

## **SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER – SUMMER 2019**

### **NEWS FROM THE NATIONAL SAFEGUARDING TEAM**

Your Diocesan Safeguarding Team receive regular newsletters from the National Safeguarding Team. These are intended to provide updates for DSAs so that we can be helpful to parishes. The latest one included items such as IICSA, Serious Incident Reporting and what Safeguarding information Parishes should display. More information is given on these matters in this newsletter.

The National Safeguarding Team currently has an interim Director of Safeguarding, Sir Roger Singleton. Melissa Caslake will take up the role of permanent Director at the end of July.

### **IICSA**

The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse [IICSA] has a further hearing due to take place in July 2019. The Inquiry has selected 4 dioceses to be a sample for further exploration of safeguarding arrangements. Leeds is not one of these dioceses.

### **SERIOUS INCIDENT REPORTING**

Following recent high-profile safeguarding-related incidents in the charity sector, the Charity Commission updated its guidance in October 2018, with a particular focus on the reporting of serious safeguarding incidents. The National Church has worked with the Charity Commission to agree bespoke guidance for DBFs, PCCs and Religious Communities on how to identify and report a serious incident.

From 1 January 2019, when DBFs report any serious incident to the Charity Commission, they should do so in accordance with the new Church of England Guidance. The Leeds Board has agreed its delegation in line with the guidance - delegation to DSAs and Diocesan Secretaries for serious safeguarding incidents and the PCC for other serious incidents. The resolutions for delegation come directly from the Charity Commission approved guidance and the accompanying templates. Templates (and guidance) relating to serious safeguarding incidents have been approved by the National Safeguarding Steering Group. Letters and draft resolution templates have been sent to parishes.

Initially we are only making Incumbents, Churchwardens and PCC secretaries aware of the guidance and asking them to put delegation of serious incidents on the PCC agenda. A simple A4 sheet of background information has been provided along with the template giving the resolutions that PCCs are required to pass to allow the relevant delegation. Once delegation is in place we will send more detailed information/guidance including the forms to be completed if/when a serious safeguarding incident occurs.

The Guidance and template reports and all documents are available online on the Parish Resources website. <https://www.parishresources.org.uk/pccs/trusteeship/serious-incident-reporting>.

In addition, the safeguarding related guidance and templates will be available on the safeguarding pages of the Church of England website.

## PARISHES AND DISPLAYING SAFEGUARDING INFORMATION

The National Safeguarding Team has received a number of enquiries about what information parishes need to display about safeguarding. Advice on this can be found in the House of Bishops Practice Guidance on Roles and Responsibilities 2017, section 3. This confirms that parishes must display the following:

- A formal statement of adoption of the House of Bishops Policy 'promoting a Safer Church: safeguarding policy statement'. This should be signed on behalf of the PCC.
- The contact details of the Parish Safeguarding Officer, Churchwarden and other local leaders.
- Information about where to get help with child and adult safeguarding issues and for this to include contact details [appendix 5 of the Roles and Responsibilities will be of assistance here].

This information should be displayed on the parish notice board but the Parish Handbook notes that parishes should ensure that safeguarding information is clearly visible on the parish website, preferably on the front page or with a link from the front page to the documentation. For those parishes that do not have a website, they may want to offer some information on the national church website - A Church Near You ('ACNY'). Churches can add a page to their ACNY profile with their local safeguarding details.

## DBS ENQUIRIES

Advice in the Safer Recruitment Practice Guidance, Appendix 8 [House of Bishops May 2017] [https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/safeguarding%20safer\\_recruitment\\_practice\\_guidance\\_2016.pdf](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/safeguarding%20safer_recruitment_practice_guidance_2016.pdf) confirms that where a parish 'sponsors or approves children's work or work with adults experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect, then they will be eligible for an enhanced criminal record check without barring information. This may relate to PCCs. In such cases members of the PCC will be eligible'.

Thus, those PCCs who come into this category will need to ensure that all members are checked at this level. Where this is a new process, the Diocesan Safeguarding Team recommends that Churchwardens and Parish Safeguarding Officers are prioritised and that PCCs work slowly through other members.

Details of the Safer Recruitment training, jointly delivered by Safeguarding and HR, can be found on the safeguarding page of the Diocesan website.

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

## TRAINING

Safeguarding is so important that it is something which everyone in the church should have an understanding of. We now have training that is accessible on line and we would encourage everyone to take the opportunity to find out more about safeguarding via this link [www.leeds.anglican.org/safe-training](http://www.leeds.anglican.org/safe-training).

The current Learning and Development Framework has been reviewed and revised and there will be some changes later this year. Details will be shared in the next newsletter but, for the meantime, please continue to book places on these courses via Gail O'Neill on – 0113 353 0204 – or email [gail.oneill@leeds.anglican.org](mailto:gail.oneill@leeds.anglican.org).

## CHARACTER REFERENCES IN COURT CASES

Occasionally members of the Safeguarding Team are asked to advise when someone from a parish is going to be appearing in court on serious safeguarding matters, and another member of their congregation is asked to give a character reference. Sometimes the defence barrister makes this approach. Our advice is that while we cannot insist that the member of the congregation should not do this, clergy and others in church should consider carefully the impact of giving a reference, particularly in the event of a conviction and custodial sentence.

Recently the Safeguarding Team have become aware that following the giving of a reference where there was a conviction, the reference giver's employer was made aware of this by the Local Authority resulting in a dismissal from post.

Please contact the Safeguarding Team if anyone in your church is approached in these circumstances.

### **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, then you should e-mail [enquiries@leeds.anglican.org](mailto:enquiries@leeds.anglican.org) or telephone 0113 2000 540.

#### **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 999) - 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 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.

### **YOUR DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING ADVISERS**



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