

SAFEGUARDING NEWS — March 2021

WELCOME to the thirteenth 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;

- Independent Inquiry into Child Sex Abuse (ICCSA) news
- The Parish Safeguarding Dashboard
- Training updates in regard to the C2 leadership module, and S1 Safer Recruitment module
- Changes to the online Domestic Abuse training offered by the Bedfordshire Training Unit
- Mental Health and Safeguarding in churches training opportunities
- Updated safeguarding pages on the diocesan website
- Guidance when seeking DBS advice



Introduction by Acting Dean at St Albans Cathedral Rev Canon Abigail Thompson

At the moment the Cathedral is preparing for a safeguarding audit which will be carried out by the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) at the end of April this year. By the end of 2019, every diocese in the country had been audited by SCIE, and the auditing of cathedrals then began. To date, around half of the country's cathedrals have undertaken a safeguarding audit.

Preparing for an audit of safeguarding procedures here at St Albans Cathedral has, at times, felt daunting. There seems like a huge amount of paperwork and policies and procedures to collate, and our records of safeguarding training and DBS checks run to many pages.

However, the preparations have also caused us to think deeply about what kind of cathedral we want to be. Beyond the policies and paperwork, is this a place where young people feel valued and cared for? Is this a place that feels welcoming and safe for people who have been victims of abuse – will their stories be listened to with kindness and with a determination to see past wrongs put right? Is this a place that is ambitious about what activities we can provide for children and vulnerable adults, whilst ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all? Most of all, is this a place where the love of God is felt through the loving actions of those who lead and worship in this place?

These questions are important for all of us, and I pray for each of you as you seek to make your church a place of safety and sanctuary for all.

Independent Inquiry into Child Sex Abuse (ICCSA)

The report and recommendations of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse or IICSA, probably best defines safeguarding in the Church of England this last year. The Church of England was one of the organisations scrutinised by the inquiry and after two and a half years of hearings, involving the testimonies of many survivors, IICSA released its report on sexual abuse within the Church of England in October last year. The national church has vowed to overhaul the system for safeguarding and supporting victims and survivors. All recommendations were accepted by the Church. Three are highlighted below.

- The Safe Spaces initiative to support survivors has been implemented nationally. Safe Spaces is a free, national support service independently run by Victim Support. It provides a confidential and safe space for anyone who has been abused through their relationship with either the Church of England or the Catholic Church. Details of Safe Spaces is on the diocesan website.
- Money is being made available for additional support and compensation for victims and survivors. This was a key recommendation and a redress scheme for survivors of abuse is underway. Overall the Church has pledged increased support for victims to include a church wide policy on the funding and provision of support to victims and survivors.

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(ICCSA continued..)

- There is an immediate expectation that victims/survivors are put at the centre of all investigations; a change arising from IICSA findings that, historically, alleged perpetrators had been prioritised over victims and survivors. The national church has changed their position considerably, and where responses to investigations were driven very much by lawyers and insurance, victims are now the centre of focus.

What does IICSA and its recommendations mean to parishes?

Work is currently being done on all recommendations and this will mean that changes will filter down to dioceses and parishes. There are several new and updated policies and guidance due this year as part of the churches' effort to address the recommendations. We will keep you updated through newsletters as to what the changes are and how it affects parishes. Good communication will be key to implementing these changes.

The ICCSA Executive Summary and Recommendations can be found on the following link:

[ICCSA Executive Summary and Recommendations](#)



The Parish Safeguarding Dashboard

Thank you to those who attended the Parish Safeguarding Officer Forums recently. We have had a significant uptake in people registering for the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard since then, so thank you also to those who are now registered and using this system to ensure that a parish is compliant with the many expectations from House of Bishops Policies and Guidance.

For those who have not yet registered, remember this is free to parishes, easy to use and is an extremely useful safeguarding tool.

For those who have not registered and wish to do so, please contact safeguarding@stalbans.anglican.org and we will facilitate this.

If anyone has used the dashboard previously but can't find it, please go to www.parishdashboards.org.uk where you can continue. There is a password reset button there should you need it.

Clearly Simpler, the dashboard developer, has now launched a new website to support the dashboard. It is mainly aimed at parish users and can be found at www.safeguardingdashboards.org.uk.

The 'Help' link at the bottom left of the Parish Dashboard menu now links to this support website.

Training Updates

Updates regarding Module C2 safeguarding training

There have been some changes which have been communicated to dioceses from the National Safeguarding Team about who needs to complete this module. The changes are not shown in the current published Learning and Development Framework or in the Parish Safeguarding Handbook, but these will be updated in due course.

Module C2 is now only for anyone holding the Bishop's licence, commission, authorisation, or permission, and also Parish Safeguarding Officers.

However, this does not include clergy who hold a Permission to Officiate (PtO) and a separate module is being prepared for these roles. If you hold a PtO and your refresher training is due then please refresh at module C1.

Those lay roles who were previously mandated to complete Module C2 will now refresh their three-yearly training at Module C1.

Module C1 can be found [here](#).

The reason is that the Basic Awareness (module C0) and Foundation (module C1) training have undergone significant revision and now cover the necessary safeguarding learning outcomes for those roles no longer mandated to attend Leadership (module C2).

