



Dear Parish Safeguarding Officers,

I hope that you all had a good summer and have enjoyed the lovely late summer weather – from the enquiries we were receiving, it certainly sounded as though parishes were organising a wide range of trips and events over the summer months. The Safeguarding Team has had a busy start to the autumn – we have received lots of requests for parish-based training events so are delivering those alongside our extensive diocesan safeguarding programme. It's great to get the opportunity to meet people from across the Diocese at training events and to hear from you about the preventative work which is happening in parishes. I must thank our small group of voluntary trainers, without whom we would not be able to deliver so many training opportunities.

We continue to receive increasing numbers of enquiries, requests for support and referrals and in response to this demand, our small team is increasing – details below. In the coming weeks the safeguarding arrangements in the Diocese will be independently audited and we look forward to working with the auditors in reviewing what works well and identifying where we need to develop further. The outcome of the audit will be reported in our next newsletter.

*Kate Singleton
(Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser)*

New Assistant Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser – introducing Louise Vernon

In spring of this year, agreement was given for the recruitment of a second Assistant Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser to enable us to respond to increased training demands, requests for support and advice and to improve our responses to casework referrals. Following interviews held in June, we have offered the full-time post of Assistant DSA to Louise Vernon. Louise will be formally joining the team in the coming weeks and we are delighted to be welcoming her. Louise brings extensive experience from an education perspective and a great deal of enthusiasm and commitment to this important role. She will be based at Trinity House and work alongside Steve Short, our part-time ADSA.

Louise writes:

It is very exciting and a privilege to be joining the Diocesan Safeguarding Team. I bring over 20 years of experience from a career in education, 10 years as part of school leadership and management, in particular in the areas I'm most passionate about; Safeguarding and Inclusion. I look forward to continuing to support children, their families and those who are vulnerable, meeting and working in partnership with all across our parishes.

Safer recruitment update

Online DBS checks

2016 has seen an impressive rise in the number of parishes now registered for online DBS check and so far this year nearly 1600 applications have been made via our online provider APCS! Almost all parishes are now registered to undertake checks online with only a few now using paper forms. If you haven't yet registered your parish for online DBS checks, please do contact Uzma Osinibi, Diocesan DBS Administrator via uzma.osinibi@southwark.anglican.org to find out how to register. Registration only takes a few minutes and a parish can be set up to use the system within a couple days of sending details.

Christine Daly and Uzma conducted a number of training sessions for PSOs on how the online DBS process works at our three Episcopal Area Offices – Kingston, Croydon and Woolwich. Those who attended found this training beneficial and commented upon how effective and simple the online DBS process is. For those who were unable to attend and wish to have a copy of the handouts (screen shots of the application pages and ID verification page) that were distributed on the day, please contact Christine or Uzma.

Parish Safeguarding Audit 2016

Several parishes have been asking whether and when they should be undertaking a self-audit of their safeguarding arrangements. We'd been expecting a national parish self-audit exercise to be launched this year but that has been put on hold. It's now been some time since parishes in Southwark were asked to self-assess their safeguarding arrangements. We'd hoped to be sending you the parish safeguarding audit for 2016 in the summer using a revised format but it's not quite ready so it will be issued by the end of the year. We have been developing an online questionnaire with the aim of making it more straightforward to you to complete and easier for us to collate some of the findings so that we can understand how to best support you. Sorry for the delay on this but Christine Daly will be in touch with PSOs following the Diocesan Audit – see below!

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Assistant Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers:

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Louise Vernon
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Safeguarding Administrator:

Christine Daly
Trinity House (as above)
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W 020 7939 9476.

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

Uzma Osinibi
Trinity House (as above)
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W 020 7939 9402.

Resources

Why your church needs to know about Pokémon GO

<http://cofecomms.tumblr.com/post/147395478962/why-your-church-needs-to-know-about-pokémon-go>

A resource to help local churches do some theological thinking around safeguarding has been published by the Faith and Order Commission (FAOC). Approved by the House of Bishops in May, the document is aimed at Christian communities who want to consider how the Church can speak about the gospel when facing the reality of sexual abuse, both in the communities it serves and as a crime carried out by its own members and officers. It is intended to be used with clergy, laity, staff and volunteers for both formal and informal teaching including training sessions, church groups and sermons. Hard copies are being sent to all clergy in Southwark diocese in October and it is available online via

<https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2535755/theologicalresourcefaocweb.pdf>

Safeguarding Records

Arrangements for the storage of safeguarding records in parishes vary widely depending on the different administrative arrangements in place. The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) has specifically requested that organisations retain any documents which may be relevant to the inquiry. Here is a brief reminder about parish safeguarding records:

