



Safeguarding Report for AGM 10th May 2023

Safeguarding Officer:

Each church within the Church of England is required to appoint a Safeguarding Officer to be the link between the Diocese concerning safeguarding matters.

The role of the Safeguarding Officer is to be the named person that volunteers and church members would report any disclosures or safeguarding concerns to. If required, the Safeguarding Officer will refer on any concerns to the Local Authority in which the Child or Adult at Risk of harm resides.

An Adult at risk of harm (previously vulnerable adult) is defined as someone aged 18 and over who is or may be in need of community care services for reasons such as mental health issues, learning or physical disability, sensory impairment, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of themselves or unable to protect themselves from harm or serious exploitation.

A child is defined as anyone under the age of 18 years old.

This role is regularly communicated within the church to ensure church members are aware of this role and who they should approach with any concerns.

Information of the Safeguarding Officer and team can be found on the website and the information point.

Safeguarding Team:

The Safeguarding Team consists of Sarah Emmanuel (Safeguarding Officer), Will Kemp (Vicar), Dean Gargano (Youth Pastor), Liz Styles (Children's Pastor), Ellie Zaragoza (PA to Vicar) and Dale Marklew (Trustee responsible for Safeguarding).

The team met without Will Kemp due to being on sabbatical but with John Naude on 28th February 2023 to review the safeguarding policies and training and the team continues to meet annually.

Importance of Safeguarding:

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and adults at risk, protecting them from abuse or maltreatment and preventing harm to their health or development.

Proverbs 31v 8 says 'Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute.'

As a church we want to ensure that the children and adults at risk in our community are protected and recognise the calling and duty to love and care for the vulnerable and marginalised and protect all from abuse.

At the Point we want to ensure we have clear procedures in place and a culture where ensuring children are safe is a key priority and taken seriously. We want to ensure we are a church where people are able to speak out about any concerns they have and any concerns are dealt with in a professional manner, with no covering up or matters being brushed under the carpet.

We are aware that the wider church has failed in this area with regards to historic abuse and sadly continues to fail where church leaders have abused their positions of authority and exploited church members and this highlights the importance of having clear policies and procedures with regards to safeguarding.

Volunteers/DBS checks:

All youth and children's volunteers are overseen by our staff Youth Pastor, Dean Gargano, and Children's Pastor, Liz Styles, who both have enhanced DBS clearance.

All volunteers and staff working with the youth and kids team have a DBS check prior to undertaking this role and an induction pack detailing all the policies and procedures.

We currently have 6 members of staff, 20 kids team volunteers, 9 youth team volunteers, 4 pastoral visiting team/home communion team and 7 trustees.

All team volunteers, trustees and safeguarding team are required to have DBS checks and these updated every three years.

All new trustees appointed will do the necessary safeguarding checks and training.

In addition to those who have a current DBS working within a team there are other members within the congregation who have DBS checks from having been on a mission trip for example but not in a current role but who could be called upon should there be team shortage.

Training:

Chichester Diocese have moved their Foundation Training (which is mandatory to attend for volunteers, staff and trustees) to online training.

Our staff, trustees and volunteers are required to complete the Basic Awareness and the Foundation Training in addition to attending our in house training run by myself and Liz Styles.

The last in house training took place via zoom on June 22nd 2022 and 23rd January 2023, 18 people have attended the training and all current staff and trustees are up to date with their training and any new trustees will complete this process once elected.

The next training session is planned for 25th September 2023.

It is agreed that volunteers will be required to attend training every two years. The diocese require training to take place every three years but at The Point we made the decision for our volunteers to attend every two years so that training is refreshed more regularly but also to allow a little leeway where people haven't been able to attend but can still remain on team.

As a safeguarding team we do appreciate that our volunteers often have attended safeguarding training in their work life or other settings and can feel frustrated by this, however we feel that as this is such an important area and being up to date and refreshed in the training is vital.

In addition Clergy, the Safeguarding Officer and the Children's and Youth Pastors are required to attend Safeguarding Leadership training.
All of the safeguarding team are up to date with their relevant training.

'Keep Safe':

As well as communicating about the role of the Safeguarding Officer as a safeguarding team at The Point we share the view that it is important to be a church that promotes children learning more about what they can do to try to keep themselves safe and promote a message which encourages to speak up, at the same time recognising the challenges and reasons why children might not feel able to.

We have communicated the NSPCC keep safe message the 'PANTS' underwear rule annually over the last few years and continue to do so.

Disclosures:

Any disclosures made are dealt with and referred on where required. The safeguarding team are made aware of any disclosures made.

Safeguarding Policies:

The Safeguarding team have reviewed the Chichester Diocese Safeguarding Policy and completed the mandatory 'Simple Quality Protects'.

Current policies can be viewed on our church website. In line with the new diocesan policy our website has a link on its home page directly to these policies.

Specific policies are in place regarding work with young people around social networking and texting.

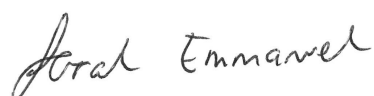
With regards to COVID-19 polices were updated to include that Zoom or other video chats will not take place on a 1-1 basis between a team/staff member and a young person of the opposite sex and another team member would always be included. With regards to Kids work any video calls take place via parents phones.

Conclusion:

Colossians 3v23 teaches us about doing our best, the message version says: 'And don't just do the minimum that will get you by. Do your best. Work from the heart for your real master, for God.... Keep in mind always the ultimate master you're serving is Christ. The sullen servant who does shoddy work will be held responsible. Being a follower of Jesus doesn't cover up bad work.'

I think it is important to remember this when we think about safeguarding, sometimes regular safeguarding training can feel like an unnecessary bore and reviewing safeguarding policies isn't the most exciting subject but as a church we want to ensure that we are doing our best in the area of safeguarding, because of how important it is and how costly this can be if we get it wrong. I always think it is worth highlighting that safeguarding is all of our responsibility and as a church we want to be a family who care for each other and make sure the vulnerable are protected from harm.

I can appreciate that reporting on a concern can feel daunting and often in a church setting where we are the family of God this can be a barrier as we always want to think the best of people and we might want to avoid conflict and feeling uncomfortable, but I would always encourage people to share any 'niggles' or anything they are not sure about with the safeguarding officer, and it would be the role of the safeguarding officer, in consultation with the diocesan safeguarding officer if required, as to whether this is reported on or not.



Sarah Emmanuel, Safeguarding Officer
26/04/2023