

'Safe and welcome'

Introduction to Safer Recruitment in the parishes of Long Ashton, Barrow Gurney and Flax Bourton

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Context

It is a tragic but inescapable fact that, throughout history, humans have shown a considerable capacity to abuse their power, position and privilege to damage each other and the communities in which they have lived.

This abuse takes many forms and its effects can be long-lasting and far-reaching. It is often suffered disproportionately by those least able to protect themselves: the very young, the very old or those who are made vulnerable by all sorts of physical, mental or socio-economic conditions.

As a gathering of human beings, the Church is not immune from the potential for this sort of abuse to take place among us. Indeed, through reviews such as the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) and others, we are uncovering more and more evidence of the ways in which Christians in particular have failed in their responsibilities to love, protect and respect others and to promote the 'fullness of life' which we believe is God's promise for all people.

Furthermore, because churches often want to open their doors wide in unconditional welcome to all, we can be an especially 'soft target' for those who would want to join our communities with abusive intent.

Good news

But all is not lost... In common with many other individuals and organisations of good will, we hold out the hope of a better, transformed world whose hallmarks are love, respect and justice for all. We see it as part of our mission as local churches to help make that transformation a reality in our communities. This document outlines one of the ways we can do that.

Safer recruitment

No amount of paperwork, policy or box-ticking will provide the magic wand which prevents abuse taking place. However, safer recruitment processes for those who lead and volunteer in church-based projects can make a significant difference through:

- approved training to raise awareness of the signs of abuse and what to do if it noticed or suspected
- appropriate background checks and conversations to understand a potential volunteer's skills, motivation and previous experience
- clearly defined roles and responsibilities (including those things which are *not* within the remit of a given role)
- proper support and lines of accountability for volunteers so they can carry out their roles to the best of their ability

NB: our training is provided by the Diocese of Bath & Wells, to whom we are accountable for our policies and procedures, and is specific to the particular challenges faced by churches as they engage with communities.

It is our policy that all those who lead or volunteer in projects or groups sponsored by our churches will be recruited according to these principles and the process set out overleaf.

Safer recruitment - key steps

• Initial application conversation

- with the Rector or a Churchwarden for a Project Leader role
- or with the Project Leader for an occasional volunteer role
- purpose is to discuss the aims of the project/group and specific responsibilities/expectations of the role, plus any relevant skills and experience of volunteer
- opportunity for self-declaration of any previous convictions or cautions on alert of volunteer
- references may be sought in some instances

• Background check

- carried out online via the national government Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)
- requires some personal ID checking up front
- outcomes of the check are shared with the Diocesan and Parish Safeguarding Officers

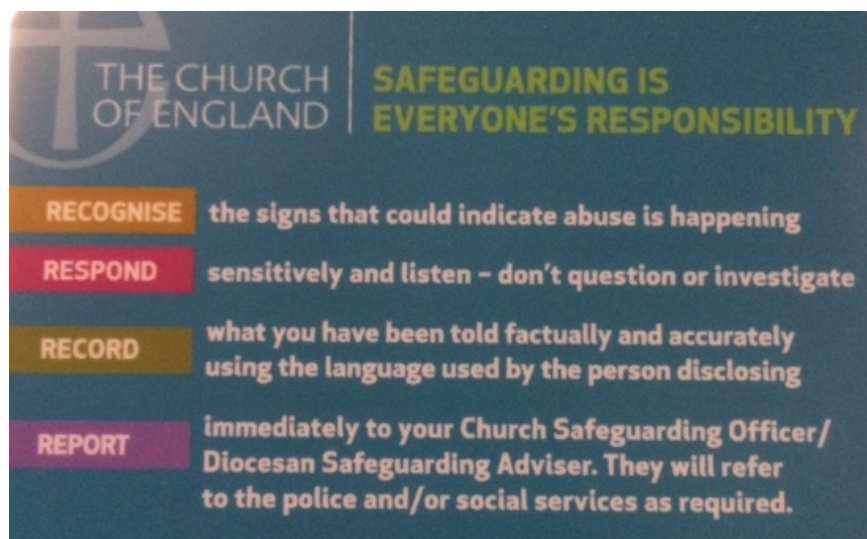
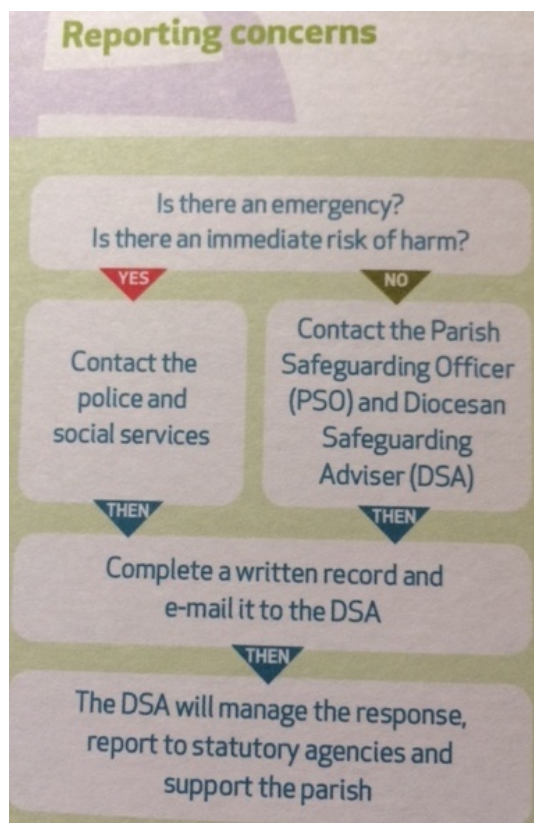
• Training modules

- introduction and foundation modules for occasional volunteers
- leadership module in addition for Project Leaders
- training is offered free of charge through the Diocese of Bath & Wells and the first two modules can usually be done online within about 2 hours in total.

• Follow-up conversation

- induction to role including any Health & Safety considerations
- opportunity to ask further questions or clarify responsibilities
- opportunity to reflect on training material

Reporting a concern



Key contacts

Revd James Harris - Rector (Vicar)
01275 602331 or reverendjamesharris@gmail.com

Gill Miles - Parish Safeguarding Officer (Long Ashton)
07484 157658 or safeguarding@allsaintsla.org.uk

Melanie James - Parish Safeguarding Officer (Flax & Barrow)
07831827454 or meljanerosling@aol.com

Ben Goodhind - Diocesan Safeguarding Manager
01749 588917 or safeguarding@bathwells.anglican.org

The National Safeguarding Team

- designing and implementing national policy and learning pathways
- casework - high profile and complex cases
- commissioning 'lessons learned' reviews
- national survivor support and engagement
- co-ordinating independent Diocesan audits
- strengthen and support national networks



Diocesan Safeguarding

Diocesan Bishop

Responsible for ensuring safeguarding arrangements are inline with House of Bishops policy and guidance.



Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor (DSA)

Manages allegations, advises survivors, reports concerns, and works closely with external agencies.

Ensures national policy and training is implemented in local organisations.



Parish Church Safeguarding

Parochial Church Council (PCC)

- have a duty of care to protect the vulnerable and work in partnership with the incumbent to :
a) raise awareness and promote training **b)** adopt the House of Bishops safeguarding practice guidance **c)** appoint at least one designated parish safeguarding officer.



Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO)

- the key link between Parish and Diocese
- has an overview of all activities involving children, young people and vulnerable adults.



Parish Safeguarding Administrator

- administrating DBS applications.
- this role is sometimes combined with the PSO