

## General Synod 2026 – Hustings questions

*Answering is optional in all these questions. Enter your response below the questions.  
Responses limited to 200 words per question*

### **Your Calling**

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| 1 | In what ways do you think God has called you to this role?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|   | <p>I worked for the National Church Institutions 2002-2014, in various departments, learning the governance, structures and many of the intricacies which enable the huge and complex behemoth of the Church to function! Subsequently, I served at diocesan level, training people for lay and ordained ministry, reflecting deeply on theology, identity and practical realities. When I was ordained myself, I served in the parish and then went on to support Bishop Andrew in exercising his episcopal ministry, fulfilling many of the functions behind the scenes which are essential but not always known or understood! Each step along the way I have felt God beckoning me, and received affirmation of how it has been the right thing to do. I offer myself on behalf of clergy friends and colleagues to participate in General Synod with all its complexities and idiosyncrasies. It's not for everyone(!), but I believe I have the knowledge, alongside the passion sharing the gospel with the people of this nation, to mean I can make a meaningful contribution and that God wants to use me in this way.</p> |
| 2 | What is your personal hope for the Church of England?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|   | <p>To fulfil its calling to be the church of and for England. It is a huge privilege and responsibility to provide ministry for the entire nation. The church's heritage means it has breadth and depth to both serve and evangelise the whole nation, recognising that this is not a one-size fits all mission. We need to meet people at their point of need, and what that looks like will vary. But we are united in sharing the gospel hope of God's longing to share his love, forgiveness, healing and reconciliation for all, to their blessing and flourishing. My hope is that we all fully play our part in sharing that hope, so our churches end up full, with people glorifying God with joy, knowing God for their comfort, whether in gentleness or exuberance, fulfilling the Great Commission.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

### **Church of England Structures**

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| 3 | What do you consider the three top priorities of the Church of England over the next five years?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Growth – in depth and breadth – drawing more people in through quality evangelisation but also ongoing discipleship, bringing people to maturity. This is for the young, the old, and all in between.</li><li>2. Finances – For many these are sorely stretched, and the responsibilities of everything from safeguarding to built heritage take investment. Some of these</li></ol> |

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|    | <p>decisions are national, others more local. The generous mutuality of the early church in Acts should guide our decisions.</p> <p>3. Globalisation, including AI and the environment – we live in an increasingly complex and unstable world where money and power and concern for perceived limited resources are hotly contested. Addressing these concerns as nations and communities with wisdom and generosity needs discernment and confidence, and we must speak into society to influence the decisions made. In such uncertain times people are seeking meaning and comfort. God's love in Christ is both the answer and frame work for addressing the world's ills. We have a responsibility to act on it and share it.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| C4 | <p>What do you feel are the main safeguarding topics for discussion at the General Synod? How would you rate your own understanding of those topics?</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|    | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Independence and trust – we need robust systems of accountability, whilst also ensuring wisdom and understanding of the church's structures and the beliefs and relationships which both benefit and complicate cases when they arise</li> <li>2. Best practice and implementation – many of the church's faults regarding safeguarding have been its handling of cases, not just the abuse. We need to ensure this both improves and meaningful learning from past errors is obtained</li> <li>3. Culture – we need to continue to develop a culture that deters perpetrators, provides safety and comfort for victims and survivors, and prays and works for a world where the evil scourge of abusive desires are not nurtured.</li> <li>4. Theology – we've barely begun to look at the psychological, spiritual and theological impact of abuse and the cultures and beliefs that enable them. This requires a long hard look at our broken humanity and society's contribution to that</li> </ol> <p>As Bishops' Chaplain, I have worked closely with our safeguarding team on historic and current cases. As a trained counsellor, I have supported victims of abuse. I am not an expert on the NST, but overall I think I have an higher than average understanding of the issues and can contribute meaningfully.</p> |
| 5  | <p>Do you recognise the key structure of the parish and priest as the bedrock of local ministry and mission in the Guildford Diocese and the Church of England?</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|    | <p>Yes, this is the foundation of our polity and ecclesiology. Christ commands us to love God and neighbour. The service to the nation of the parochial system embeds this in our very structures. It is an amazing and humbling responsibility and I delight in the gift and opportunity it provides.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

