

Safeguarding Training Session at St. John's Sunday 27th April 2014

Introduction:

The purpose of this meeting is to give an overview of the Diocesan safeguarding policy (8 sections) which I hope the PCC will adopt. I know most, if not all, of you have attended safeguarding training sessions held by the diocese (and some of you will have similar training at your place of work), but it will assist me because I'll know what has been discussed so thank you all very much for attending today.

What does safeguarding mean?

According to the Children Act 1989 "The Welfare of the Child should be paramount".

Therefore, the aim should be to keep children away from harm and do nothing to impair their health, well being and development. We are commanded to love our neighbour as ourselves and we have the example of Jesus to follow:- He consistently sought out the vulnerable and oppressed to heal and minister to and it was He who said "Suffer the little children to come unto me" (Luke 18.16).

In the policy the term safeguarding covers vetting and safer recruitment, safer working practices, responding to concerns, dealing with allegations against those responsible for children. There have been child protection policies in churches for some years but "Safeguarding" came about following the death of the 8 year old French speaking immigrant, Victoria Climbe" in 2000. In his enquiry Lord Laming criticised police, social services, medical services and the church for their shortcomings. The report was published in 2003 and has led to the current requirements for all organisations to adopt safeguarding measures. Sadly, churches have had their share of scandals and reports – locally, Ronald Johns was a vicar in Borrowdale and a Canon at Carlisle Cathedral was sentenced for sexually abusing 3 boys between 1983 and 1991. The Church's Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS) estimate 25% convicted paedophiles attend church. Safeguarding is the duty of all the congregation – we all need to be vigilant and report any incident/person we are concerned about.

Today we are principally concerned with children but the church also has a responsibility to recognise and support all those (including adults) who may be vulnerable in such a way as to give them as much independence and autonomy and not undermine their dignity. A vulnerable adult is one who is, or maybe, in need of community services OR who is, or maybe, unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation

The policy:

The diocese policy can be found at www.carlisle-diocese.org.uk/people-and-structures/committees/safeguarding.html and on St. John's website in due course, is comprised of 8 sections plus appendices. Only 3 of these and a couple of appendices need to be read by workers with children:- sections 3i, 5i and 6 and appendices 1a & 1d. – so these will be looked at in more detail.

Section 1

The principles, theological context and definitions relating to safeguarding are set out in this section. The principles include:-

- *Giving care, nurture and respectful pastoral ministry to all children and adults*
- *Safeguarding and protection of all children and adults*
- *Establishment of safe, caring communities which provide a loving environment where there is a culture of informed vigilance regarding the dangers of abuse*

It is pointed out in this section that staff will be carefully selected and trained to fulfil these roles and any problems/ allegations will be taken seriously and dealt with promptly with the involvement of the relevant authorities when appropriate.

Abuse can have a very profound and long lasting effect on an individual and so it is right that the abused should be given support. However, we have all fallen short of the mark so we should also support the abuser appropriately: support may well be required by those involved in any way with a case of abuse e.g. the church worker to whom a disclosure is given and even to the safeguarding co-ordinator.

Section 2

This section describes the roles and responsibilities associated with the Church. It is worth repeating that everyone has a duty to help ensure the safeguarding of those around them.

The organisation within the Church of England is hierarchical:- The diocese is obliged to adopt the House of Bishops safeguarding policies, and is responsible for the safeguarding structure within the diocese and for monitoring safeguarding within the parishes. The diocese also provides access to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

St. John's has an obligation (PCC and incumbent) to accept as a minimum the House of Bishop's policies and to be informed by additional procedures within the diocese. We should be responsive to local needs in our safeguarding policy, appoint a safeguarding co-ordinator (or two) and ensure appropriate recruitment of the various leaders and give them

training and support. There needs to be the correct level of insurance cover and there should be an annual review of safeguarding policies and procedures.

The parish safeguarding co-ordinator should work with the PCC and the incumbent to maintain a safeguarding policy and needs to ensure that any concerns about children, vulnerable adults or anyone's behaviour are appropriately reported to the local authorities and the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA). In addition the safeguarding co-ordinators are responsible for ensuring the policy is followed by the church workers who should be familiar with the appropriate sections of the policy and to periodically "drop in" on a group meeting.

Section 3i

Section 3 is divided into two parts:- section 3i is the code of conduct for workers with children whilst section 3ii is relevant for workers with adults who may be vulnerable .

The recommendations in this section are taken from "Protecting All God's Children" 2010 and include advice for all children workers, plus more information directed at the leaders of the various groups, how to respond to **child protection** concerns and some advice on running church sponsored activities.