Please note, for those who are due to complete module C2 for the first time, modules C0 and C1 must be completed beforehand.

Update regarding Safer Recruitment and People Management course (module S1)

We are pleased to be running these courses again, having updated the material from the final draft of the forthcoming Policy.

This course is a required (essential) module for:

- Line managers and anyone involved in the recruitment of Church Officers (including employees, elected members and volunteers)
- Those with responsibility for administering DBS (Lead Recruiters or Recruiters)
- Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSOs)

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Diocesan Website Safeguarding Pages

The safeguarding pages of the website have now been updated.

These can be found [here](#).

Hopefully the information is better laid out, and the new 'Help for Parishes' page intends to give you the information you need, which, coupled with training and the Parish Dashboard, will help you to achieve safeguarding expectations. There is now a search function on the Safeguarding Documents page.

Please remember the Diocesan Safeguarding Team are here to support and advise you.

DBS enquiries

The safeguarding team are often hampered by the volume of DBS enquiries that we receive.

Parish DBS enquiries should be made to Thirtyone:eight in the first instance.

For those who may not be aware, Thirtyone:eight are our umbrella body who process our DBS checks and make the practice simpler for the applicant.

Part of their service which is paid for by the diocese, is to give advice to parishes who are registered with them. Enquiries however, must be made by the DBS administrator, known as the Parish Lead Recruiter or Deputy Recruiter who again, are registered with them.

Please only contact the diocese with a DBS enquiry after the Lead Recruiter or Deputy Recruiter has enquired with ThirtyOne:Eight, and further advice is still necessary.

Recruiters also have access to a very useful online DBS eligibility tool via the ThirtyOne:Eight website.

Updated guidance from ThirtyOne:Eight 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 and can be found [here](#).

Page 30 onwards of the same document presents flowcharts for regulated activity for children and adults, along with notes and further guidance around eligibility for specific roles within church.

(Training updates continued...)

The S1 course is 2 hours via Zoom and can be booked online through the safeguarding training page of the diocesan website [here](#).

We intend to run one course each week for most weeks this year excluding July and August.

Update regarding Domestic Abuse course (module S3)

We don't currently offer this course and look forward to suitable training material from the National Safeguarding Team, when we will then role this out to parishes.

However, we are pleased to offer access to an online course which takes up to two hours to complete. This course is free, and is useful training in this important area. It is not an alternative to the national church Domestic Abuse classroom training and once we are in a position to deliver module S3, then all those in the relevant roles will be asked to do it.

This online course is useful general training for anyone who would benefit from it, pending the new national training being available. Practitioners should visit <https://safeguardingchildren.vc-tms.co.uk> and follow the instructions to register. You will need to give workplace details. Once registered, please search for 'Awareness of Domestic Violence and Abuse' to find this course. If anyone has problems registering then please email academy@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk who will assist.

A new Learning and Development Framework is expected this year which will bring further change and at that point we will publish a safeguarding training newsletter to make clear any new requirements.



SAFEGUARDING

Mental Health/Safeguarding in Churches

The safeguarding team and Rev Richard Allen, Spiritual Care Manager for Hertfordshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, have designed and will deliver mental health/safeguarding training for church leaders in the diocese.

The training is not mandatory, however it is hoped that four volunteers from each deanery will attend this and then cascade it to other interested parties in their deanery, and help equip us for the increase in mental health cases in churches as we come out of lockdown.

It is intended that the training will help parishes follow either a mental health or a safeguarding route, always with care in mind.

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(Mental Health/Safeguarding in Churches continued..)

It is clear that mental health services and support in all areas of society are hugely under-resourced to meet the current need, and churches will form a significant part of the response to those individuals who are affected.

Effective help needs to come from a foundation of knowledge and confidence through training and discussion.

The training, which is a joint approach from Richard and the safeguarding team, is aimed at ensuring that members of the church community who are struggling with poor mental health are supported appropriately, especially when they might put others at risk of harm, or be at risk of harming themselves.

Training dates have yet to be arranged but will take place in May and June.

An email invitation was previously sent to clergy and PSOs to volunteer to attend this training and cascade it further and we have already had a wonderful response. Thank you to all those who have registered an interest.

We have to limit each deanery to four places.

The following deaneries still have places and we now invite other church leaders from the below list to be involved;

- Biggleswade—1 place remaining
- Dunstable—2 places remaining
- Luton—1 place remaining
- Barnet—2 places remaining
- Bishop's Stortford—1 place remaining
- Buntingford—1 place remaining
- Cheshunt—2 places remaining
- Hertford and Ware—2 places remaining
- Stevenage—4 places remaining
- Berkhamsted—2 places remaining
- Rickmansworth—1 place remaining
- Watford— 3 places remaining
- Wheathampstead—3 places remaining

If you are willing to complete this training and then arrange and cascade it to others, please could you email Catherine Boon at cboon@stalbans.anglican.org with your name, role, parish and deanery in order that we can collate and present to an even spread across the diocese.

Training material and guidance will be offered to those wishing to take part.

The training will be two hours via Zoom.

If this is for you, please could you reply to Catherine by 1st April.

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