

## Welcome and Introduction

Welcome to the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham's Safeguarding Newsletter Autumn 2021. This last year has been a period of significant change for so many and our safeguarding arrangements within the Diocese are no exception. This newsletter is the first after some considerable time, but we are committed to making it a regular termly addition, to compliment other ways in which we get information to you. Some of the changes we have experienced were the result of reviewing our effectiveness, some were needed to comply with national policies and others were needed to respond to events outside of our control. Change is always an opportunity to affirm what we are doing well and adjust where needed. We have tried to keep you informed through the PSO events which have now been established as a regular termly event. I want to broaden what is discussed in these sessions and include outside speakers, so if you have any suggestions as to who might be interesting to hear from in the field of safeguarding, do let me know. We will cover some similar topics in the Newsletters, and I am very grateful to our willing PSO who offered our first "day in the life of" article. It is a really good read and I hope we might have more contributions over the coming additions. This Newsletter also covers changes to our training courses, spotlights on new policies and developments within the safeguarding team. We hope you enjoy reading it.

**Julian Hodgson DSA**

## A Day in the Life of: A PSO

When I first took over the role of PSO four years ago, it was a much smaller role. Like Topsy, it has grown and grown since then. In the beginning I tried to read everybody's Policies about everything – all sorts of different organisations such as Urban Saints; Girl Guiding, other church groupings, etc; but in the end I got so confused around everybody's different methods and requirements, I decided to stick to just the C of E (especially Diocesan) ones.

Another church member is the Contact Manager for DBS applications, so I don't have to worry about any of that side, except to ensure that a Diocesan Self-Declaration Form is received prior to a check being submitted. But she knows not to go ahead without the okay from me, so that is simple. Once the check has been made, she then lets me know the certificate number and date of issue so that I can log it on our ChurchSuite database and keep track of when it will expire. The new APCS has a management reporting function, so we are not using that facility within ChurchSuite.

I spend at least part of each Monday and Thursday on Safeguarding issues, and often have additional meetings outside of these days. Annual tasks (updating Policies, reports to PCC / APCM) I have spread



throughout the year to a rhythm that suits me. Monthly tasks such as checking the Dashboard (very helpful) saves me having to keep too many notes on what needs to be checked... who knew that our Ecclesiastical Insurance Policy doesn't cover us to take our youth into outer space? When I told one of our Youth Leaders this, his response was simply "Well, you'll have to tell them, 'cos I'm not!" It also does not cover taking them on a boat over a certain length – which is probably a bit more relevant! I also have rolling, on-going tasks of checking application forms of folk volunteering for new roles and ensuring that everyone who does volunteer is up to date with both their Safeguarding training and DBS coverage.

I am very lucky in that most of our Leaders are very responsible and responsive as regards Safeguarding issues, but there are always those who think they can sneak a new volunteer in under the radar. I always notice and most of them have now given up even trying!! The regular, ongoing, week by week tasks are what takes up most of my time. Making sure that everyone whose training is about to expire gets reasonable notice, so they have time to either complete the course on-line or have time to be able to attend a face – to – face course and ditto with those whose DBS is about to expire. The fact that most young people never seem to check their emails these days is getting to be an increasing problem; I might have to find another medium soon. Mind you, leaving voicemail messages doesn't seem to work any better! Also ensuring that Risk Assessments are completed ahead of time for any new (or at a different venue) event.

This is interleaved with 'live' cases which can occur out of the blue but need immediate attention. The student who is self-harming; the elderly person who is vulnerable because of isolation and may be the victim of financial abuse; the historic abusive actions of a church member of many years ago that has suddenly re-surfaced but now needs to be dealt with appropriately; the youth who is responding inappropriately in youth meetings. Sometimes these end up being matters of pastoral concern rather than Safeguarding matters, but I always start a file on each incident so that background information and relevant contact details are easily available for either 'the next time' or for the person who eventually takes over from me, not forgetting to pass the information to the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.

Why do I do this? Why am I prepared to make myself a bit of a nuisance sometimes in order to ensure that everything is done properly?

30+ years ago, a young nursery assistant found an iron-shaped burn on the back of one of the small children in her charge. But she knew what she had to do. And as a result, four children (including the two boys who now live with me) were taken out of a very abusive situation and eventually placed for adoption. Those two boys still suffer each and every day from the effects of what they went through. Safeguarding is too important not to take seriously.

*PSO - Anon*



## Training News

**Policy Updates:** We now have the final versions of two key Policy Updates, which will come into full effect in January 2022, when we will be required to be fully compliant. We are already working towards these requirements so you will notice some developments in our guidance.

