SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER – SPRING 2017

DBS ENQUIRIES AND SAFER RECRUITMENT

DBS

As you will be aware, until recently we used the services of the Churches Agency for Safeguarding (CAS) to provide access to the online system for DBS Checks.

However, after a review of our DBS procedures and, coincidentally, after being informed that CAS will soon stop providing this service, it was agreed that we will use the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS).

CCPAS provide the same service to a significant number of other dioceses and are therefore very experienced in dealing with the particular circumstances of the Church of England. Additionally, they are a larger organisation with the ability to provide DBS advice to parishes proactively. The change will also mean a reduction in costs for the Diocese.

Unfortunately, as the two organisations are entirely separate, this will mean that parishes (or benefices/clusters as appropriate) will need to register again with CCPAS. We have looked at ways to reduce the administrative burden of this but unfortunately there is no way of avoiding the fact that a (hard copy*) form has to be completed and returned to the diocese. For further instructions, please refer to the e-mail sent by David Wilkinson in March. If you did not receive this e-mail please contact Gail O’Neill.

* The form needs to be completed by hand so that CCPAS have a signature on record and are therefore authorised to make any requested future changes to your registration.

You will be glad to know that once you have registered and logged in to the new system, the actual process for applying for a DBS check or verifying ID documents is the same. You will receive comprehensive guidance and support from CCPAS to ensure that all goes well.

Please note that while DBS checks are not necessary for anyone who is a church musician or chorister, if this person moves towards a greater involvement with children and young people, e.g., teaching or acting as a musical director, then a check will be required.
SAFER RECRUITMENT

As a reminder, the 2016 version of the Practice Guidance Safer Recruitment updates guidance to parishes on all matters relating to safer recruitment. The guidance is on the diocesan website safeguarding page under national policy along with a range of relevant forms to help you with safer recruitment. Please note that this process should be followed for all new recruits as from the date of acceptance by your PCC.

There is now a ‘Frequently Asked Questions’ help-sheet available; this can be accessed via the safeguarding section of the diocesan website.

TRAINING

Training dates for 2017 are on the safeguarding section of the website.

The Safeguarding team held a ‘train the trainers’ evening in March; we were very impressed with the enthusiasm of the group. We invited participants to give a brief talk on a subject of their choice and learnt many interesting facts about a wide range of diverse topics including bee keeping, the Brontes, Water Aid and much more! A further training session will be taking place in the next couple of months. During that session, we plan to go through the safeguarding training package that we will be inviting volunteers to deliver.

We are looking for more people to join us so if you are interested and feel that you would like to support us, then please ‘phone Gail O’Neill – 0113 353 0204 – or e-mail gail.oneill@leedsanglican.org.

The National Safeguarding Team has improved the training delivered by safeguarding advisers. It has also made available an online basic safeguarding course (C0) appropriate for anyone. C0 complements existing training packages. The safeguarding team will provide parishes with clear access instructions in due course.

NATIONAL POLICY AND GUIDANCE

The Church of England has recently released a new safeguarding policy for children and young people and adults entitled "Promoting a Safer Church". This was published on March 15, 2017 - however, a shortened 'at a glance' version of this Policy Statement is to be prepared by the national team for Parishes, Dioceses and Cathedrals. Therefore, we
recommend that you do not make any changes to your current Safeguarding Policy Statement until we send you the new, shortened version.

NATIONAL AUDIT

In March we received the final version of the independent safeguarding audit of the diocese, which is overall very positive. We are in the process of setting out our response to the auditors’ findings and developing an action plan to implement the recommendations made. We will publish the report and our response on the safeguarding section of the website in due course.

INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

After an initial flurry of enquiries last year, things have been quieter for the diocese in this area of work. The first public hearing – on migration – commenced earlier this year. You may well have seen reports about it on the national news. We understand that the first Church of England in depth investigation is due to take place in March 2018 and will focus on the diocese of Chichester.

SAFEGUARDING ENQUIRIES

If you have a specific safeguarding enquiry you should contact the diocesan safeguarding adviser for your episcopal area. However, if you have a more general enquiry – about training or where to find information, for example – then you should e-mail enquiries@leeds.anglican.org or ‘phone 0113 2000 546.

REMEMBER
If a child or adult is at immediate risk of significant harm, in the first instance you should contact your local social services team or local police (call 101) - and then inform your DSA.

Complaints and Whistleblowing
If you are not satisfied that a safeguarding issue has been dealt with appropriately and you are unable to resolve the matter with one of our safeguarding advisers then please contact the Joint Diocesan Secretary, Mrs Debbie Child, on 07713 623544, who will listen to and investigate your concerns.
The Diocese of Leeds Complaints Policy and Whistleblowing Policy can both be found on the safeguarding section of the diocesan website.
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