



Dear Parish Safeguarding Officers, Incumbents and All who receive this newsletter,

We realise this is a very difficult and worrying period for everyone and I want to start by thanking you for the thought and care which is being given by so many of you to supporting the most vulnerable at this time. This is a brief newsletter which focuses on safely supporting the work of our churches as we all respond to Covid 19. I don't need to tell you that the situation is changing very quickly so we will do our best to keep you updated over the coming weeks. We continue to offer a safeguarding advice and support service.

In this issue we include an update on how to contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Team as we work remotely, information about the current position with regards to safeguarding training, some updates on temporary changes to ID checking arrangements for DBS checks which have been introduced and some general advice and helpful websites.

This is also probably the last newsletter I will be writing as Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser before I leave at the end of next month to take up a new role in a national sports charity. It seems strange to be leaving the Diocese in such extraordinary times but I want to thank all of you for the incredible support you have given me and the expanded safeguarding team over the last six years as we have worked together to safeguard children young people and vulnerable adults in worshipping communities across the Diocese. I have met and worked alongside many, many people whose commitment to the well-being and safety of others has been incredible. It has been a real privilege to work with so many talented and caring people at the Cathedral and across the Diocese, sadly far too many to name here although I would just like to mention my wonderful colleagues in the Diocesan Safeguarding Team. I'd be grateful if you could offer them your support in this period of transition.

Recruitment is now underway for my successor so if you know of people whom you think may be interested in applying please do point them towards the advert on the Diocesan website at <https://southwark.anglican.org/about-us/vacancies/diocesan-safeguarding-adviser>

Please do take care of yourselves and each other in the coming months and thank you again, to you all.

Kate

Kate Singleton

Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser

Contacting the Diocesan Safeguarding Team during the coming weeks

The current public health situation means that the Diocesan Safeguarding Team is working remotely from various locations. As always, we will aim to respond as soon as possible.

All members of the team are regularly checking for voicemail messages left on their landline numbers. In office hours, the safeguarding advisers can also be contacted via their mobile phones, numbers are listed on the last page of this newsletter. We are currently able to access our emails.

If you need to discuss an **urgent** safeguarding matter out of office hours please contact 07982 279713 and leave your name and contact details. One of the team will call you back as soon as possible.

If you have immediate concerns about the safety of a child or adult, please contact the Police via 999 and your local authority Children or Adults Services Department.

Clergy, parish safeguarding officers and lay leaders are reminded to pass on any safeguarding allegations, disclosures or concerns they receive about church officers to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser or one of the Assistant Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers as soon as possible and within 24 hours.

Please remember that we are available for consultation and advice on any safeguarding matter relevant to your church. Please do be in touch with us!

Safeguarding and helping local communities in relation to coronavirus

We have received a number of queries from parishes about recruiting and deploying volunteers to help the most vulnerable who are isolated from their communities.

We are all trying to find creative ways to help in these very uncertain times. Our advice is that churches only deploy those people who have been safely recruited to offer support to the vulnerable. There may be other helpful tasks which can be fulfilled by others who have not been safely recruited. People must be mindful of infection risks and carefully follow government health guidelines in relation to Covid19 and social distancing.

We are awaiting some guidance from the National Safeguarding Team on some of these issues and we will send that out as soon as we can after we receive it.

In the meantime, if people contact your church who are not known to you asking to help, the advice is to put those people in touch with local charities which are co-ordinating neighbourhood arrangements.

Important information about Safeguarding Training courses

Our diocesan and parish safeguarding courses have now been cancelled until further notice and participants have been informed. We are not making arrangements for any parish courses until we are sure they can be delivered in a way which is safe for all. We need to comply with government advice on social distancing.

Anyone needing to complete or renew training is invited to complete the online modules available on Basic Awareness and Foundation. When an online course has been completed, Carol Rimmer, our safeguarding training administrator will be able to see the details on the training portal and add it to your training record.

