

APCM Safeguarding Report

Safeguarding Officers

The Diocese of Bristol has introduced a number of new safeguarding initiatives, policies and guidelines in the past twelve months.

In response to this, the Bybrook Team Ministry appointed two safeguarding officers, Mary In der Rieden and Pat Meakins, to advise and assist the PCCs with their safeguarding responsibilities. Mary will primarily focus on the safeguarding of children and Pat with the safeguarding of vulnerable adults. Their contact details are:

Mary In der Rieden

01249 715 269/ 07553 463 030

Pat Meakins

07741 533 226

Safeguarding Policy

In the past, each PCC had adopted its own Safeguarding Policy. In order to ensure that all PCCs had an up-to-date policy, and that the policy was the same across the Team, a new Safeguarding Policy was prepared. This has been approved by the Team Council and each PCC, and is now in place throughout the Team. In addition to setting out the safeguarding commitments of each PCC, the Policy includes guidelines for safer recruitment, a policy on the fair recruitment of ex-offenders and guidelines for the handling of disclosure information.

The new Safeguarding Policy can be obtained from the PCCs, the Safeguarding Officers or the Bybrook Office.

Safeguarding Information

The Safeguarding Officers are in the process of preparing an information document which will include (i) an overview of safeguarding, (ii) a list of the roles and responsibilities for safeguarding within our Benefice, (iii) guidance on how to respond to a safeguarding concern, (iv) guidelines for those working with children and vulnerable adults and (v) a list of emergency numbers.

The document, once finalised, will be provided to all staff and volunteers who work with children or vulnerable adults.

Criminal Record Checks

Certain staff and volunteers throughout the Team are required to have a criminal record check in light of the role they undertake. This used to be a paper-based process.

In the last year, the Diocese of Bristol has arranged for an online provider who facilitates Disclosure and Barring Service (“DBS”) checks. DBS checks have replaced Criminal Record Bureau (“CRB”) checks. Mary In der Rieden has completed the necessary training to allow her to process DBS checks online and, following the adoption of the new Safeguarding Policy throughout the Team, she is now able to process DBS checks through the online provider.

Following a review of all staff and volunteers in the Team, it was found that eleven DBS checks were outstanding. These are in the process of being completed.

Training

The Diocese of Bristol provides a comprehensive safeguarding training programme for staff and volunteers working in churches and church activities.

This includes a basic level safeguarding course which all staff and volunteers are required to undertake and which can be completed online.

In addition to this, all staff and volunteers who work with children or vulnerable adults must complete Foundation Safeguarding training which is a face-to-face training course.

Furthermore, any staff or volunteers who work in a supervisory capacity with children and/or vulnerable adults, as well as all Church Wardens, need to complete Leadership Safeguarding Training which is also face-to-face.

Training for the Ministry Team is arranged by the Diocese but training for all other staff and volunteers is arranged by the PCCs with the assistance of the Safeguarding Officers. The Safeguarding Officers will be working closely with the PCCs to begin the training process.

Risk Assessments

Each activity provided by our churches should be risk assessed on an on-going basis. To date, this has not been done in a formal manner. The PCCs, with the assistance of the Safeguarding Officers, intend to appoint a team leader in respect of each such activity. The team leader, together with the Safeguarding Officers, can then undertake a risk assessment and take any actions which are identified to reduce any risks.

Safe and Welcome

The Bristol Diocese has introduced an award scheme called "Safe and Welcome". It relates to safeguarding and youth activities, as well as the accessibility of churches. As the scheme also covers accessibility issues, it goes beyond pure safeguarding, but the two can go hand in hand.

When certain milestones are met, a church will be awarded bronze, silver or gold "Safe and Welcome" awards. The scheme replaces one called "Child Friendly Churches".

The scheme provides useful targets to aim for in a structured fashion and, by accessing the scheme, additional assistance and resources are available to the PCCs and Safeguarding Officers. As a result, the Team Council is recommending that the churches within the Team join the Safe and Welcome scheme.

Action Plan

It is intended that the following actions will be taken over the next twelve months:

- all outstanding DBS checks to be completed;
- safeguarding information document to be finalised and distributed;
- training to be made available to all those who are required to undertake it;
- minimum level training to be completed by all PCC members, safeguarding officers and Ministry team members;
- team leaders to be appointed to each church activity and formal risk assessments to be commenced.

Assistance Required

In order to implement the action plan outlined above the Safeguarding Officers will need the assistance of church staff and volunteers as well as the wider congregation.

Those who require DBS checks will need to work with the Safeguarding Officers to complete the necessary process.

Everyone who works within our Churches needs to complete a certain level of safeguarding training. The PCCs, with the assistance of Safeguarding Officers, will make the training courses available and individuals are asked to complete that training at the earliest opportunity.

Furthermore, every member of the congregation and wider-community is reminded to report any safeguarding incidents or concerns to the Safeguarding Officers (or a member of the Ministry Team who will contact them on your behalf), no matter how small the concern.

If anyone has any safeguarding queries, or requires further information, they are welcome to contact the Safeguarding Officers at any time.

Mary In der Rieden