

SAFEGUARDING REPORT FOR THE APCM APRIL 2025

The profile of safeguarding in churches is higher than ever before and for good reason. Whilst thankfully, those who seek to abuse children and vulnerable adults are in the minority, they do exist in numbers and they seek out churches and other organisations where safeguarding practice is weak. Their activities go on in secret and they are generally very skilful at gaining trust. We also tend to associate safeguarding with children, and this is where safeguarding practice is most developed. However, nationally in the Church of England and in our diocese, there are now considerably more safeguarding referrals involving vulnerable adults than children. We must also remember that we are safeguarding ourselves as staff and volunteers. As a growing church, we want to welcome those who are vulnerable, but this comes with safeguarding challenges. Safe recruitment practice is crucial and means much more than DBS checks it means ongoing training, self-checks and reviews from ministry leads.

All that said I believe that safeguarding should be enthusiastically welcomed in a church where every individual is cherished and valued and although some of the procedures may be seen as onerous, the point of it all becomes clear as we look at ongoing safeguarding failures in all walks of life, not only the Church of England.

In the last 12 months Lou Rawlings volunteered to take on the DBS administration role, for which she has my thanks. I can report, that at the time of writing, the DBS renewals and first applications are in progress and will be up to date with no gaps for individuals volunteering. The numbers of volunteers who are DBS checked, or in the process of being checked number over 70.

Keeping training requirements ongoing and up to date is more challenging and this year will see Domestic Abuse Training become mandatory for more voluntary roles. Thank you to all you volunteers who support the ministries for your responsiveness when you hear from me, I am very grateful to you.

Thoughts for 2025-2026.

- Making Safeguarding visible and part of routine church life. Some of you may already have in your possession a credit card sized card with safeguarding prompts front and back. I have been handing these to people I know who volunteer for many roles as well as those who work with children and vulnerable adults. These cards will be refreshed and changed and handed out again in the next few months. This simple exercise has prompted some good conversations that I may not otherwise have had. You may have noticed (or not!) that I now wear a badge when I am in church that has my name and role on it.
- I plan to create a safeguarding display in church, with the aim of engagement and information sharing.
- Review how confidential records are kept which complies with GDPR.

- Review how we keep children and young people safe in the buildings we use for their activities

Annual Safeguarding Statement

I can confirm that the PCC has complied with its duty under Section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have regard to the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults).

Anne Hignell

Parish Safeguarding Officer

March 16th 2025.