The first new Policy relates to ***Safeguarding Learning and Development Framework 2021***. This document is guidance issued by the House of Bishops under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016. You can access the full guidance here:

[Safeguarding Learning and Development Framework 2021.01.pdf \(mcusercontent.com\)](#)

Church bodies must plan for full implementation of this framework from January 2022. The framework will not be revised again until 2024, ready for the next three-yearly cycle of safeguarding learning to commence in 2025. The online Portal has been updated with new accredited versions of the Basic Awareness (C0) and the Foundation (C1) Modules and in this Diocese we are already delivering the Leadership (C2) Module in line with the new guidance.

The courses are now tightly prescribed to ensure consistency across the country, so we have very little room for manoeuvre in terms of content or delivery, including the number of people we can take on each session. Those of you who have already attended the new Leadership Module will know that there is now a Workbook for the course and a pre-course task to respond to 4 questions. We try to send these Workbooks out in good time to allow people to complete the task, so if you know of anyone booked onto a session, please do remind them of this requirement.

The Framework makes clear the expectations for training in all roles –

*'It is expected that people work to achieve the required level of learning as soon as is practicably possible upon starting a new role. For example, PCC members often end up standing for election on the day and their appointment takes effect immediately. It is not therefore realistic to say that they must be trained before they start. The required core safeguarding learning pathways should be a priority with Basic Awareness and Foundation being completed as part of an induction process and the remaining core pathways being completed within six months of an individual taking up a post. Refresher learning should be completed at a three-yearly interval and will keep knowledge and skills up to date. It is expected that everyone will have been trained to the required level within each three-yearly cycle. Refresher learning should be undertaken at the highest required level (as per safeguarding training in the statutory sector) for core pathways. Additional pathways should also be refreshed on a three-yearly cycle.'*



- \*The requirement to update Specialist modules such as Domestic Abuse and Safer Recruitment is new.
- \*In this Diocese the Bishop has agreed that all CWs and PTOs should continue to attend the Leadership Module as they would be required to take a lead role in Safeguarding if the Parish goes into vacancy.

The second new Policy document is the ***Safer Recruitment and People Management 2021***, which is an e-manual and also comes into full force on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022. It can be found here:

[Search results | The Church of England](#)

There is a new online Safer Recruitment module to accompany this new Guidance which can be found on the Training Portal: [Safeguarding Training Portal \(cofeportal.org\)](https://cofeportal.org) and our own Safer Recruitment briefing sessions will reflect the new Policy. This document represents an evolution of the previous Policy and breaks down the process of Safer Recruitment into more steps, but is really not a major change on our previous practice. There is more emphasis on post appointment support and supervision for Church Officers, which we have always promoted as good practice on our training.

There is a self-assessment checklist which you can use to ensure that you are fully compliant with the new Guidance. I would urge PSOs and Lead Recruiters to look at the new Guidance and check for yourself where your own Parish needs to take action to ensure compliance with both Policies. Those of you who use the Parish Dashboard will see changes to the Dashboard to reflect the new requirements from the New Year.

**Diocesan Safeguarding training:** The current terms training sessions continue to book up, with most of the Leadership sessions already fully booked. If you do have a place booked, please ensure that you complete the pre-course task in good time and attend the session as we have a lot of people waiting for places. We do keep a list of Reserves, so please do let us know if you cannot attend as we can sometimes still fill the limited spaces.

We are offering a few face to face sessions this term to see how comfortable people feel being back together. With Covid cases remaining stubbornly high we have restricted the number of face to face sessions and will continue to offer the bulk of our training via Zoom for this term. Given the demand for training, it is likely that for the foreseeable future, much of our training will be presented virtually, as we can train a greater number of people that way.

Under the new Framework we will not be recording your training as being complete until you have attended both sessions of the Leadership module and returned your Evaluation for the course. We will be amending the certificate we issue in the new year to make this clear and add renewal dates.

*Heather Rolf Safeguarding Training Manager*



## Team News

**Staffing:** As many of you know, Gill Wahlers retired from the Diocese at the end of August, having served many faithful years assisting people with originally their CRB checks and more recently with their DBS Applications. Gill's willingness to go that extra mile to help try to resolve a problem was most appreciated by many who worked with her. We wish Gill well in her retirement and hope we can carry on her legacy of problem solving with a smile. Thank you, Gill.