The leaders are given a list of 12 do's and 18 don'ts, but the majority will not come as a surprise. The do's include reporting to the leader/ safeguarding co-ordinator/DSA anything you're suspicious or concerned about.

To my mind these lists can be divided into groups:-

- 1) Common sense
 - Treat with respect and dignity
 - Avoid inappropriate touch and innuendo
 - Ensure children know who they can approach with a problem
 - Ensure they behave well towards each other
 - Organise toilet breaks for young children
 - Avoid physically rough or sexually provocative games
 - Set a good example
 - Don't allow unknown adults access to the children
 - Respond warmly but not intrusively to a child who needs comforting
 - If a child is misbehaving – have a word with the parent

Keep parents informed of drop off and collection times

- 2) "Back protection"
- Tell another adult if you need to take a child to the toilet
 - Work in direct sight of another adult
 - Administer first aid with others around
 - Make children and parents aware beforehand of an activity which involves physical contact
 - Consent for photos etc
 - Record, sign and date incidents
 - Don't invite a child home alone, or be alone in a car with a child
 - Don't organise social meetings outside of a group

- 3) Spiritual
- Not included in the policy but should we not pray for those in our charge

Additional responsibilities for group leaders:

- Health and Safety requirements and arrangements including first aid
- Risk assessment of all activities & safe environment
- Liaise & report to PCC
- Discuss specific safeguarding concerns with the safeguarding co-ordinators
- Maintain an attendance register (children and leaders)

Particular aspects:-

Special needs -try to be inclusive

- Ask parents for advice

Consent

- Child can consent for simple things if he/she can understand the implications
- Adult consent required for more special activities

Registration forms securely stored (Data protection Act 1998)

Available during activities

Staffing Ratios – from 1:3 to 1:8 depending on age
 Leaders genders to reflect group composition

Venue See leaders responsibilities above

 Access to drinks

 Accident book, list of first aiders

E-safety - I don't propose to say anything about this today.

 I'm not aware of the groups using the computer during meetings

 Communication with the children in group is a difficult area – essentially try

 To maintain boundaries, phone as little as necessary and share the
 information. Consider asking consent of the parent (written). Could use a
 group specific facebook page but keep separate from your own friends &
 contacts. Limit childrens data displayed to the minimum. Educate children to
 be wary about putting personal information into the public arena.

Unaccompanied children – make welcome, ensure parents happy for them to be

 there. Encourage them to arrive home when they are supposed to.

 Fill in a registration form as far as possible.

Taking children off site – Need special risk assessment and consent. There should be a

 person at base who knows the itinerary, has contact details of the children and
 leaders and waits by the phone . Leaders on the trip should have access to a phone
 and carry a first aid kit. If the driver is from the church he/she needs to comply with
 the requirements as laid out in the policy in terms of age, licence, insurance cover,
 appropriate driving experience and licence etc.

Workers who have been DBS checked need to keep this renewed every 5 years (assuming they are still in that role) and are required to attend a diocesan safeguarding training session every 3 years as a minimum.

Section 4

Safer recruitment. This section gives advice on the recruitment and appointment process. It should be decided if the person requires a DBS check and at what level for the post applied for. This should be decided by the person driving the appointment process with the assistance of the safeguarding co-ordinator if required. If the position does need a DBS check then the co-ordinator will contact the verifier (currently Ann Walkingshaw) and she will arrange this. The applicant will need to be interviewed and give the details of two referees (preferably one should be someone who knows the applicant from a work environment who can comment on any safeguarding risk and the other should be someone who can comment on the applicant's Christian character). The interview and references must be satisfactory and the DBS check clear **before** the individual can commence their role.

If the DBS check is not clear then the safeguarding co-ordinator must meet with the applicant and chat through the situation. It is most likely that the DSA will need to be contacted to decide how to proceed from a safeguarding point of view. DBS checks will only be returned with something to report in a very small number of cases and must not be depended on to keep appointments safe. The appointment process must be sufficiently robust to deter and possibly identify a potential abuser. To this end it needs to be made during the appointment process that the church takes safeguarding very seriously and questions specifically asking about safeguarding aspects should be asked by one of the interview panel who has been DBS checked him/herself.

The successful applicant should be given details of the support and training they will be offered during their work and informed of the arrangements for supervision and who they can approach for help. They should attend a diocesan safeguarding training session as soon as possible.

Section 4ii gives information about the barring service and what constitutes regulated activity i.e. activity for which a DBS and barring check is needed (which includes the leaders of childrens groups). Essentially this depends on the frequency of the meetings and the level of supervision an individual adult has with special consideration for overnight activities and time intensive ones.