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| 6 | What is your view on maintaining a church in every parish when many are struggling financially?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|   | The principle is important. Some rationalisation is no doubt prudent, as the accidents of history have meant that not every church is best placed to serve the current patterns of population spread. As per question 2, I believe the witness of Acts regarding generous mutuality means in both finances and other practical resources, we need to share and support one another. I think there is much to commend this being done at a mixture of deanery and diocesan levels, as well as discerned prudence regarding national distributions from both the Archbishops' Council and the Church Commissioners. I do not believe in the worldly understanding of 'success', and it is overly simplistic, and a prosperity gospel, to suggest that apparently flourishing churches are the only places where God's blessing lies. We need to do better at discerning how best to support parishes which are struggling. |
| 7 | Given the previous question, what thoughts or concerns do you have about the choice of central funding for limited focal projects or a model of funding towards the dioceses in support of all parishes?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|   | I am not convinced this is an either/or question, but there is a need for both/and. I think the majority of funding should be towards the parishes and welcome many of the insights and input of Save the Parish. However, specific projects for carefully discerned ministries to special groups should also get support, provided there are identified pathways for ongoing discipling and either eventual incorporation into the wider church, for the maturing of the mission into meaningful church communities.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 8 | How would you solve the burden of expensive church building maintenance costs?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|   | The loss of the exemption from VAT was a huge blow to the funding of historic church building costs. A new deal with government needs to be developed that acknowledges the contribution of the church to society on so many levels. Other European countries do this in a variety of ways, and anyone appraised of the facts, in justice, would support some kind of solution being found.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 9 | Should a candidate for General Synod who threatens to redirect parish share to the Ephesian Fund, withdraw their candidacy? Why or why not?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|   | It deeply saddens me that a small minority believe they can ascertain the authenticity of faith of others on matters that are non-credal, i.e. not part of the historic orthodox faith of the last 2000 as evinced in the Creeds. The New Testament consistently calls us to unity and non-judgement of our siblings in Christ. There are many profound evils                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

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|  | in this world, and we are distracted from the need for our united voice in addressing them. If such a candidate stands, they do so on their own conscience, but I would beg transparency and their openness to challenge on how they can truly participate in the functioning of the institution of the Church if they are simultaneously campaigning for its effective dismantling. |
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### **Doctrinal and Theological**

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| 10 | In what ways does the doctrine of original sin (as defined in article 9) influence your wider theology and ethics?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|    | It is a profound motivator to share the gospel of God's loving forgiveness and healing, by his grace, through the incarnation, ministry, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, in accordance with the creeds. None of the articles are held in singularity, but alongside each other. Article 10, on freewill, reminds us of God's grace, whilst similarly article 11, on justification through faith (though we must not make faith itself a work), and article 12, on good works, as being the fruits of faith. Together these speak deeply of the heart of the gospel, which is the bedrock for my theology and ethics. As to the specific reference to 'lust of the flesh', I think could equally translate as mortal desires (sarkos being our bodily mortality, and Christ's use of 'lust' in the Sermon on the Mount reflects a breadth of meaning, and not simply regarding sexual desire). Money, sex and power, and so much more, easily distract us from the call to follow Christ's way of self-giving love and to liberate the oppressed (as per the Beatitudes). My ethics follow these core gospel principles. |
| 11 | Thomas Aquinas defined love as "to love anything is nothing else but to will good to that thing." (Summa Theologica 1.20.2, c.f. Romans 12:9). Do you agree with this definition? If so, how would you define the word <i>good</i> (particularly but not only moral goodness), and practically what does it mean to will good when loving God or our neighbour?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|    | I would start my definition for love with the example of Christ in his self-giving on the cross, and the vindication of the resurrection. 1 Corinthians 13 reiterates that in its exhortation to selfless action (love is not simply a feeling). I take Aquinas in his use of 'bonum - good' to have the Latinate sense of beneficence, and thus blessing to others, and so being for their benefit and flourishing. However, just as I lean to the seeing faith gifting us contentment, but not guaranteeing happiness, I would say that wishing good for our neighbour may hope for positive experiences in life – be that good health, relationships, avoiding poverty, oppression and war – but at the same time, goodness in the sense of the blessing of God, may mean knowing him and his                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

