

**Safeguarding Update Parish Safeguarding Officer edition March 2022.**

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Wednesday, 16 March 2022

 Hi all

I hope this update finds you well. I have written an update especially focused on our PSOs as I have a fair bit to share this month. Firstly, thanks so much for all that you do, the team is very aware that without your efforts and dedication we would achieve very little.

PSO Forums

As I have mentioned before, I created a standing item on the Diocesan Safeguarding Panel to feedback on any PSO concerns or issues. To support this further I would like to set up a quarterly forum on Microsoft teams where we can catch up with you on any issues, answer and questions and generally get a feel for how things are going. I will try and arrange these, so they occur shortly before each Safeguarding Panel. I have heard a lot of requests since I started for more engagement, and I feel this can help connect people in a setting that is more secure than something like Facebook. With Teams you can also save documents and share screens etc.

If you would like to sign up for these forums, please drop me an email. They aren’t compulsory but are open to any PSO who would like to take part.

PSO Email accounts / Phone Numbers

I still see a lot of people using personal email addresses for safeguarding work. Please can I ask that you create a separate email account for your safeguarding work so that we can ensure our information is safe and that it reduces the risk of viruses or data breaches etc.

Similarly, we suggest you use a private number as a contact number for PSO work, that is, not a landline or a shared mobile. If your PCC has the funds to provide a dedicate Safeguarding mobile, then do explore that option.

Parish Dashboards

Use of these is still quite low. Just a reminder that they walk you through all of the tasks you need to do and are a tool to support you. If you haven’t signed up but want to then drop me an email, with your PSO email address and name of your Parish, Benefice and Deanery and I will sort this for you and send a link to support you in completing it.

Safeguarding Noticeboards

Please can everyone check you have details of how people can report safeguarding concerns in prominent places in your church buildings. They should clearly identify who the PSO is and how to contact the diocese.

An action from PCR2 is to make it easier to make confidential safeguarding referrals so you may want to also consider this in your church. I’m happy for confidential referrals to come via mail to myself if they don’t want to make them at parish level. Please can you check any notices about my team are up to date.

PSO Induction Training

Just a reminder that we are now inviting applications to undertake this face to face and available dates are on our website. We have heard a fair bit of feedback from the first two sessions we have run and will be taking that on board and making some changes, including, and utilising more of our team for the training so that you have an opportunity to meet us, ask any questions about the role you have taken on and make it more interactive.

We would like to include an experienced PSO in our training to talk about their experiences of the role. If you can offer this either as a one-off attendance or more frequently, I would love to hear from you.

PSO Buddies

As many of you will be aware its rather daunting becoming a PSO. We would like to be able to offer new PSOs who feel they would benefit from it a PSO buddy that they can link up with in a mentoring capacity.

If you feel you would like to do this, then please again drop me an email.

Safeguarding Casework

Being new in role (can I still say that?) I have undertaken an audit of our casework. It is clear that due to limited resources, furlough and Covid restrictions more widely, we (My team) need to ensure we are more consistently providing you with the right tools when faced with managing potentially dangerous people in your parish. As such I wanted you to have an awareness of what you should get from us when you have someone going to your parish who poses a safeguarding risk to children or vulnerable adults.

1. A risk assessment. This identifies what the risk is, what increases or decreases it.
2. A risk management plan. This identifies what is needed to manage the risk.
3. Based on the above documents, a Safeguarding Agreement which is used to define what the individual can or can’t do in your church. These documents should be reviewed annually.

Victim Services

I will shortly be undertaking a full review of the services that the diocese offers to victims of abuse. I would really like this to focus on experiences of victims including what worked well or what victims feel we should be doing or offering. I will be setting up a working group to undertake this process over a period of 12 months. This will offer a real chance for us to reflect on what more we can do and try and do the absolute best we can for people impacted by safeguarding failures in the church.

If you know of anyone who has been a victim and would be interested to getting involved or if you are someone with expertise in this field and would be willing to join the working group, please drop me an email.

Finally

I frequently get asked by new PSOs “What should I be prioritising?” For me that’s a difficult question in part because different PCCs and Parish Teams will have different strengths and weaknesses. For me there are some basics to start with:

1. Ensure you have been officially recorded as a PSO. Set up an email account for the safeguarding work and if possible, ask the PCC for a mobile.
2. Look at who in your parish is subject to safeguarding agreements? How are things going with those people?
3. Ask the PCC if there are there any active safeguarding concerns in your parish?
4. Check that people in your parish know how to report safeguarding concerns and ensure there are visible and up to date posters and noticeboards etc.
5. Email Samantha Gunning and book onto the PSO Induction Training. Complete your online training. Basic, Foundation, Domestic Abuse and Safer Recruitment. [Visit our training page](https://www.bathandwells.org.uk/parish-support/safeguarding/safeguarding-training/) for all the information you need.
6. Check with your PCC what outstanding vetting or safeguarding training is needed within your parish. Follow this up with them via email.
7. Register for the [Parish Safeguarding Dashboard and](https://www.bathandwells.org.uk/parish-support/safeguarding/parish-safeguarding-dashboards/) review the ‘How to Guide’.
8. Introduce yourself to us at Flourish House and know we are here to support you. You will never be made to feel bad for calling us.

Best wishes to you all and thanks again to all of our wonderful PSOs.

Ben

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