

SAFEGUARDING NEWS — October 2019

WELCOME to the tenth issue of the newsletter which brings the latest updates from the Safeguarding Team to all churches and chaplaincies in the Diocese of St Albans.

This issue introduces:

- Guidance in one place for information in relation to DBS
- Updated guidance to reporting Serious Incidents and Safeguarding Serious Incidents to the Charity Commission
- Information from Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board regarding private fostering
- Online Domestic Abuse training offered by the pan Bedfordshire Training Unit
- Mental Health Day promotion



Introduction by Archdeacon Jonathan

Safeguarding now rightly occupies a central place in the life of the church. It is absolutely essential to ensure that people may safely be part of a community of faith. There is no greater responsibility laid on us than this. In this Safeguarding News there is a wealth of important material and information to assist us in discharging our Safeguarding responsibilities diligently and well. Together with guidance given by our dedicated Diocesan Safeguarding Officers there are also many extremely useful and informative links providing further resources. I ask that you read this copy of Safeguarding News carefully and then keep it in a clear and obvious place so as to be able to refer to its contents as need and opportunity arises.

DBS

Criminal records checks are available to help organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors by identifying candidates who may be unsuitable to work with children or other vulnerable members of society. The government agency set up to administer these checks is the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). The DBS's aim is to help employers in England and Wales make safer recruitment decisions. A number of roles, especially those involving children or vulnerable adults, are entitled to a criminal record check. The DBS enables many organisations to access these checks as part of good recruitment practice.

We hope you find the links and advice below, all together in one place, a useful reference and a help to understanding DBS eligibility and checks. Please remember, DBS is only one part of the Safer Recruitment process.

[DBS Information Document](#)

ThirtyOne:Eight, our DBS umbrella body, have recently updated their guidance and this can be found on the diocesan website. Their document *Recruiters guide E-Bulk system from Basics to Enhanced* is extremely useful and gives excellent advice regarding DBS eligibility. Page 30 onwards presents flowcharts for regulated activity for children and adults along with notes and guidance around eligibility for specific roles within church. This document can be found on the link; <https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/recruiters-guide-basics-to-enhanced.pdf>

Please see the other updated documents from our DBS umbrella body 31:8 on our website at <https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/diocese/safeguarding-documents/> under the heading *Recruitment Guidelines*.

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The Church of England also provide information on DBS eligibility and related matters and the following link leads to a *Frequently Asked Questions* information sheet;

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/dbs-faq-february-2017.pdf>

Appendix 8 of the Church of England's Safer Recruitment guidance identifies roles where the activity is seen to be eligible for a criminal record check and gives direction;

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/Church%20of%20England%20role%20%20%28Appendix%208%29%20-%20Safer%20Recruitment.pdf>

DBS Costs

As of 1st October, the DBS reduced their fees on some types of DBS check and these are detailed below.

Basic Disclosures will be charged at the fee set by the DBS of £23 per check plus £5 standard processing fee from ThirtyOne:Eight plus 50p VAT. The fee is the same whether the applicant is a paid worker or volunteer.

The cost of a standard DBS check for a paid worker is £23.

The cost of an enhanced DBS check for a paid worker is £40.

The cost of an enhanced DBS check for a volunteer is free.

In each case there is a £5 processing fee from ThirtyOne:Eight plus 50p VAT

At present in each case, the processing fee is split between the parish and the diocese.

The cost of the DBS check lies with the parish, apart from Clergy, PTO and Readers checks which are completed and paid for by the diocese.

PCC members and DBS checks

Where a PCC sponsors and approves, in its own name, children's work or work with vulnerable adults (e.g. a Youth Club, Sunday school, home visiting scheme for the housebound or a luncheon club for adults with special needs who require assistance with feeding or toileting), **all** PCC members should complete a DBS check.

The need for a check does not apply to all PCCs, only those that sponsor and approve either children's work or work with vulnerable adults.

The trustees do not have to be involved directly with the activity or activities, they simply have to approve them.

The appropriate check in each case would be an enhanced check without barring information.

National guidance says that the decision about which members on a PCC should be checked is left to local determination. The local determination is a diocesan one.

St Albans Diocese have directed that all PCC members who are eligible should have a DBS check and when a PCC undertakes the activities set out above, all members are eligible for a check.

This is in the best interests of safeguarding, is good practice and has already identified individuals who have relevant previous convictions and information of concern held against them which was otherwise unknown.

