

## **Promoting a Safer Diocese**

### **A Safeguarding Policy for the Diocese of London**

#### **Foreword by the Bishop of London**

Since taking up my appointment as the new Bishop of London I have visited many parishes and projects across the Diocese. I have been struck by the vibrant and diverse ways in which we are engaging with communities within the Diocese of London and beyond. Large numbers of children, young people and adults attend churches across the Diocese every day of the week – through clubs, drop-ins, services and a whole range of other activities. One of the great blessings is the diversity of those who are touched by these activities in our churches.

At the heart of our calling as a church is our call to share the good news of Christ with all people – with a particular concern for those in most need. ALL are welcome. Indeed, many people who may be vulnerable are attracted to our churches because they are seen as a safe space. That strength brings with it a great challenge to the Diocese and our worshipping communities:

- To work to ensure that our parishes, churches and other communities continue to be seen as safe spaces;
- To offer a welcome to those who have sinned and seek repentance whilst managing any risk appropriately;
- To ensure that those who make allegations of abuse are listened to and supported, and that we deal with such allegations promptly.

We all have a role to play in creating a safer diocese – thank you for all that you have done and continue to do. We need to create a culture of informed vigilance, taking our safeguarding responsibilities seriously. To this end we are working to ensure that everyone has up to date safeguarding knowledge appropriate to their role, so that we can carry out our responsibilities with thoughtfulness, commitment and care.

I commend to you this new Safeguarding Policy for the Diocese of London as our commitment to play our full part in the whole church approach to safeguarding adopted by the Church of England in the policy statement that was agreed by the House of Bishops in 2017.

Signature

**The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame SARAH ELISABETH MULLALLY DBE , B.Sc, M.Sc, D.Sc (Hon)**



## Safeguarding Policy

### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The care and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults<sup>1</sup> who are involved in Church activities is the responsibility of the whole Church. Everyone who participates in the life of the Church has a role to play in promoting a Safer Church for all. This Safeguarding Policy is based on the Safeguarding Policy Statement of the Church of England that was agreed and published by the House of Bishops in 2017. It sets out the Safeguarding Policy of the Diocese of London and in particular a summary of the roles and responsibilities of all church bodies and office holders as we work together to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults who are involved in church activities.
- 1.2 This policy makes six overarching policy commitments:
- 1.2.1 To promote a safer environment and culture
  - 1.2.2 To enable and ensure safe recruitment practice and to support all those within the Church with any responsibility related to children, young people, and vulnerable adults
  - 1.2.3 To respond promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation
  - 1.2.4 To offer pastoral care to victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons
  - 1.2.5 To offer pastoral care to those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons
  - 1.2.6 To respond to those who may pose a present risk to others.
- 1.3 Under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016, all authorised clergy, bishops, archdeacons, licensed readers and lay workers, churchwardens and PCCs must have 'due regard' to safeguarding guidance issued by the House of Bishops (this will include both policy and practice guidance). A duty to have 'due regard' to guidance means that the person under the duty is not free to disregard it but is required to follow it unless there are cogent reasons for not doing so. ('Cogent' for this purpose means clear, logical and convincing.) Failure by clergy to comply with the duty imposed by the 2016 Measure may result in disciplinary action.
- 1.4 This Policy is supported by more detailed Practice Guidance and reference documents developed by the national safeguarding team, which can be viewed and downloaded [on their website](#).
- 1.5 In addition, the Diocesan Safeguarding Team have developed a range of bespoke guidance which can be accessed [on the diocesan website](#).

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<sup>1</sup> Although the term 'vulnerable adults' is used in this policy to be consistent with House of Bishops Policy and Practice Guidance, the term 'adults at risk' may be used interchangeably.

## **2 Safeguarding Policy Statement**

- 2.1 We are committed to safeguarding as an integral part of the life and ministry of the Church. Safeguarding means the action the Church takes to promote a safer culture and ensure that those who work, volunteer and worship in or visit our churches are kept safe. As such, we will promote the welfare of children, young people and adults, work to prevent abuse from occurring, seek to protect those who are at risk of being abused and respond well to those who have been abused. We will take care to identify where a person may present a risk to others, and offer support to them whilst taking steps to mitigate such risks.
- 2.2 The Diocese of London affirms the 'Whole Church' approach to safeguarding adopted by the Church of England. This approach encompasses a commitment to consistent policy and practice across all Church bodies within the Diocese. All Clergy and Church Officers, and indeed everyone associated with church activities across the Diocese and who may come into contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults, has a role to play.
- 2.3 The Diocese will take appropriate steps to maintain a safer environment for all and to practise fully and positively Christ's Ministry towards children, young people and vulnerable adults, responding sensitively and compassionately to their needs in order to help keep them safe from harm.