No one under 18 years of age should be solely responsible for a group and the C of E recommends this age group should not undergo a DBS check. It would seem sensible therefore to only appoint teenagers as helpers who are well known to the church and ensure they are closely supervised and given clear instruction of what is expected of them and

ensure they receive whatever support they need. These matters should be reviewed with the individual at the start of each year. Consideration should be given as to whether an educational reference for those under 18s still in full time education should be sought from the school in order to ascertain if there are any safeguarding concerns (this is not essential currently).

The recommendation is for at least three members of the PCC to have been DBS checked; one of these should be the individual responsible for overseeing the safeguarding co-ordinator(s). It may be that PCC members have been DBS checked for other roles they hold within the church.

It should be noted that there is a legal requirement to inform the DBS if anyone is dismissed for safeguarding reasons.

Sarah's Law refers to the Child Sex Offenders' Disclosure Scheme which allows for specific information to be requested from the police about an individual who would not normally qualify for a DBS check e.g. a member of the general population or congregation who is not involved with children's work.

A basic level DBS check can be requested for people not involved with children's work via the Disclosure Scotland Scheme.

Section 5

This part of the policy is divided into 3 sections and is concerned with the recognition of abuse – part one describes the situation in children, part two shows the adult perspective and the third part refers to domestic abuse.

Recognising abuse to children:

The golden rule is that if it is considered a child is at risk from harm they should be referred to the police or local authority's children's services. Unless there is an immediate need the matter can be discussed with the DSA first to gain advice.

Harm to children may take many forms and can be easy or difficult to spot. Harm may have occurred as the result of a one off incident or it could be due to the accumulation of episodes over time. Harm may be current or historical.

Four categories of harm are recognised in "Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010":-

Physical abuse –this includes hitting, biting etc. and the fabricating of symptoms of an illness in a child resulting in unnecessary treatment, and even inducing an illness in a child

Sexual abuse – this includes forcing or enticing the child to be involved in

sexual activities, looking at or being involved in the production of sexual images. It also includes the involvement of a child in inappropriate behaviour and the grooming of a child ready for abuse.

Neglect – This is a failure to meet the basic physical and/ or psychological

needs of a child likely to result in serious impairment e.g. failure to ensure adequate supervision, failure to get access to appropriate medical care. Neglecting emotional needs, adequate food, clothing and shelter etc.

Emotional – Persistent emotional maltreatment such as to cause severe and

persistent adverse effects on emotional development with ensuing feelings of worthlessness. May involve the prevention of expression of views thus silencing the child or ridiculing them. This can involve the having developmentally inappropriate expectations imposed.

Overprotection

Seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another e.g. in domestic violence situations

Bullying – although it's unclear when bullying becomes abuse

Special topics – refer to full policy but include

- i) Stranger abuse – it should be noted that most abuse arises from people known to the child
- ii) Internet related – chat rooms, cyber bullying
- iii) Forms of harm include the downloading, keeping or distributing indecent images of children
- iv) Bullying – may be other children
- v) Children may be affected by gang activity, exposure to knives, drugs, dangerous dogs etc.
- vi) Disabled children – are more likely to be abused than healthy children

- vii) Deliberate self harm –local authority childrens care services, child and adolescent mental health services and/or the GP should be informed
- viii) Domestic abuse –may not involve physical violence to the child but it is considered the child will always suffer ,at least, emotional abuse in this situation
- ix) It should be remembered that parents of abused children may themselves be vulnerable adults e.g. substance abuse
- x) Female genital mutilation -is illegal and should be reported to the police
- xi) Child trafficking
- xii) Sexual exploitation and involvement in prostitution
- xiii) Forced marriages (as opposed to arranged marriages)

Some clues to spotting an abused child

These children may exhibit a change in their behaviour e.g. they may become withdrawn, aggressive or attention seeking. They can start to experience difficulties with concentrating at school, but others may excel at school because they feel valued by teachers. They may suddenly start to receive gifts. Abused children may develop self harm or addiction problems with alcohol or drugs. It may be that they suffer a loss of self esteem and are willing to let anyone do anything they like to them (any love is better than no love)

Recognising Domestic abuse

This is very common and occurs in all sections of the community – it occurs in 1 in 5 adults (1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men) with the male to female type being both more common and more serious. Between 6 and 10% of women experience domestic abuse in any given year and 1 in 3 suicides is a victim of domestic abuse.

It has been estimated that 750,000 children per year witness domestic abuse.

Domestic abuse may be physical, emotional, financial, sexual, spiritual or neglectful in nature.