1. Safeguarding records should only be seen by those who need to have proper access to them.
2. There should be a written protocol about who has access to the records and how records are accessed in an emergency or in planned or unplanned absences of the record holder.
3. Paper files should be contained in a lockable fire proof cabinet.
4. Electronic files should be password protected and backed up regularly. A secure server is preferable. Systems should be virus protected. Data must never be stored on pen drives or other removable media unless encrypted.
5. Great care should be taken when scanning paper records so that they retain their authenticity. This is especially the case when records are required in criminal or civil cases.
6. Make passwords hard to guess (6-12 characters in length, at least one capital letter and at least one symbol).
7. Sending information via e-mail is quick and easy but is open to the risk that someone other than the intended recipient can intercept it. Assume that it could be read by anyone (and remember that many people involved in Church use personal or family email addresses). This will help to ensure that you take appropriate care both in the content of the email and any attachments. Take care to check the address before sending it.
8. Personal data in relation to safeguarding is likely to be classified as 'sensitive personal data' under the Data Protection Act because it may relate to an individual's sexual life or the commission or alleged commission of an offence. Greater care is required when handling sensitive personal data and you should seek professional advice (e.g. from the Diocesan safeguarding Team or Diocesan Registrar) if you are ever unsure of how to manage such data.
9. Emails containing safeguarding personal information should ideally be in an approved encrypted format. Most organisations are moving to this level of security.
10. If full email encryption is not available, email file attachments should be always protected by an approved encryption (password protected) method.
11. No letter containing confidential information and identifying details should be sent other than by 'Special Delivery' (which tracks documents online together with signed proof of delivery). Always use the double envelope safeguard. The relevant information should be contained within an inner envelope marked confidential but no classification details shown on the outer envelope.
12. Professional advice (IT and Legal) should always be obtained in relation to digitisation of old records.
13. Safeguarding record retention in the Church of England – we are updating *A Safe Church* in line with current practice guidance and advice coming from the IICSA. If in doubt about whether to retain records, please consult with the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.

The following principles are always helpful when considering recording safeguarding information:

Proportionality, Accountability, Transparency, Accessibility, Accuracy, Security

Independent Audit of Diocesan Safeguarding Arrangements

A national quality assurance programme is currently underway within the Church of England, reviewing and evaluating current safeguarding arrangements. Each diocese is having its safeguarding arrangements independently audited as part of this rolling programme with the audits taking place over a three day period. The audits are being undertaken by SCIE (the Social Care Institute for Excellence). **The Diocese of Southwark's audit has been scheduled to take place between 11th and 13th October.** The audit reports are being published on the Church of England and diocesan websites.

There are a number of components to the audit – the two auditors will review case files held by the Diocesan Safeguarding Team to assess how effectively we respond to different safeguarding concerns. The Diocese's recruitment practices are reviewed through examination of a number of clergy personal files and also some recruitment files relating to diocesan officers. We are providing a considerable amount of pre-audit documentation to the auditors in advance of their arrival. There are also a number of conversations which take place during the three days with different representatives of the Diocese, including Bishop Christopher, the Diocesan Secretary, Cathedral representatives and members of the Safeguarding Reference Group in which the auditors will explore particular themes from different perspectives.

Our statutory partners (including the Police and local authorities) have been asked to provide feedback on their views of the safeguarding arrangements within the Diocese. Another major component of the audit is a focus group which provides the opportunity for individuals with different parish safeguarding roles across the Diocese to feedback their views and experiences. A wide range of individuals with different roles including PSOs, clergy, Churchwardens, Readers and SPAs will be involved.

At the end of the three days, the auditors will meet with Bishop Christopher and some members of his staff to talk through their findings and consider next steps. We will provide details of the audit findings to you through dissemination of the finalised report.

Thank you to all who are contributing to the audit.

New edition of National Church Practice Guidance on Safer Recruitment

In July the National Safeguarding Team at Church House issued revised Practice Guidance on Safer Recruitment. The link to the full guidance is:
https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2552006/safer_recruitment_practice_guidance_2016.pdf

It includes new guidelines on the portability of DBS certificates and there have been some changes. If someone has an existing clear DBS certificate for a CofE role in the Diocese of Southwark, they will not need to do another new application when applying for a new Church role within the Diocese **provided the existing certificate covers the same/higher level of check and workforce as required by the new role.** This is of great benefit for those who move between roles within the Diocese. It can also benefit those who volunteer across neighbouring parishes.

Please note individuals still **need to show their original certificate** to the disclosure administrator/PSO so to verify that the certificate is clear and at the required level for the new role.

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New edition of national Church Practice Guidance on Safer Recruitment (*continued*)

However, **portability will NO LONGER apply to anyone moving from outside the Church of England into a parish position** - for e.g. a youth worker working for a local authority, or an applicant employed by the NHS wishing to apply for a crèche/Sunday School roles in a parish. In such circumstances, the parish would need to ask for a new DBS check for the applicant **unless the person is already registered with the DBS Update Service**. (For a small annual fee, individuals can register with the DBS update service and for volunteers, it is free of charge. More information on the update service is available at <https://www.gov.uk/dbs-update-service>.)

New Confidential Declaration form

The Practice Guidance contains a revised and updated confidential declaration form (Appendix 5). We are sending out this form along with this newsletter. *Please could you ensure this is the version you issue to applicants when you contact them with all the other information they need to complete their online DBS applications.*

Confidential Declaration forms should be retained by the parish, and are only submitted to the Diocesan Safeguarding team when the applicant discloses relevant information. In those cases, the Confidential Declaration form, along with a note, can be sent to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser in a sealed envelope marked Confidential and will be kept by the Safeguarding Team pending the outcome of the DBS check.

Other useful information

The National Safeguarding Team has developed a **DBS Frequently Asked Questions** document on the following link,
https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2552019/dbs_faq_july_16__002_.pdf

The Practice Guidance includes guides on the **types of activities and roles which are eligible for different levels of criminal record check**.

If you are unsure about which level of check a role would require, please do contact APCS (Access Personal Checking Services) on 0845 643 1145 before submitting your application at the ID verification stage.