

SAFEGUARDING NEWS — July 2022

WELCOME to the sixteenth 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;

- New House of Bishops Guidance - Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults
- Safeguarding Sunday
- Model Safeguarding Policy
- Safeguarding training update
- Volunteers needed for Support and Link roles
- Bedfordshire Safe Space Scheme
- New Assistant Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, Dave Adams

Foreword by Diocesan Secretary David White



Creating a safe church, welcoming to all and especially children, young people and vulnerable adults, is central to showing God's love to others. That is why the diocese gives the greatest importance to applying best safeguarding practice.

As I have visited deanery meetings over the last few months I have been challenged about the burden of safeguarding training that falls on parishes – and on volunteers who are already stretched in all their other responsibilities in keeping church life going. I do understand the pressures and am sympathetic to these. But we cannot drop our standards in the safeguarding area because it remains a sad reality that our team have to deal with safeguarding cases as a constant feature of their work – some historic, some contemporary. Because there are risks to the vulnerable within our

churches we must keep the highest level of vigilance and ensure that we have people in leadership in all parishes who are trained to know how to prevent problems arising and respond if they do.

Thank you for the role that you play in making sure that our churches are safe. We really value all that you do in the safeguarding area as part of your service to the church and to God's people.

New House of Bishop's Guidance – Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults

The Church of England's Safeguarding policy statement 'Promoting a Safer Church' (2017) outlines the Church's commitment to promoting a safe environment and culture across all church communities for children, young people and vulnerable adults.

This new Guidance does two things:

- 1) It describes what is meant by "Safeguarding" and defines the different forms that abuse and safeguarding concerns can take. As such, it provides the context and foundation for the complete suite of Church Safeguarding Guidance documents. (With two exceptions, the forms of abuse are based on existing Church guidance, which have been updated and brought together in one place).

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2) It provides more detailed guidance on important safeguarding issues:

- Domestic abuse, because many Church Officers will themselves be victims and survivors of domestic abuse, and/or will be in contact with victims and survivors who, for example, might be members of a congregation or work colleagues.
- Spiritual abuse and deliverance ministry as these are particularly relevant to safeguarding in a Church/fait context

The guidance can be found at <https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-e-manual/safeguarding-children-young-people-and-vulnerable-adults-1> and came into effect on 4th July 2022.

Please listen to the audio introduction which explains how best to use the guidance.

As spiritual abuse is a new and emerging area of understanding, we recommend that you take the time to read this part of the guidance and PCCs are encouraged to review their own church culture.

Examples of characteristics of a healthy Christian culture include a culture in which:

- There is a genuinely open dialogue, there is positive encouragement and active welcoming of different perspectives and views.
- Everyone is valued, respected and nurtured and no one is isolated or excluded.
- Harmful behaviour, e.g. bullying, can be (and is) challenged by anyone.
- Power is distributed, not vested in one or two individuals or groups.
- Self-reflection in each member is promoted.
- Safeguarding is foundational and actively promoted, preventative and responsive processes are in place.
- Survivors are heard, supported and responded to.



Key characteristics of spiritual abuse:

- Misusing scripture to coerce behaviour
- Coercing through censorship
- Requiring unquestioning obedience
- Using a sense of divine position to exert pressure to conform and suggesting this position is unchallengeable.
- Enforced accountability
- Exclusion or isolation of individuals as a punishment for non-compliance
- Coercing behaviour through exploitation and manipulation
- Publicly shaming and humiliating individuals in order to control their behaviour
- Threats of spiritual consequences
- Inappropriate mentoring relationships

The new guidance is helpful in that it highlights a spectrum of behaviour, with worked examples to show where something can be considered to cross the threshold into spiritual abuse. The guidance also details the response and referral required at each stage.

Spiritual abuse is a form of emotional and psychological abuse. It is characterised by a systematic pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour in a religious context. Spiritual abuse can have a deeply damaging impact on those who experience it and can be experienced in a variety of different relationships.

Spiritual abuse is often an integral element of other experiences of abuse within Christian and other faith contexts and must be considered when there are disclosures of other forms of abuse.

Spiritual Abuse is not a separate category of abuse but is a form of psychological abuse against adults and emotional abuse against children. It is important when discussing such cases with statutory agencies to be clear the spiritual abuse is a form of psychological and emotional abuse within a religious context.

The Church of England accepts that there is an ongoing discussion about the use of the term 'spiritual abuse', and that some hold a view that an alternative term or wording should be used. It is, however, vital to give people the language to talk about this type of abuse, to recognise it, act on it and prevent it. The term 'spiritual abuse' is used by survivors and at present is the most widely recognised, and so it is the term used within the guidance.

Model safeguarding policy

Could I request again that parishes base their safeguarding policy on Promoting a Safer Church 2017, as opposed to Protecting All God's Children 2010.

Parts of Protecting All God's Children are now out of date as they have been rewritten in more recent guidance.

Promoting a Safer Church is the national policy and underpins how we safeguard within the church.

Please find below a link to the national model parish policy for your use, which echoes the main points from the Promoting a Safer Church national policy document.