Section 6 – Responding to allegations

It is important that the individual reporting abuse is taken seriously and if you are concerned this information needs to be shared with someone who will know what to do and will act

within the law and in the best interests of the person harmed. One such option is the DSA but the archdeacon can be contacted if the DSA cannot be contacted quickly enough as can the local authority services. Although adults may have more control over their situation abuse to children must always be reported to the statutory authorities.

Receiving the referral :-

This may come about by a direct disclosure from the abused. Disclosure may be delivered by a third party and can be in written or verbal form and may take the form of a grievance i.e. against a person, or it may be a complaint e.g. about a policy or an action that was taken. The abuse may be current or historical, it may be obvious or less so and might be a conclusion that you have reached after a long time of observation and thought. Whatever the situation it is important that you don't struggle with it alone but let the professionals deal with it i.e. the DSA. (Complaints or grievances against the clergy should be reported to the arch deacon or bishop)

Guidance for the initial response:-

It is important to respect the confidence of the individual unless it concerns a matter of law when you may have to tell someone else – therefore don't promise to maintain a confidence until you know what is to be confided. It is important to tell children from the outset that you may have to tell someone else in order to help them so you cannot promise to keep things secret but it is still important that they tell you what is troubling them.

Stay calm and maintain eye contact whilst the disclosure is being made. Allow the individual to talk and don't ask leading questions. You must be non-judgemental but can still offer support and reassurance that they were right to tell you.

Don't tell everyone – your group leader(if not yourself)should be told and the DSA (obviously if the disclosure is about either of these individuals then someone else should be informed instead).

Try to explain what might happen next.

Reassure the person of your continued support but **do not** investigate the matter yourself and don't inform the abuser.

Note taking/record keeping:-

Make full notes as soon as possible **after** the incident has been disclosed and quote exact words where possible.

Stick to the facts and record the individual's details including the GP if possible Sign and date the record and include your role – keep this record in a safe place.

Imminent Risk:

Securing the safety of the individual in these circumstances is essential so act immediately and inform the police or local authorities.

If the parents are available but not the abusers they should be kept fully informed

Referring On:

The DSA may ask you to speak to certain people – be ready to share all the information you have and follow the advice given.

Let them know if the family are aware you are making a referral and if you are willing to have your details shared (usually best to do so unless you have a good reason to remain anonymous – if so let them know)

We should be prepared to whistle blow in the church.

Section 7 – Supervision of offenders and those who pose risk

This section is about how to manage the situation of having someone in the church who is a known offender – it may be someone who is known to have abused in the past e.g. sex or violent crimes against adults in the past or they may just be considered to pose a risk although they are not offenders e.g. drug or alcohol problems, mental illness or special needs. These people should be discussed with the DSA and a conclusion reached about how they can be included in the church – perhaps with certain restrictions on their activities and they may need to sign an agreement which will be monitored by a support group in church. There may be other groups who can support the individual e.g. family, other organisations

It is important these individuals receive pastoral care but in the case of some child sex offenders it may be that it is arranged for them to attend a different church with fewer/no children present.

Section 8 – Insurance and Health and Safety and Risk Assessment

Insurance policies for churches usually require all reasonable steps to have been taken to prevent injury, loss or damage – therefore we have an obligation to adopt best practice.

To be covered by the insurance policy the PCC must specifically accept responsibility for the activities of a group and this must be minuted in detail.

It follows that the PCC must have full details of any proposed new activity and these must also be minuted.

The PCC must select all new leaders and maintain records of all these appointments.

In reality the PCC will most likely discuss general activities for a particular group on an annual basis but will need to be consulted on any new activities which go outside these parameters or if new leaders are appointed.

Special care is required if a group go on a trip.

Health, Safety and Risk Assessment:

There should be an annual inspection by churchwardens and others to include issues specifically relating to children and adults who may be vulnerable

Hazardous pieces of equipment should be checked and made safe e.g. kettles with trailing leads.

No obstructions in passageways

Appropriate toilet facilities with hygienic hand driers

Drinks should always be available

If food is regularly prepared on the premises an appropriate inspection is required by the Environmental Health Officer and a Food Handling and Hygiene certificate obtained.

Packed lunches should be refrigerated, an attendance register kept.

A first aid kit and accident book should be available

What leaders should know about fire:

What the alarm sounds like and where the exits and emergency exits are located

How to use any fire fighting equipment

Location of the assembly point

Name and address of premises

Who will meet the fire brigade when they arrive

The register should be taken with the group

Twice yearly fire practice

This is a very abbreviated version of the full policy which should be consulted.

Topics to think about:-Electronic communications, Supervision and training needs, First Aid

