

Annual Safeguarding report for CCH 2021-2022

Policies and practice

The church continues to meet the requirement to have due regard to guidance issued by the House of Bishops on matters relating to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. Whilst safeguarding is a standing agenda item at each church council meeting, Charlie, myself and the church council have been active in considering how its profile may be raised in the future to ensure safeguarding continues to be promoted effectively, whilst maintaining a proportionate balance with other important church business.

Our safeguarding policy and best practice guidelines are updated annually and continue to be in line with the House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policy and Practice Guidance and meet statutory requirements whilst remaining relevant to our church context. This year we have also undertaken a review of church culture, led by Susan Brown which provided good opportunities to reflect on our safeguarding practices and has led to some tweaking of these, mainly to raise the profile and awareness of safeguarding within the church, for example having my details on the power point each week, more mentioning of safeguarding from the front on Sundays and the need for safer recruiting of life group leaders going forwards.

As a Church we make use of the "Parish dashboard" tool which is an online tool to help PSOs assess how we are doing at following safeguarding best practice. I am pleased to report a high level of compliance at level 3 (the highest level on the toolkit).

Safer recruitment and Training

We are compliant with diocese safer recruiting practices. This means that all those working with children or vulnerable adults undertake a DBS check, as well as other checks such as an interview and references. We have recently expanded the teams in a range of ministries requiring the undertaking of these processes for such individuals. Much of this work is done behind the scenes by Lizzie Dunn who gives up considerable time to make sure we are able to fill our rota's with safely recruited volunteers.

The diocese has also updated best practice to move to a 3 year cycle for renewal of DBS checks and therefore Lizzie and I are in the process of renewing a number of DBS checks which are now due for renewal.

As well as safer recruiting our volunteers require safeguarding training provided by the diocese before they can serve in children's work, on church council or with vulnerable adults. We ensure that new volunteers have all required training before taking up a role, and are in the process of overseeing the refreshing of this training in those for whom the 3 year cycle has finished.

Safeguarding concerns and incidents

No safeguarding concerns have been raised during the year.

Alice Gilbert – Church Safeguarding Officer. March 2022