



Dear Parish Safeguarding Officers,

This newsletter gives you updates on some of the safeguarding work which has been happening over the last year as well as letting you know about some new developments for 2016. I have contact with many of you and continue to be hugely impressed and very grateful for the levels of commitment shown to keeping safe those who are most vulnerable within our church communities.

Thank you all for your ongoing work.

*Kate Singleton (Diocesan
Safeguarding Adviser)*

Safeguarding training: 2015 statistics

In 2015, the Diocese delivered a comprehensive safeguarding training offer to clergy, those in authorised ministry and to a range of other church officers, including paid staff and volunteers. 1343 individuals attended these courses from September 2014 to December 2015. Evaluations completed by participants continued to be overwhelmingly positive, with people particularly valuing case study materials and the opportunities to share experiences and good practice from local settings. The Diocese was involved in piloting national safeguarding training materials during 2015 which specifically centred on the course aimed at clergy, Readers and SPAs. Senior staff training was delivered in June 2015 in conjunction with the National Safeguarding Team. The Diocesan based training programme (largely delivered by myself and Steve Short) is complemented by parish based sessions, usually delivered by a small number of voluntary trainers. I am very grateful to all those involved in the training programme.

From September 2014 to December 2015:

- 39 courses were delivered as part of the Diocesan safeguarding training programme to 727 participants
- 25 safeguarding courses were delivered to parishes or deaneries involving 616 participants

The provision of effective training is crucial in the promotion of good safeguarding practice and the prevention of harm.

Safeguarding Reference Group

At the end of 2015, Chris Smart became the new Chair of the Safeguarding Reference Group. Chris took over the role from Judy Wright who had chaired the SRG for several years. We are enormously grateful for the time and commitment shown by Judy in her role as Chair.

Chris is a former senior Police officer within the Metropolitan Police Service with extensive experience in safeguarding. Chris was already a member of the Reference Group and so has an excellent understanding of the issues relating to safeguarding within the Diocese. The SRG is responsible for overseeing safeguarding policy and practice across the Diocese.

More safeguarding statistics!

In 2015, the safeguarding team saw an increase in new casework referrals. 155 new referrals were received by the safeguarding team during 2015.

The new cases range from the provision of advice to parishes where there may be concerns about the circumstances of individuals within congregations, to risk assessment of those individuals with blemished DBS checks, to serious safeguarding situations where concerns have been reported about the conduct of church officers.

37% of new cases concerned children and young people

29% of new cases related to an adult who may be at risk of harm

15% of new cases related to a concern about domestic abuse

18% of new referrals related to a blemished DBS check

Planned work for 2016

- Revised national guidelines will be integrated into a new version of *A Safe Church* with additional project resourcing to the team to complete this.
- All remaining parishes will be set up to use the online DBS system.
- The Diocese of Southwark will have its safeguarding arrangements independently audited as part of a national quality assurance programme in October 2016 – more information to follow in the next update.

Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (for all concerns of harm to children or vulnerable adults):

Kate Singleton
Trinity House,
4 Chapel Court,
London SE1 1HW
kate.singleton@
southwark.anglican.org
W 020 7939 9423
M 07982 279713.

Assistant Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser:

Steve Short
c/o Trinity House (as above)
steve.short@
southwark.anglican.org
W 020 7939 9423
M 07982 279713.

Safeguarding Administrator:

Christine Daly
Trinity House (as above)
christine.daly@
southwark.anglican.org
W 020 7939 9476.

Diocesan Disclosure and Barring Service Administrator (for management of DBS vetting process):

Uzma Osinibi
Trinity House (as above)
uzma.osinibi@
southwark.anglican.org
W 020 7939 9402.

Diocesan website link:

<http://www.southwark.anglican.org/wat/safeguarding-people>

Parish safeguarding Audit 2016

You will remember that parishes were asked to complete a safeguarding self-audit in 2013 and 2014. There was no audit last year although parishes were asked to check progress against 2014 action plans. We had anticipated issuing an audit tool late in 2015.

However, we were advised in the autumn that the National Safeguarding Team (NST) wanted to undertake a nation-wide safeguarding self-assessment exercise at parish level. Given how busy everyone is, we didn't want to risk duplication, so we have been waiting to hear more. The latest word from the NST is that the questions have now been agreed and they are working with the Church of England Research and Statistics team to determine how the process will work. I've not got a clear timescale, but expect to find out more at the Annual Safeguarding Conference which I will be attending in early February. As soon as we have some information on the process and timescales, we will let you know.

