SAFEGUARDING NEWS — December 2018

WELCOME to the eighth 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 has a reminder from our Diocesan Registrar, Matthew Chinery, about your obligations to safeguarding for forthcoming Annual Parochial Church Meetings.

We offer advice on DBS Basic Disclosure checks, which have been available since June this year, online through our umbrella organisation ThirtyOne:Eight – formerly CCPAS.

Also, for those in Hertfordshire we have an online survey presented by Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board.

And finally, this edition also contains a link to examples of risk assessments for church activities. It also includes a document for guidance for lone working.

Foreword by Bishop Richard

Nicholas Parsons on Radio Four's long running 'Just a Minute' programme loves to give people the 'Benefit of the Doubt'. He likes to be generous with points; to support the person who is less skilled at avoiding repetition, deviation or hesitation; or just to be maverick in his chairing. Whatever the reason, his tendency to give the 'Benefit of the Doubt' echoes in so many ways our desire to see the best in others.

On a humorous radio show it is a nice touch. In the world of safeguarding it is potentially catastrophic. More than once I have seen people not speak up about their concerns about the actions of someone else because consciously or unconsciously they want to give the person the 'Benefit of the Doubt'. It is potentially damaging because by not reporting our concerns we put someone else – a child or a vulnerable adult – at risk. In reporting our concerns we are not being unloving but rather ensuring the safety of others.

Please go on enjoying 'Just a Minute'. It is a great programme. But when it comes to safeguarding don't give the 'Benefit of the Doubt' and put others at risk. The safety of the vulnerable must always come first.

SAFEGUARDING AND CLERGY DISCIPLINE MEASURE 2016
UPDATE AND NOTES FOR PARISHES

Matthew Chinery, the Diocesan Registrar, has issued the following guidance on safeguarding matters:-

Annual Parochial Church Meeting: PCC Report

- It is a formal legal obligation for the PCC, in its report to the APCM, to state whether or not the PCC: *"has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have due regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults)."*
- An explicit statement to this effect is required at the APCM in your parish, (and has been since Spring 2017 in most cases)
- PCCs therefore need to be thinking, at an early stage, what they corporately need to do to be able to state, in good conscience, that they have complied with this legal duty.
- The statement made at the APCM is, effectively, a public statement. The PCC's report to the APCM is often published, whether on a parish website or as part of a PCC's annual return to the Charity Commission.
- Failure to have due regard to House of Bishops' guidance also has the potential to jeopardise a parish's insurance cover, because the Trustees (PCC Members) will have failed to comply with their legal duties.

Basic Disclosure

In June 2018, St Albans Diocese accepted the new online service offered of Basic Disclosure by Thirtyone:eight (formerly CCPAS). This service means a parish will now be able to process a basic check for any worker who is **not** otherwise eligible for an enhanced DBS check. It has been possible to apply for Basic Disclosure before but not online through our umbrella organisation. The Church of England guidance refers to consideration of obtaining a Basic Disclosure where an enhanced DBS is not obtainable.

A Basic Disclosure involves a search of the Police National Computer for details of all current convictions. The disclosure will contain details of convictions and conditional cautions that are considered to be unspent under the terms of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Checks can be monitored on the system by the DSA in the same way as all other DBS checks.

Anyone can apply for a Basic Disclosure as long as they live or work in the UK.

Please remember – a Basic Disclosure is not an alternative to an enhanced DBS check and if a position is eligible for an enhanced DBS check then an enhanced DBS check MUST be used.

There is a cost implication. Basic Disclosures are charged at the fee set by the DBS of £25 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.

Basic Disclosures are available for anyone, in any role within the church.

It is sometimes the case that we think a particular role should attract a DBS check but it is in fact ineligible and falls outside the criteria required. (Sometimes enhanced DBS applications are refused as the eligibility criteria are not quite met)

The Diocese advise that the following three points should be considered in determining whether a role should attract a Basic Disclosure check as part of Safer Recruitment. Please note that it is important to consider the <u>activities</u> that a role requires, as these may differ, even for a role with the same title in a different parish. It should be considered whether:

- The role implies a close level of trust placed in them by the church, <u>or</u>
- The role requires a close working relationship with children or young people, albeit only occasionally, <u>or</u>
- The role requires a close working relationship with vulnerable adults, albeit only occasionally

Example roles which may fall within the above criteria are:

- Vergers
- Pastoral visitors

Further examples which may be included depending on their activities in your parish:

- Lay Leaders of Worship
- Spiritual Directors
- Drivers
- Servers

The list is not exhaustive and it is for a parish to decide whether a particular role within the parish meets any of the above points.

For example:

- Do your pastoral visitors visit vulnerable adults and are they unsupervised in doing so?
- Do you arrange for volunteers to help out and drive vulnerable adults to church occasionally?
- Would the role of Lay leader of Worship indicate a close level of trust in your parish?

Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (HSCB) Safeguarding Audit.

The local safeguarding board have a responsibility to ensure the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements in places of employment and that staff know how to raise safeguarding concerns.

They have asked that people of Hertfordshire from all roles within the church, paid or voluntary, complete their online survey. This will provide a targeted approach to addressing key safeguarding themes coming out of the audit thus improving the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people in Hertfordshire.

I am pleased that HSCB have included places of worship within this approach.

They ask that this questionnaire is to be completed by as many staff as possible within the diocese within Hertfordshire. Please share this newsletter widely to offer those in any role in the church an opportunity to complete it. The survey is anonymous and asks only for the job role.
The analysis of the completed surveys will be fed back to the diocese to help them understand the strengths of and gaps in:

- Staff's confidence, skills and knowledge; this will enable development appropriate learning opportunities and training
- Support and arrangements that the diocese has put in place

The survey is being sent out to multi-agencies within Hertfordshire and some of the questions may not seem very relevant. Please answer all questions as best you can. It only takes up to ten minutes to complete. The survey will remain open for six weeks and will be closing on Friday 11 January 2019.

https://surveys.hertfordshire.gov.uk/s/section11wave3/

Risk Assessments

Risk assessments are required for all church related activities. Ecclesiastical Insurance expects risks to be considered and measures put in place to reduce any risks to an acceptable level. Please click on the link below and see example templates under the heading 'Risk Assessment'. There is also a document for guidance for lone working under the same heading.

https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/diocese/safeguarding-documents/