## **3 Foundations**

- 3.1 In developing its Safeguarding Policy, the Church of England has been guided by the following foundations, which will also guide implementation of this policy within the Diocese:

### **3.1.1 The Gospel**

The Church is called to share the good news of God's salvation through Jesus Christ and the call to repentance and faith through Jesus Christ. The life of our communities and institutions is integral to how we address this task. The good news speaks of welcome for all, with a particular regard for those who are most vulnerable, into a community where the value and dignity of every human being is affirmed and those in positions of responsibility and authority are truly trustworthy. Being faithful to our call to share the gospel therefore compels us to take with the utmost seriousness the challenge of preventing abuse from happening and responding well where it has.

### **3.1.2 Human Rights and the Law**

We recognise the personal dignity and rights of all children, young people and adults, as enshrined in the Human Rights Act 1998 and the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Safeguarding work is undertaken within a legislative framework supported by government guidance which sets out a range of safeguarding duties, responsibilities and best practice to which we will adhere.

### **3.1.3 Core Principles**

The following key principles underpin our approach to safeguarding practice:

- The welfare of the child, young person and vulnerable adult is paramount;
- Integrity, respect and listening to all;
- Transparency and openness;
- Accountability;
- Collaboration with key statutory authorities and other partners;
- Use of professional safeguarding advice and support both inside and outside the Church;
- A commitment to the prevention of abuse;
- The active management of risk;
- Promoting a culture of informed vigilance;
- Ensuring that case reviews and audit activity lead to improved process and response.

### **3.1.4 Good Safeguarding Practice**

We will promote and maintain a safer culture that protects and promotes the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults, and in order to do so we will ensure:

- A leadership commitment, at all levels, to the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults;
- A safeguarding policy that is available to Church Officers ;
- A clear line of accountability within the Diocese of London for work on safeguarding;
- Clear reporting procedures to deal with safeguarding concerns and allegations;
- Clear roles for Church Officers;
- Practice and services informed by ongoing learning, review and by the views of children, young people, families, vulnerable adults and in particular, those who are survivors of abuse within a church setting;
- Safer recruitment procedures are in place;
- Clear arrangements for support and/or supervision;
- Safeguarding training is made available to all Church Officers working with or in contact with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults;
- Effective working with statutory and voluntary sector partners;
- Publicly advertised arrangements for children, young people and vulnerable adults to be able to speak to an independent person, as required;
- Complaints and whistleblowing procedures that are well publicised;
- Effective information sharing;
- Good record keeping.

### **3.1.5 Learning from the past**

In recent years, statutory reports and independent reviews into abuse that have involved the Church of England and other faith organisations highlight past errors and significant lessons to be learnt to improve safeguarding. As a Diocese we continue to commit to a journey of truth, healing, learning and abuse prevention.

The Diocese is committed to learning from both our own past failings and those of the wider church, by ensuring that lessons learned are used to improve our response to future safeguarding concerns and how we equip and support all those with a role to play in

ensuring a safer diocese. In particular we are committed to listening to the views of survivors of abuse so that we can ensure that their voice shapes our future practice.

#### **4. Policy Commitments**

Based on the foundations outlined above, the Diocese of London has adopted the following policy commitments of the Church of England:

##### **4.1 Promoting a safer environment and culture**

All Church Officers will respect all children, young people and vulnerable adults and promote their well-being. We will strive to create and maintain an environment that is safe for all. We want to promote well-being, prevent abuse, and create a nurturing and caring atmosphere within our churches for children, young people and vulnerable adults. We wish continuously to improve and will do that by providing training and support to our staff, clergy, officers and volunteers in line with the House of Bishops' practice guidance. We want to communicate better, ensuring that we put our learning into practice and that our governance and quality assurance processes support our aspiration to improve. We will support all Church Officers to adhere to safer working practices and will challenge the abuse of power. We will ensure that we have people who listen to and advocate on behalf of children, young people and vulnerable adults within the knowledge that they will be cared for.

##### **4.2 Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children and vulnerable adults within the Church**

We will select and vet all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the Church, in accordance with the House of Bishops' safeguarding policy and practice guidance. We will train and equip Church Officers to have the confidence and skills they need to care and support children, young people and vulnerable adults and to recognise and respond to abuse. This will be done by providing and coordinating consistent and accessible safeguarding training in accordance with House of Bishops safeguarding policy and practice guidance.

##### **4.3 Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation**

Anyone who reports a safeguarding concern, knowledge or allegation of current or non-current abuse to the notice of the Church, or an incident that amounts to an allegation of abuse, will be responded to respectfully and in a timely manner. This will be in line with statutory child and adult safeguarding procedures and the House of Bishops safeguarding policy and practice guidance. All safeguarding work will be recorded in line with the House of Bishops safeguarding practice guidance. All suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations, that reach the threshold for reporting to the statutory authorities, will be reported via the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser or designated safeguarding adviser/officer in another church body to the appropriate statutory authorities. The status of the complainant or person against who the allegations are made is of no relevance to this.