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|  | <p>love even in adversity, pain or sadness, and not a guarantee that such times may be avoided.</p> <p>Regarding willing good towards God, I cannot add to or benefit God in any way. Rather, my love to God is through my worship, recognising God as God, and opening my heart to his will and his Spirit to work in my life, to love/serve him and others.</p> |
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### **Mission and Ministry**

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| 12 | <p>What is the most significant change to the structure/strategy of the Church of England that will allow more people to come to know Jesus?</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|    | <p>The CofE has approximately 12,500 parishes and 16,000 churches. It does not have a command-and-control structure. Its structure – the parish system – is its blessing to the nation, and its responsibility to God and neighbour of loving service. In that sense, its structure needs not change but rather is a reminder of its duties.</p> <p>As to strategy, wisdom and discernment at national level can provide resources, encouragement and some best practice based on evidence. I do not believe we are not trying hard enough. I do not believe there is any kind of quick fix. Alpha is great but that doesn't mean everyone should do it. Any growth is by the grace of the Spirit. What we do need, is encouragement, support, and empathy. Resourcing parishes fairly, loving enthusiasm for each other's different charisms, provides encouragement which energises mission. I fear we don't do this enough, and sometimes only the select few get input, which lowers morale, weakening mission. We need to follow Tertullian's astonished pagans' observation 'see how these Christians love one another'. That would be the greatest witness we could actually do, would lead to encouragement and action, and could inspire the conversion of the nation.</p> |
| 13 | <p>Why does it appear that other denominations are able to attract children and youth more than the Church of England?</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|    | <p>I fear this is rather a broad generalisation and not particularly helpful or meaningful, and easily comes from confirmation bias. It's not a competition! And we should delight that people are coming to faith, wherever that might be, even if we believe that charisms and theology of the CofE might be a real gift to people. I am also conscious that although some patterns of faith may be initially attractive, the depth and foundations of Anglican theology and ecclesiology, longer term provide a bedrock and support for faith which possibly some may eventually find lacking in the exciting but more experiential non-denominational churches. The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few. We should not be worrying about other churches' missional</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

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|    | activities, but simply rejoice in those coming to faith, learn and share with our siblings in other denominations, and get on with the task before us.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 14 | Care for Creation is part of the Church's marks of mission. How do you feel about the net-zero targets for 2030?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|    | The early chapters of Genesis are the foundational texts for knowing of God's loving care for all creation and his good desires for its flourishing. A flourishing world enables the flourishing of people, as its resources are shared equitably and we remain in balance. The net-zero targets are not arbitrary, but discerned as for the blessing of all creation. Much needs to happen at both the micro and macro level. There will always be pressing needs for the poor and the oppressed, but this does not need to be an either/or situation. We need our government to be bold and confident in seeking to establish world justice which includes properly addressing climate change. Churches have a part to play in this as part of society. |
| 15 | What are your thoughts on encouraging more people to enter the church as trainee ordinands?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|    | The evidence is clear that where there are priests, the growth follows. We also need to encourage and resource the laity. Releasing the vocations of all is important for the flourishing of God's people. More ordinands would be wonderful, but it must be through careful discernment, as we've seen where that can go wrong, and this is not simply about numbers. We do also need to consider clergy wellbeing, and prosaic matters like the stipend and pension, strategic deployment and diocesan support structures are important considerations in this whole package if we are to encourage more people to this sacrificial calling.                                                                                                            |

