

SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER



WINTER 2020



Dear colleagues,

Welcome to the last safeguarding newsletter for 2020. It has, for obvious reasons, been quite a year. The Safeguarding Team would like to thank you all for the outstanding work you have done throughout 2020 to serve those who are vulnerable in your communities, particularly during the most difficult points of the 'lockdown'. We would also like to thank you for working with us on two major developments for safeguarding in the Church of England; the Past Cases Review (2) project and the new safeguarding training framework. The following pages of this newsletter will give you some updates about these areas of work.

2020 has seen the publication of the final report of the investigation by the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) into the Church of England and Wales. This report once again highlighted the extraordinary courage of the many victims of child sexual abuse in the Church of England who have come forward, giving evidence both to the police and to the Inquiry itself. IICSA's report can be found on their website: www.iicsa.org.uk

This Diocese continues to build upon the progress we have made over the last ten years with regards to our safeguarding culture, practice and provision. Many parishes have completed Level 1 of Simple Quality Protects during 2020; this is a very encouraging achievement and represents genuine progress. In particular, the Safeguarding Team would like to thank all of you who have worked so hard on SQP, many of whom we have met over the last year and a half during the evaluation events across Sussex. The enthusiasm and pride you have shown in what you have achieved has been great to see!

We wish you all a very merry Christmas, and the happiest of New Years!

The Safeguarding Team

PAST CASES REVIEW (2)

PCR(2) is a national project that aims to ensure that every safeguarding report or concern involving church officers has been reviewed and dealt with appropriately.

In February Bishop Martin asked each parish in the Diocese to review their records and memory and report any safeguarding concern of which they were aware to the Safeguarding Team.

To date we have had responses from 99% of parishes. We are extremely grateful for this excellent response, particularly during the challenges of 2020, and wish to extend our thanks to everyone who has participated in this effort.

Like all Dioceses Chichester has a project board to ensure that we are following the national PCR(2) protocol. One of the members of that board is himself a survivor of child sexual abuse in this Diocese. The remainder of this page gives him the opportunity to explain the impact abuse had on him. As you read this, please use it to reflect on why the task of ensuring the past is properly dealt with, as PCR(2) aims to do, is so important.

It is over forty years since I was sexually abused by a priest in Brighton. It was an Anglo-Catholic parish and, like many priests from that and other traditions, this priest sat on a pedestal, looked up to by everyone in the church. I was twelve years old. I still feel the fear, anxiety and trauma of that day. When I think about what others suffered I also feel guilt for speaking out; unlike many victims I was only abused once. But I was abused. I am a victim, just like them. I was an innocent child and should not have been exposed to, and should have been protected from, this type of behaviour.

My abuse took place in the sacristy before serving at a baptism. I spent the whole service in a state of shock and fear, on auto-pilot, waiting for it to end so that I could get away. My parents were not church-goers and had no deference towards clergy; they believed me instantly when I told them what had happened. They confronted my abuser but didn't report it to the police in order to protect me. I never raised this with my Dad, but I think he thought he was doing the right thing.

In my twenties, I disclosed my abuse to my then parish priest. His response scarred me for life. He asked me whether I'd led my abuser on. I was twelve, sexually innocent and terrified. I didn't know what response I should or would get - or what he would do with the information I gave him. But I didn't expect the response that I got!

So, what do I expect of PCR2? I hope that by being transparent and up front - and being survivor focused, it will encourage other survivors to have the courage and confidence to come forward and know that their concerns will be listened to and acted upon. The 1970s and '80s are decades of shame for this Diocese - not only for the abuse that took place but more so for its failure to act when disclosures were made. Things have changed and I would encourage any survivor of sexual abuse in the Diocese to contact the police or safeguarding team - you will be listened to.

For me, I would like to dedicate my role as a survivor representative on PCR2, to the memory of Neil Todd, a victim of Peter Ball who took his life in 2012. May he rest in peace.

TRAINING

The Church of England has recently introduced a new module, called the Virtual Safeguarding Leadership Pathway, which replaces the old 'C2' training that was delivered to clergy, parish safeguarding officers, churchwardens, readers, and others in leadership across the Diocese.

The Leadership Pathway, which is currently delivered online via Zoom due to Covid-19 restrictions, focuses on a learning 'journey' involving engagement, reflection and the practical application of learning. Safeguarding is more about attitudes and culture than about 'ticking boxes' and the Pathway recognises this. One of the ways the Pathway reflects this is by requiring participants to complete written work before and after the two 90-minute sessions.

The Safeguarding Team recognise that this requires participants to complete a lot more work than previous versions of safeguarding leadership training. We are currently looking at the training materials to see whether some of the demands of the module can be reduced without reducing its effectiveness, particularly regarding the pre-course work. We will let parishes know via email what progress we achieve with that work. We do recognise that safeguarding training needs to be achievable and to present people with realistic demands, particularly for the volunteers who give freely so much of their time to further the mission of our churches. We are particularly grateful for the huge dedication of Parish Safeguarding Officers across the Diocese, who make such a difference to the level of safeguarding provision in our churches, and recognise that the Leadership Pathway training should not place too many further demands on people who are already giving so much.

In recognition of the demands of the new training, the national church have recently made slight changes to the lists of those required to complete the Leadership Pathway. These changes mean that currently churchwardens and PTO clergy are not required to complete this training in the Diocese of Chichester. The Safeguarding Team are working on options to include churchwardens and PTO clergy in a level of training beyond Foundation which will be available next year.

PLEASE BE AWARE OF THE SAFEGUARDING WEBSITE!

The Diocese of Chichester's Safeguarding Website gives you a wealth of information to help you achieve excellent safeguarding standards in your local parish. If you're not familiar with it, it can be found at:

<https://safeguarding.chichester.anglican.org/>