Online Safeguarding Training Instructions

The link below takes you to the Church of England training portal and to the registration and login page.

<https://safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org/>

On the right hand side, click on 'Create new account' and enter your details.

When you enter your parish details, please put the location as well as your church's name, e.g. St Mary, Brixton, as we need to distinguish between different churches of the same name.

Once you have completed the registration information you will receive an email to the email address you have used to sign up. Please note, that this may take a couple of days to arrive.

It will contain a link which you follow to confirm your registration. It will take you back to the main page and will ask you to log in. You then see a series tabs at the top of the page, select 'Online courses' then select either 'Safeguarding Basic Awareness' or 'Safeguarding Foundations'.

For further information or any queries relating to safeguarding training, please contact :

Carol Rimmer, Safeguarding Training Administrator, tel: 020 7939 9478, e-mail:

carol.rimmer@southwark.anglican.org

PCR2 Update

The work on preparing for the Past Cases Review 2 continues and remains a priority for the Safeguarding Team. We now have a PCR2 Project Co-ordinator, Bryan Thomas, in post and welcome Bryan to the team.

The extended deadline for parishes to return details of known safeguarding incidents or concerns passed on 23rd March 2020, and we would like to thank all parishes who have undertaken this important task.

We urge any parishes who have not made a return to submit their Table 1a as soon as possible, even if there are no cases to report.

The team remain available to respond to any queries or issues relating to the requirements of the Past Cases Review and can be contacted on pcr2@southwark.anglican.org.

Temporary DBS ID Checking guidance during the coronavirus

Temporary changes to ID checking guidelines were issued by DBS on the 19th of March as a result of the coronavirus outbreak. These temporarily relax the ID checking arrangements enabling new checks and renewals to take place without risking infection to the applicant or ID checker. It remains important that all those we have involved in working with vulnerable individuals across the Diocese remain subject to the relevant safeguarding checks.

This guidance is from the gov.uk website:

“Due to current measures that have been put in place as a result of the coronavirus outbreak, we’re aware that organisations are having difficulty following the DBS ID checking guidance.

Currently, when validating ID documents, it is best practice to carry the examination out face-to-face with a live video link as an alternative method. Under the current guidance, the ID checker must be in physical possession of the original documents so they can be checked for indicators of fraud.

As the public is being advised to work from home where possible, this is causing difficulties in receiving the physical documents and is delaying applications, and in some cases, preventing applications from being submitted.

To ensure that the necessary DBS checks can still be carried out, the DBS standard and enhanced ID checking guidance will be changed for a temporary period.”

The temporary measures will allow either:

- ID documents to be viewed over video link by the ID checker or
- scanned images of the ID documents can be used

* Please note: If the application is for a new applicant (rather than a renewal), then the applicant will be required to present the original versions of these documents when they first attend their employment or volunteering role.

The full text can be found by following this link <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/covid-19-changes-to-standard-and-enhanced-id-checking-guidelines>

Please contact Uzma Osinibi for more information should you require it.

Important information relating to Bell Ringing Group - The Lilliputters Guild

We have been given the following information by the Provincial Safeguarding Adviser at Lambeth Palace.

The Lilliputters Guild is a church bell ringing group with no home tower or County. It is made up of a collection of young ringers from several associations across the country with many of the members under the age of 16. The Guild falls under the Winchester and Portsmouth Diocesan Guild of Bell Ringers, however, they travel extensively round the country to various churches and cathedrals to use their bell towers. This has necessitated overnight stays.

There are some serious safeguarding concerns that have been raised. If your church has been visited or may be visited by the group please contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Team prior to any visit taking place and we will liaise with the National Safeguarding Team.

Useful Websites

Coronavirus: Diocesan information and guidance for parishes:
<https://southwark.anglican.org/coronavirus/>

Coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance for churches:
<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches>

Coronavirus (COVID-19): UK government response
<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response>

Please also check your local council websites for information and local support services.

Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser:

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