[Model Parish Safeguarding Policy](#)



SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding Sunday

Safeguarding Sunday in November is a simple way both to celebrate and highlight all the constructive safeguarding work that goes on in our local churches every day of the year. We know how easy it is to forget this with all the other demands on our time.

Protecting vulnerable people is at the heart of the Christian message of justice and hope. Safeguarding Sunday is an opportunity for your church to show your community that you take this responsibility seriously.

The Church of England is supporting this year's Safeguarding Sunday on 20th November, encouraging local churches to use their regular Sunday service to explore together what safer places look like, and to acknowledge those working behind the scenes to make our churches safer for all.

The initiative comes from safeguarding charity Thirtyone:eight who provide a resources pack to help Safeguarding Sunday be a success. These can be found at <https://thirtyoneeight.org/get-involved/safeguarding-sunday/>

Whether you can give just a few minutes or can dedicate your whole service, Thirtyone:eight have everything you need to help plan and run your event.

Last year, over 2,000 churches across the UK took part! Join in this growing movement of churches speaking-up for vulnerable people on Sunday 20th November (or any Sunday in November) and help make 2022 the biggest year yet.

Safeguarding Training

Thank you to all those who have now completed their required training modules.

Can I remind everyone of the requirements made by the new learning framework that came into effect at the start of this year.

The tables in the November 2021 Safeguarding Training newsletter show the learning requirements for 2022-2025.

[Safeguarding Training Newsletter November 2021](#)

- Table 1 will assist you in looking up learning via a course.
- Table 2 will assist you looking up learning via a role.
- Table 3 gives the links to book a course. This table also indicates a course's duration, and whether it is online or delivered virtually via Zoom

We have had several questions in regard to what modules Tower Captains and Bell Ringers must complete.

Tower captains and deputies and those teaching children – **must** complete Basic Awareness if not already done so, as a one off. They must also complete Foundations and refresh at this level three yearly.

Bell ringers – we recommend that bell ringers complete Basic Awareness.

Support and Link roles

The diocese is seeking volunteers who could assist in a Support or Link role, required when a concern is raised against a church officer.

Although we do currently offer to support all parties when a Core Group is held after a concern is raised or a disclosure made, having a small pool of volunteers for each role will ensure our compliance with Responding to, Assessing and Managing Concerns or Allegations against Church Officers Practice Guidance 2017. We are looking for a pool of six people for each role.

In the case of the link role we require people who can communicate with the respondent with consideration for the isolation and vulnerability which they may experience.

In the case of the support role, communication with a victim or survivor, listening to and responding to their needs is required.

Training is required for each role, which is delivered by the National Safeguarding Team.

Please see the link to the role descriptions below. We would be grateful if you think you could fulfil either of these roles that you contact safeguarding@stalbans.anglican.org with an expression of interest.

[Link Person Role](#)

[Support Person Role](#)

Bedfordshire Safe Space Scheme

We are pleased to tell you about a scheme that is being run in Bedfordshire called the Safe Space Scheme. It is spearheaded by Central Bedfordshire Council but open to all of Bedfordshire.

Simply put, a place (Church or other building) registers themselves on the scheme if they are willing and able to supply a Safe Space for someone suffering Domestic Abuse to come to use a phone (preferably a mobile) and possibly the internet to contact agencies when they feel that they cannot use their own, perhaps because the phone or computer are being tracked by the perpetrator.

It involves registering the scheme, displaying posters outside the Church with contact details on and obviously being able to offer the help.

Please find below links to some more information regarding the scheme on the [BDAP](#) website, which highlights the Safe Space Scheme but also has valuable information on a variety of topics.

The Safe Space will display, if possible, information about the local and national services that can support victims. If these information details can't be displayed for some reason, the Safe Space would provide access to the information for people who need it.

Staff who manage and work in the Safe Space do not need to be experts in domestic abuse. Just having information about support services displayed and providing a safe environment for someone affected by domestic abuse to make a call or access on-line services, could make a big difference.

Even if you can't offer a Safe Space you can still help by displaying the posters.

[CBC This is a Safe Space](#)

[BDAP This is a Safe Space Questions](#)

[Domestic Abuse Helplines](#)

Separate but on the same theme, if you think you could be a Domestic Abuse Responder, please see

[Become a Domestic Abuse Responder](#)

Diocesan Safeguarding Team

Your Safeguarding Advisers are:

Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) - Jez Hirst 01727 818107 or mobile 07867 350886

Assistant DSA - Martyn Hedley 01727 818106 or mobile 07391 010033

Martyn works part time and his usual work days are Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.

Assistant DSA - Mandy Davies 01727 818193 or mobile 07771 179015

A key part of Mandy's role is the co-ordination, preparation, and delivery of safeguarding training. Mandy works part time. Her usual work days are Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

Email address for all: safeguarding@stalbans.anglican.org

Diocesan Safeguarding Administrator - Catherine Boon

01727 818103 cboon@stalbans.anglican.org

Catherine works on weekdays between 9:15am and 2.45pm

Introducing Dave Adams, Assistant DSA. 01727 818104 or mobile 07469 351357.

Dave is a retired Police Detective and has spent many years involved in the safeguarding of children. Dave joined us at the start of May 2022 and works full time.



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