Church Officers will cooperate with the statutory authorities, where they are involved. In responding to concerns or allegations of abuse relating to Church Officers, the Church will act in accordance with the requirements of criminal, civil and ecclesiastical law, and will respect the rights and safeguards afforded both to the victim/survivor and the subject of concerns or allegations.

#### **4.4 Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons**

We will endeavour to offer care and support to all those who have been abused, regardless of the type of abuse, when or where it occurred.

The Diocese is committed to continuing to learn how to respond in a supportive and healing way to the needs of those who have suffered abuse. Those who have suffered abuse within the Church will receive a compassionate response, be listened to and be taken seriously. The Church will respond to any disclosure of abuse in accordance with House of Bishops policy and practice guidance. This will be done in collaboration with the relevant statutory agencies in accordance with criminal, civil and ecclesiastical law. They will be offered appropriate pastoral care, counselling and support - according to the agreed need. An appropriate pastoral response to the family, parish, congregation or order will be considered, with due regard to the right of privacy of those directly involved, and to the administration of justice.

#### **4.5 Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons**

The Diocese and its Church Officers, in dealing with any safeguarding concerns or allegations of abuse, will respect the rights under criminal, civil and ecclesiastical law of all those named or against whom allegations are made. A legal presumption of innocence will be maintained during the statutory and Church inquiry processes. As the process progresses additional assessment, therapy and support services may be offered. The Diocese will take responsibility for ensuring that steps are taken to protect others when any Church Officer is considered a risk to children, young people and vulnerable adults. This will be done by working to mitigate any identified risks according to a safeguarding agreement. Church Officers who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse belong to families, congregations and church communities. We will be mindful of the need to provide support to members of families, parishes and congregations affected by the Church Officers in such situations.

#### **4.6 Responding to those who may pose a present risk to others**

Our churches, based on the message of the gospel, open their doors to all. We will offer pastoral care and support to any member of the church community who may present a known risk. We will ensure that any risk is assessed and managed through a safeguarding agreement in accordance with House of Bishops policy and practice guidance. This will be done in collaboration with the relevant statutory agencies and in accordance with criminal, civil and ecclesiastical law.

### **5. Putting the policy into action**

5.1 This Policy will underpin all safeguarding work within the Diocese and the drive to improve safeguarding practice and create a safer diocese. We will ensure that:

- All Church Officers have access to and understand this Policy;
- The Policy is promoted and publicised across the Diocese and its churches;
- The Church's safeguarding message is communicated as reflected in the policy;
- We have a "Promoting a Safer Diocese" action plan in place that sets out, in line with national and local priorities, how the policy is being put into action and is reviewed regularly;
- We will support churches and church groups across the Diocese in implementing this policy at a local level.

- 5.2 All parts of the Diocese, including Parochial Church Councils, are required to adopt or take account of this Policy within their own safeguarding policy.
- 5.3 The Cathedral, which has its own safeguarding policy, will take account of the House of Bishops' Policy Statement and Practice Guidance and the Diocesan Policy. Agreed arrangements are in place to ensure the development of appropriate safeguarding arrangements in the Cathedral, including advice from the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisors where appropriate. A representative of the Diocesan Safeguarding Team attends the Cathedral Safeguarding Steering Group and a representative of the Cathedral Chapter will attend the Diocesan Safeguarding Steering Group.
- 5.4 A summary of all diocesan responsibilities is attached at appendix 1, along with an overview of our safeguarding arrangements at appendix 2. A summary of all parish roles and responsibilities is attached at appendix 3. A more detailed description of these can be found in the 2017 Practice Guidance '[Key Roles and Responsibilities of Church Office Holders and Bodies](#)'. The Diocesan Safeguarding Team will provide specific support as required and can be contacted on 020 7932 1124.
- 5.5 A [Parish Handbook](#) has been developed by the National Safeguarding Team and has been adapted specifically to the needs of the Diocese. A copy of this is available on the [safeguarding pages of the diocesan website](#). It incorporates the duties and responsibilities of the core roles and bodies within each parish and gives advice on safer recruitment and safe ways of working, as well as actions to take where safeguarding concerns are raised. Specific advice and support can be obtained from the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisors on 020 7932 1124.
- 5.6 In line with the House of Bishops' '[Safeguarding Training and Development Practice Guidance](#)', all clergy, role holders and volunteers are required to undertake safeguarding training appropriate to their role every three years. The current training programme run by the Diocese is outlined on the [safeguarding pages of the diocesan website](#). Specific advice and support can be obtained from the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisors on 020 7932 1124.

Final

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