### **Inclusivity**

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| 16 | Are you aware of the Racial Justice Covenant in place for the Guildford Diocese, and can you make a statement about your recognition of the aim of the covenant and your support?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|    | The Great Commission, Pentecost and the mission to the gentiles in Acts, show the gospel imperative for Christ's longing to draw all people to himself. It is far too easy for the Church of England to rest on the laurels of establishment and institution, and not truly serve all in its parishes and communities, and to fairly reflect the populations in which it exists. The RJC is an essential reminder of the need to commit ourselves to being the church for all people, and that we need to be open to change and inclusion, |

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|    | to listening and, at times, repentance. I wholeheartedly support and commit to increasing the diversity of the church, and playing my part in that.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 17 | How will you encourage a Church of England where each parish can foster a balanced and informed understanding of inclusivity, creating a culture where differing perspectives can be expressed openly, and where everyone feels genuinely heard, seen and valued?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|    | I have a track-record of engaging in inclusivity and participating in developing mutual understanding and working for a church where all can flourish. As a tutor at St Martha's, and a regular speaker in a variety of church contexts, I have taught and shared the diversity of theological stances on diversity and inclusion. This demonstrates the respect I hold for the range of theological convictions and the source of those views, and the concerns each holds. I have also discussed the pastoral implications of how we handle these matters, whether training ordinands and trainee lay ministers, or providing resources for spiritual directors. At a national level, I have participated in the LLF working groups, and contributed to proposals seeking to find a way through for the church on our different stances on gender and sexuality. As God somehow continues to hold us together, we need to learn from each other's convictions, whilst also affirming our shared faith in Christ and how this, even in the face of profound difference, must remain central to our fellowship in him.                                                            |
| 18 | What do you think the Church of England needs to do differently if we are to engage those who have experienced the church to be abusive, homophobic or sexist?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|    | I fear we too often say that we are listening but only want to do so on our own terms. 'You shouldn't feel like that' invalidates individuals' experiences and fails to hear the harm we have caused, even if unintentionally, or because we think there are higher causes. Too often we uncouple beliefs from pastoral practice, or allow our praxis to be unpastoral, thus undermining its need to be loving (1 Corinthians 13:1-3 – but if I do not have love...). We should always exhort and encourage faith, and God promises that the fruits will follow. But that means we are not to judge or determine what those fruits might look like, other than to condemn outright evil. Too often we confuse the sin of brokenness with the sin of evil. Both are deeply lamentable, may even at times be co-mingled, but we need to love people to Christ, not berate them or assume superiority. The Church has institutionally enabled much abuse, homophobia and sexism. We need to work on our unconscious bias. Diversity and inclusion needs to involve those on the receiving end of these horrors, being more present in our communities and decision-making processes. |

