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General Information and Updates for Churches 2016/2

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1) Security Funding

You may be interested in the following. The Home Office has announced bidding for grants under the [Places of worship: security funding scheme](#), to provide protective security measures for places of worship in England and Wales. Bids for funding can be made for the next 8 weeks until **5pm on 20 September**. A second round of bids will open in spring 2017.

Eligibility

Bids are invited from **places of worship** in England and Wales: *however,*

- **schools and educational institutions are not eligible to apply;** and
- **Jewish places of worship are ineligible** because there is already a scheme in place to fund security measures at Jewish community sites through grants administered by the Community Security Trust.
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Bids may be made for the capital cost of security equipment but *not* for the cost of recruiting security personnel. Places of worship need to contribute 20 per cent of the total costs. The non-exhaustive list of examples includes: CCTV; perimeter fencing; access control gates; bollards; door locks; window locks; intruder alarm; external lighting; security doors. The funding would also include the appropriate labour cost to install the security equipment, but **not** contributions towards: annual service charges, maintenance charges, or one-off fees such as connection or monitoring charges.

How to bid

1. Provide supporting documents to show that you need increased security. These can include police reports, records of incidents, photographic evidence or insurance claims.
2. Arrange a site survey with the Master Locksmiths Association (MLA) or your local Crime Prevention Design Adviser (CPDA) and get them to complete an [assessment form](#).
3. Provide three quotes from approved security installers.
4. Fill in a [bid application form](#).

Bidding opened on **26 July**.

Bidding closes at 5pm on **20 September**.

Outcomes will be communicated by **9 November**.

Contact details: securityfundingCED@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk.

(Source CLAS)

2) Property

Ecclesiastical has a [web page](#) of advice and guidance devoted to working from height in churches, which states:

“The Work at Height Regulations 2005 subsequently amended by the Work at Height(Amendment) Regulations 2007 applies in England, Wales and Scotland and means that churches have a legal duty to provide protection for their employees and persons under their control. It is important to remember that the Health and Safety Executive regard it as good practice to provide volunteers with the same level of protection as if they were employees.”

In short, churches have a duty of care in tort/delict for these and similar activities, which is extended to “visitors” (i.e. the congregation) by the Occupiers Liability Act 1957:

“... to take such care as in all the circumstances of the case is reasonable to see that the visitor will be reasonably safe in using the premises for the purposes for which he is invited or permitted by the occupier to be there.”

It should also be remembered that the primary concern of insurers is *insuring against risk*, not with health & safety considerations as such. If your insurer believes that you are operating an unsafe working environment it will either increase your premiums to unaffordable levels or refuse to cover the risk at all.

(Source CLAS)

3) Charity Commission Consultation on External Scrutiny of Charity Accounts

The Charity Commission has opened a [consultation](#) on changes to its guidance on the external scrutiny of charity accounts: [Directions and guidance for independent examination \(CC32\)](#).

At present, all charities with an income over £25,000 must have some form of external scrutiny, either a full audit or, for the smaller ones, an independent examination. The consultation seeks comments on the impact that the following proposals might have on regulatory burdens on examiners and trustees:

1. Three new Directions on: examiner independence, conflicts of interest and disclosure of related party transactions, and financial sustainability and going concern; and new simpler guidance for each Direction;
2. extending independent examination to consolidated (group) accounts;
3. a new, simpler format for the examiner’s report;
4. changes to the reporting of matters of material significance;
5. new guidance on the reporting of ‘relevant matters’; and
6. an approach that makes it clearer that the guidance is *expected* practice not simply *recommended* practice

The consultation closes on **30 September 2016**. The changes are intended to come into effect for reporting periods ending on or after 31 March 2017.

[Source: Charity Commission – 3 June]

4) Fundraising

The Charity Commission has released its new guidance for charities trustees about fundraising from the public. The Commission points out that trustees have a key role in overseeing their charity's fundraising and ensuring that it reflects their charity's values. The new guidance is part of the Commission's response to some of the high-profile problems identified about the fundraising practices of some charities and the agencies that they had employed over the past year. *The Commission emphasises the need for trustee boards to have effective oversight over fundraising and to focus on donor care.*

See:

- [Charity fundraising: a guide to trustee duties](#)
- [Taking responsibility for our charity's fundraising: a checklist for trustees](#)
- [Key fundraising principles \(CC20\)](#).

need to be very careful indeed to observe the new guidance on fundraising (and, of course, the data protection legislation).

[Source: Charity Commission]

5) Listed Places of Worship Roof Repair Fund

A recent meeting of the Historic Religious Buildings Alliance heard a report from Debbie Yates, the Programme Manager for the Listed Places of Worship Roof Repair Fund. In the second tranche of the LPWRRF:

- there were 1502 applications (about 800 of which were resubmissions): the average request for funding was for £58,000;
- the quality of the applications had improved;
- 84 per cent of applications were from England, the highest proportion being from the South West;
- all applications had now been assessed; and
- it was expected that 400 projects would be funded: the budget this year is £25m – 502 grants had been awarded in the first round against a budget of £30m.

75 per cent of applications came from the Church of England and 4 per cent each from the Church in Wales, the Church of Ireland, the Church of Scotland and the Roman Catholic Church (which, we suspect, is probably very roughly proportionate to their respective shares of listed churches). In terms of listing grades, there were similar numbers of applications relating to Grade I, Grade II* and Grade II, all with over 400 applications.

Decisions have now been made and a list of successful applicants will also appear on <http://www.lpowroof.org.uk/>. The successful projects will have six months in which to submit the necessary documentation and apply for permission to start and to draw down the first tranche of the grant. The projects must be delivered within two years.

[Source: CLAS summary]

6) Self Care and Mental Health

The Northern Ireland Public Health Agency has published a new resource, the [Flourish! Self-Care Toolkit](#), aimed at helping clergy to look after their mental health. It has been produced by the suicide prevention group Flourish!, which includes Lighthouse Ireland, the Churches Community Work Alliance NI, clergy from across Northern Ireland's Churches and the Public Health Agency itself; and it is being distributed to 1,315 members of the clergy across all denominations in Northern Ireland.

Fiona Teague, Health Improvement Manager with the PHA, writes: "Clergy carry out important and valued work looking after their congregations. Very often those who care for others, such as the clergy, don't take time out to look after their own mental and emotional wellbeing, and this can lead to stress and ill-health."

Although the resource is aimed primarily at clergy, much of its advice would be equally apposite to those in the caring professions generally – and not just within Northern Ireland.

[Source: Northern Ireland Public Health Agency]

7) Wales – Registering with Rent Smart Wales

The Communities and Children's Secretary has reminded landlords of the requirement to register with [Rent Smart Wales](#). As a result of the Housing Act (Wales) 2014 all private landlords must register themselves and their properties with Rent Smart Wales by **23 November**. Those landlords who are involved in letting and management activities will also have to undertake training. There is a Rent Smart Wales call centre, run by the City of Cardiff Council, to deal with queries from landlords and agents.

Member Churches in Wales need to think carefully about this. For example, do you have a curate's or caretaker's house that is currently let to a private tenant? If so, you should check whether or not you need to register.

[Source: Welsh Government – 12 July]

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