DBS update - 2015

2015 has been an eventful year in the Diocese with regard to Disclosure and Barring Service applications and administration. In the summer, we bade a fond farewell to long time DBS administrator, Linda Craven and in September, Linda's replacement, Uzma Osinibi joined us as the new Diocesan DBS administrator.

2015 also has seen major changes with the introduction of our online DBS service, and with changes at the DBS itself.

Introduction and use of the Online DBS Service

In 2015, the Diocese implemented considerable changes to the manner in which it conducts criminal record checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service. A review of arrangements for DBS checks was undertaken in 2014 and it was agreed that the Diocese should prepare to move away from its use of paper based applications and seek to engage another umbrella organisation which could take full advantage of the online facilities available. Arrangements for online DBS checks using an independent provider (APCS – Access Personal Checking Service) were piloted in early 2015 and by December 2015, 182 parishes had been set up so that they could use the system online. This number continues to rise, with a further 10 parishes registering in the first half of January alone.

The feedback from those using the online system has broadly been very positive. Parish Safeguarding Officers note the speed and simplicity of the system, not to mention the relief of not having forms returned to them through the post due to errors or omissions.

The vast majority of checks are processed far more quickly than previously and the risks associated with sending sensitive information through the post have been removed. Through a specialist helpline, APCS have been able to provide support directly to named officers in parishes as well as to key staff in the Diocese. Where necessary, they have escalated those checks which are subject to delay, although some issues remain in relation to a small number of checks delayed with individual Police forces.

The aim for 2016 is to ensure that all remaining parishes are set up so that they can use the online system and the need for paper based applications will then be removed entirely. If your parish is currently not using the online system, please do contact Uzma (Diocesan DBS administrator) via uzma.osinibi@southwark.anglican.org to find out how to register. The whole process only takes a few minutes and registration is often completed within a few days of sending your details.

For those of you using the online service, there are a few important items to note:

- Checks for **volunteers or paid workers** – When you are verifying ID on the application page, you will be also asked if the post is paid or voluntary. Currently, it has been set as a default tick for volunteers so only untick the box if you are applying for someone in a paid post. The DBS application fee is waived for volunteers so it is important we get this right.
- **Documents to send to applicants** – Please ensure that when you issue an applicant with a user ID number, you also attach the following three documents: Guidance notes, ID checking list and a Confidential Declaration form (the same one you would have been sending with paper applications). The latter is a key part of the safeguarding process and should be kept in a secure location with other forms used in the recruitment process.

DBS update service and portability

With the fairly recent introduction of the DBS's update service, we are having an increasing number of queries about portability.

The DBS **update service** enables applicants (for an annual subscription paid by the individual) to have their disclosure certificate kept up to date on line. Employers are then able to verify the status of the disclosure certificate by logging in with details provided to them by applicants. This is of great benefit to those applicants who have multiple roles where a DBS check is required and it also saves employers time and resources in requesting a new application.

However, we must work within national Church of England guidelines which set out some clear criteria for portability of checks in the church. This means that even if people have subscribed to the update service, certain conditions apply when we consider whether a new check is needed for a church role.

Please do get in touch with Uzma to discuss whether an existing DBS certificate can be accepted. (Further details can be found on pages 11-12 of the guidance on the link below.)

A final reminder that people should not start in any role until the DBS check has been completed. Where a check is blemished, please make contact with Uzma, Kate or Steve to discuss the next steps required.

Please find attached a link to the current national Safer Recruitment Practice Guidance (2015) which includes a number of templates to support your safe recruitment practice:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2254766/safeguarding%20practice%20guidance-%20safer%20recruitment.pdf>

We are currently in the process of reviewing A Safe Church to reflect all these changes and clearly set out guidance as to when portability (both within and outside a Parish) can be applied. More information on this will be coming out in the next few months. Meanwhile, if you have any queries, please contact Uzma Osinibi at uzma.osinibi@southwark.anglican.org and/or 020 7939 9402.

Please see the attached latest guidance on Safeguarding Children in Towers.

Resources

Jill Gregson, one of our voluntary trainers met Mark Healey, Lambeth Hate Crime Prevention Coordinator at a Faiths Together in Lambeth meeting recently. He is hope to make contacts in all faith communities in Lambeth so that he can get information to them, and also to be able to liaise with anyone reporting hate crime that is faith based.

If you are based in a parish within Lambeth and want to find out more, Mark's contact details are: mhealey1@lambeth.gov.uk