Gill's retirement and the change of the DBS supplier provided us with the opportunity to review the administration arrangements for the team. We are busy recruiting to replace Gill and I will provide updates on this as soon as I am able. The new DBS administrator is a full-time post situated in the safeguarding team and their role will include additional duties to support Lynn who has been the only administrative support for the DSA since 2018. Lynn works part time and the arrival of a full time Assistant DSA and a part time Caseworker has required them to be appropriately supported administratively.

Some of you will know that, as a team, we have also moved base within Jubilee House. The Diocesan Office was designed as an open plan workspace which is not conducive to the confidential nature of our work. We took the opportunity of the working from home arrangements to build an internal office area on the top floor, which we share with the Multi-Academy Trust team. It is a good environment to work as a team and we already feel at home.

John Jones is our new Case Worker and John arrived in April so will soon be completing his probationary period. John comes to the team with an extensive safeguarding pedigree gained from many years working in the Police. We are already valuing his investigative skills and understanding of how police manage serious safeguarding situations. In addition to his casework, John is taking on the compilation of the newsletter, so expect much more of him in future additions. This is part of his role as parish support worker, and John will start to work with those parishes who have yet to engage with the Parish Dashboard, or who are struggling to appoint to key safeguarding roles. John is much welcomed, and it feels like he has always been part of the team.



## **Cathedral News**

Safeguarding at the Minster is also changing but hopefully in ways that will be less obvious to parishes, as it is largely going to take place in the background. Vicky Thorpe is the Cathedral Safeguarding Coordinator and Vicky has many years of experience from her time working in schools. We are currently working with the Cathedral Management in formalizing the relationship with the Diocese into a Service Level Agreement. This is important because despite the commitment and dedication of Vicky over the years, she remains a volunteer and that leaves the Cathedral vulnerable were she ever to step down or be unable to cover the work.

In early September the Minster also completed a SCIE Audit. Many of you may recall the Diocese SCIE Audit in 2018 and the report that was produced and is still available on the website. SCIE (or The Social Care Institute of Excellence to give them their full title) were commissioned by the Church of England to undertake a full external audit of all dioceses and Cathedrals back in 2016 and Southwell Minster was the last Cathedral to be done. We are awaiting the detailed report, but the initial feedback was both challenging in what needed to be developed and encouraging in what they saw as sound safeguarding casework practices.

## **PCR2 Update:**

Many of you contributed to the PCR2 process by providing parish records and identifying cases of concern. We had a 100% return rate from parishes so feel that we provided as much information as we were able to the Independent Reviewers. They started their work in January 2021 and will have completed their file reviews in early October 2021. Well over 1000 files have been reviewed and we had a good response from survivors who wanted to be part of the process as well. The aim of the PCR2 was for the Church of England to ensure that all those church officers known to pose a risk to others were properly identified and a risk management plan in place. Our report therefore feeds into a national Oversight Report that aims to be published next year. To meet our part in that process, our report has to be signed off by the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel (DSAP) and Bishop Paul by early November and an action plan developed on responding to the recommendations within the reviewer's report. A few urgent actions have already been completed but overall, the Reviewers have found a much-improved level of safeguarding in recent years. PCR2 looked back at safeguarding practices for any church officer in post at any time between 2007 and 2020. This meant that depending on when the concern took place, they were considering church responses dating back even further (in some cases back to the 1950s). We will produce an Executive Summary which will contain all the findings and recommendations but nothing that could identify any individual or parish. The Executive Summary will be published at the same time as the National Oversight Report in Spring 2022.



## DBS Update

Our new DBS provider APCS is proving to be much easier to manage and has a really good telephone support service for PSO or applicants to check when things are not proceeding smoothly. We have now ended all connections to 31:8 so Lead Recruiters will no longer be able to make applications by mistake. A huge THANK YOU to you all as we only had three applications processed after the 1<sup>st</sup> of June cut off.

A quick reminder that all PCC members **must** have a DBS as trustees of a charity. The type of check is determined by whether the parish does any children's work such as Sunday School, Youth Groups, Holiday clubs etc. If so, then all PCC members as Trustees of a children's charity should have an Enhanced DBS check which is free. If no children's work takes place in the parish, then PCC members should undertake a Basic Check which will need to be paid for by the parish at a cost of £29.47 per application. We pay the fee on your behalf and re-charge parishes with a single invoice. Precise details of which roles require which check can be found on the Diocesan Website in Appendix 8 of the ***Safer Recruitment Policy 2016***.

### Next Edition

If you have any requests for information in the next addition, please send suggestions to John at [john.jones@southwell.anglican.org](mailto:john.jones@southwell.anglican.org) or call the team on 01636 817200.

The next edition of the Safeguarding Newsletter will be in January 2022.