

Caring for our Neighbours, Caring for our Volunteers

Safeguarding Guidance

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you to all of you who are putting together plans to help out the most vulnerable people in your parishes (the elderly and those with specific complex needs) during the current health emergency. At this time we are awaiting specific guidance from the National Safeguarding Team with regards people who might chose to do this on behalf of their local church. Subject to anything further they might advise we have drawn together our own thoughts on this matter to assist you in the interim. **As you will appreciate we do not want to stop you doing all you can to ensure that those people who are in most need get the help they require, but we would also ask you all just to step back slightly for a minute and take stock of some wider implications.**

We know that the Police are already concerned that the level of financial abuse both by phone and also online (scamming) is likely to rise now that so many older people are living in isolation and without direct family support. Whilst we would not want to hamper much needed support to the local community our concern is that unscrupulous people may also come forward to 'volunteer' if they think we are not paying sufficient attention to doing some basic checks around people who are volunteering to help out in this way. **Vulnerable people will be made even more vulnerable as a result of this situation and their safety must be paramount.** So this is to offer some simple advice to make sure that the help given and received is safe and sustainable for everyone.

1. If possible, only ask those people who have already been safely recruited and DBS cleared to visit people on their own i.e. LPAs, Pastoral Visitors, LLMs, people with PTO (if under 70), clergy. This is not exhaustive but gives an idea – you will know who you have locally.
2. If volunteers you do not know well or who have not already been 'safely recruited' by the Church come forward to help don't turn them away but ask them to complete a simple application form – see attached example.
3. Take up references – even verbally is better than nothing.
4. Where numbers permit try to ensure volunteers visit in pairs and wherever possible at least one half of the pair should be a known and fully 'safely recruited' volunteer.
5. Try not to send the same volunteers back again and again to visit the same people/address.
6. If volunteers are going to be handling money for people they MUST have a DBS check at enhanced and barred level, the Disclosure and Barring Service have been very clear that there is no change to their rules on this.
7. Ask volunteers to report back to you or another nominated person for a de-brief after each visit.
8. Make sure they all complete the Basic online safeguarding module so they can recognise if someone is being abused. The link to that is here:
<https://safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org/>

9. It is also important to note volunteers should avoid physically going into the homes of the elderly or others with vulnerabilities. All such people are likely to fall into what the Government have identified as high risk groups and close direct contact of this nature could potentially place them at a far greater risk of contracting the virus. Wherever possible interaction should take place on the doorstep, observing the widely distributed 2 metre rule. This will also minimise the risks to volunteers and ensure the service they provide is sustainable.

Please look after each other and stay safe.

Heather Bland/Jem (Jeremy) Carter

Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers

*****PLEASE NOTE*****

There are now 2 Diocesan Safeguarding Advisors (DSAs), who work together on a job-share basis to provide safeguarding cover throughout the week. These are Heather Bland and Jeremy (Jem) Carter.

Heather Bland works 9am-5pm, Monday-Wednesday inclusive, predominantly from Church House. Heather should be the first point of contact for urgent safeguarding advice from 8am-9pm on Mondays and Tuesdays and from 8am until 12pm on a Wednesday (via mob 07500 664800), after which she will handover to Jem Carter as below.

Jem Carter works 9am-5pm Tuesday-Friday inclusive, largely from Church House, although one day a week (predominantly Tuesday) is spent providing dedicated Safeguarding support to the Cathedral. Jem is the first point of contact for urgent safeguarding advice from 12pm on Weds through until 5pm on a Friday. He is also available on an 'on call' basis until 9pm on Wednesday and Thursday evenings (via mobile 07469 857888).

An external Safeguarding service provider '**thirtyone:eight**' provides out of hours cover from 5pm on a Friday until 8am the following Monday – Tel 0303 0031111.

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Registered charity no. 240833. Registered Office: Church House, Crane Street, Salisbury SP1 2QB

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