to the role being applied for.
Enhanced with list checks
This is like the enhanced check but includes a check of the DBS barred lists.

The time it takes to process a DBS check depends on:
- the level of check
- if the details given for the check are correct
- which police forces need to be involved in the check

Volunteers
Checks for all volunteers are free of charge. This includes anyone who spends time helping people and are not being paid for that role.

Once the certificate has been received the applicant needs to inform the Raphael Safeguarding Officer and provide a copy (scanned and emailed) for our records which will be kept in secure storage.

What documents are required for DBS Checks?
There is a full and comprehensive list on https://www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check/documents-the-applicant-must-provide-

The post of Raphael Safeguarding Officer is vacant, the trustees and namely Tracy Ennis hold the responsibility in the absence of a Safeguarding Officer.

This Policy will be reviewed biannually

This Guidance has been reviewed and agreed by the Trustees

Tracy Ennis, Chair of Trustees
02/08/2026