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| 19 | How do you think the Church of England can ensure LGBTQI+ people are fully welcomed, valued and able to flourish in the life of the Church?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|    | <p>The church just needs to get on with fully authorising the Prayers of Love and Faith, which are for those who want and need them, whilst there is no compunction on those who in good conscience do not want to use them (as we do with marriage in church after divorce). Likewise, priests should be allowed to enter into same-sex marriages, as a guard against concupiscence (as per the BCP) and as a matter of social justice and equity (it is shameful that LGBTQI+ ordained persons are not allowed by the church to have full next of kin rights, to their extreme detriment in some countries). We cannot keep saying LGBTQI+ Christians bear fruits of the Spirit whilst also denying them the ability to play their full part in church communities. These two steps are basic, just and enable individuals to maintain their personal conscience. Denying them to others sadly suggests a theology of taint, an unworthy, judgemental stance.</p> |
| 20 | Given that faithful Christians interpret Scripture differently on difficult and contested questions, how would you seek to maintain unity within diversity when they disagree?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|    | <p>We need better and more comprehensive teaching on both our differences and on our unity. The history and different emphases of different principles leading to the variety of views needs to be taught, understood and respected. We also need to share better the importance of how the early church understood difference but were exhorted to unity around the cross of Christ. This is a function of the bishop and senior ministers in the church. They have thus far, failed to do this. In particular, Christ issues the invitation and command to his table. To not participate in communion with fellow Christians who have confessed, been absolved, and declared their faith in the creeds, ignores this foundational rite and duty of the church.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 21 | Do you believe that women and men are treated equally in our churches? If you were elected to the General Synod, what changes would you like to see which would support women's ministry?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|    | <p>No, of course not. Just as in law and society, we have laws regarding equality, actual behaviour and social change are slow to follow. It is far too easy to say that because women can now be ordained that equality has been achieved. The distribution of women ministers throughout the church consistently demonstrates that change is slow. I do not believe that unconscious bias training is working sufficiently well. Systemic institutional and social barriers create the conditions in which women's experiences get limited and other skills and experience are diminished. The review of</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

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|  | the Five Guiding Principles is too slow. Churches should have to declare their stance on women and women's ministry. Part-time church roles need equitable pay. The hours related to alleged % FTE roles are exploitative. |
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### **Equal Marriage and Marriage Law**

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| 22 | Marriage laws in the UK are being reformed, with the proposed change moving the system from licensed buildings to licensed officiants. Should clergy be permitted to conduct weddings in any dignified and safe location?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|    | I am undecided on this. It saddens me that far too many people choose secular weddings owing to inflexibility on Christian services, but at the same time, the value of making vows in a place hallowed by prayer retains a precious resonance that is a blessing perhaps people do not always fully appreciate. I am cautious regarding developing a pick and mix, consumerist approach to weddings, and this possibility makes priests available for hire, disconnecting from the parish system. However, there are locations other than churches that are no doubt suitable, it is good that people want God to bless how they hope to celebrate their love and commitment, and God is everywhere!                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 23 | How do we resolve the apparent conflict between making all people feel included and welcome whilst holding firm to the Bible's and CofE's historic position on marriage, and so allow the CofE to move on from endless debates about sexuality?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|    | <p>Which position? There are multiple forms of marriage in the bible (including polygamy, enforced marriage of rape victims and POWs, and no religious rite is documented), whilst marriage as we currently know it (witnesses, a defined location, priest, and the consent of the couple, not the bride's father and the bridegroom), was only solidified in the Hardwicke Act, 1753. The evolution from patriarchal property deal to a loving partnership has taken centuries.</p> <p>The only consistency has been the exemplar of God's covenant love and faithfulness towards humanity. We fail at inhabiting this. No marriage is perfect, and whilst legal marriage provides some security, plenty of unmarried relationships hold some marriages to shame in their fidelity and self-giving. Also, lest we forget, abuse is most common in families and marital rape was legal until 1991.</p> <p>I adore marriage's wonderful ideal, but fidelity is only fulfilled in God's perfect love towards humanity. I fear marriage has become an idol, as opposed to the school for virtue it offers. Some single and civilly partnered persons embody its virtues excellently, as it is faithfulness, not marriage per se to which God exhorts us. Focusing on marriage's charisms, would bless and encourage people far more.</p> |

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| 24 | If you were an Incumbent, would you allow an assistant priest or curate in your parish to use the Prayers of Love and Faith if, in conscience, they felt able to do so?                                              |
|    | Yes. And anyone not doing so, would be acting against the agreed position of the Church of England and wrongly restricting their fellow minister's right to exercise their conscience.                               |
| 25 | Would you support a member of your congregation who was in a same sex marriage being on your PCC, or leading worship or children's/youth work in your church?                                                        |
|    | Absolutely, with the same provisos as any other member, that they were discerned as called to it, suitably qualified and skilled, and had a clear DBS and appropriate safeguarding training for the particular task. |