In the main, it is a deterrent for anyone who has such information or convictions held against them. It also reflects our commitment to make the church the safest place it can be.

A robust application of policies is key to safeguarding. National newspapers and recently the Independent Inquiry into Child Sex Abuse have clearly documented past failings.

Our direction is backed up by the Charities Commission who recommend that trustees ALWAYS obtain a criminal record check when eligible to do so.

ThirtyOne:Eight are aware of our direction and will support such applications.

This direction applies to **all** PCCs whether they are a registered charity or not. PCCs are charities although not all are registered but rather 'exempt' charities, but they are charities nonetheless, and the PCC members are charity trustees.

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Please Remember

ThirtyOne:Eight provide guidance on DBS and DBS eligibility and are pleased to advise any recruiter registered with them on such matters and applications. Please contact them in the first instance if the answer to a particular question is not within this newsletter.

They can be contacted on 0300311111 or at

disclosure@thirtyoneeight.org

It must not be forgotten that only a tiny percentage of those who abuse are caught and still fewer are convicted, so organisations must never rely solely on a criminal record (DBS) check. Criminal record checks, although crucial, remain only one element of safeguarding and the safer recruitment process.



Reporting Safeguarding Serious Incidents to the Charity Commission

You may remember in the last newsletter in May, we introduced new House of Bishop's Guidance in regard to Reporting Safeguarding Serious Incidents. The guidance has since been updated. This change to how reports are made to the Charity Commission, for both safeguarding and non-safeguarding serious incidents, was instigated by the Charity Commission (and not by the Church) and applies to all charities.

The updated Church of England reporting guidance, PCC Factsheet as well as the updated FAQs are available on the Serious Incident Reporting page of the Parish Resources website at <https://www.parishresources.org.uk/pccs/trusteeship/serious-incident-reporting/>

The updated safeguarding reporting guidance, PCC Factsheet, updated FAQs and the PCC delegation template are also available on the diocesan website safeguarding pages at <https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/diocese/>

Private Fostering Information in Bedfordshire

We have been asked by our partner Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board to share the following links regarding this useful information about private fostering.

Luton - Safeguarding - https://www.luton.gov.uk/Health_and_social_care/children_and_family_services/Pages/Private-fostering-who-is-sleeping-in-your-house.aspx

Central Bedfordshire - <https://www.centralbedfordshirelscb.org.uk/lscb-website/professionals/private-fostering-1>

Bedford - <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/social-care-health-and-community/children-young-people/private-fostering/>

Information regarding Mental Health in Churches

Following on from the introduction in our last newsletter to understanding mental health in churches I am pleased to announce the annual diocesan mental health day. This year it is being held on Saturday 19 October at Barton-le-Clay. The attached flier gives details and a link to the booking arrangements.

This event has been arranged by interested parties within the diocese but we are of course pleased to promote such a useful and insightful event.

Please note there are only a few spaces left so book soon if you are interested.

[Mental Health Awareness Day](#)

Domestic Abuse Awareness Training

St Albans Diocese currently do not offer the national safeguarding training course, module S3 Domestic Abuse, except to clergy. However we are pleased to offer access to an online course which takes between an hour and two hours to complete.

This course is free, and is useful training in this important area.

It is not an alternative to the module S3 national church face to face training and once we are in a position to deliver Domestic Abuse training, then all those in the relevant roles will be asked to do it.

Domestic Abuse training is shown as a required (essential) role for;

Anyone holding the Bishop's licence, commission, authorisation or PTO

Spiritual Directors

Bishops Visitors

Pastoral Visitors

Safeguarding Officers

And as recommended for;

Senior staff teams

Churchwardens

Leaders of children/adult's activities

Youth Workers

Others as relevant to role

This online course is useful general training for those in the above roles who would benefit from it, pending the national training being available.

Practitioners should visit <https://bedfordshirelscb.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/> and follow the instructions. You will need to give workplace details.

Once registered, please search for 'Awareness of Domestic Violence and Abuse' to find this course easily.

Note: Charges apply for eLearning not completed within 6 weeks of registration.



SAFEGUARDING

Training

Please note, a new national safeguarding training framework has been released. An updated Safeguarding Training Newsletter is to be circulated before the end of 2019.

We are appreciative that the module C0 online course was updated in May this year and is an improvement on the previous version.

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