

Safeguarding Report 2016

Report on Footsteps

There have been no safeguarding concerns reported regarding our Church of St Mary's Storrington over the past 12 months.

Information regarding Safeguarding and the wellbeing of our church members is displayed in church in a variety of formats and for a variety of purposes.

We comply with the principles of the Safeguarding Policy of the Church of England and of the policy specific to our own diocese. The Principles of the Policy of the Church of England are attached to this report.

We have a Safeguarding training event (delivered by members of our Diocesan Church Safeguarding team) for church members to attend on **May 17th 2016 at 7pm in our church**. All are welcome. It is anticipated that the session will last 2hours.

Our Sunday School group, known as Footsteps, has seen a dwindling of numbers due to members becoming older and having exam pressures and/or commitments on Sundays. There are a growing number of sporting/ drama and dance activities being held on Sundays. However we do have a small group of regular attendees.

We were able, with the help of adults, to continue to support the annual Christingle Service (Christmas 2015) and perform a Nativity within that service.

Last summer we entered the Storrington in Bloom Wheelbarrow Challenge and succeeded in gaining second prize. Footsteps Members were delighted and carried on their "green fingering" to fill the wheelbarrow again for a spring display outside church.

Jackie Lee

2 Safeguarding Policy of the Church of England

- 2.1 The Law and guidance cited is that for England and Wales and is up to date as at August 2010. The Church of England, in all aspects of its life, is committed to and will champion the safeguarding of children, both in society as a whole and in its own community. It fully accepts, endorses and will implement the principle first enshrined in the Children Act 1989: the welfare of the child should be paramount. The Church of England will foster and encourage best practice within its community by setting standards for working with children and young people and by supporting parents in the care of their children. It will work with statutory bodies, voluntary agencies and other faith communities to promote the safety *and well-being of children*. It is committed to acting promptly whenever a concern is raised about a child or about the behaviour of an adult or someone under the age of eighteen in a position of trust, and will work with the appropriate statutory bodies when an investigation into child abuse is necessary. It is also committed to the support of those who have been abused and to listening to the voices of survivors, who can help the Church learn lessons from the past.

Discussion of the principles

- 2.2 The statement of principles is common for children and for vulnerable adults. However, this section and the rest of this document consider only the implications for children.
- 2.3 We are committed to:
- the care, nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with, all children and adults;
 - the safeguarding and protection of all children and adults;
 - the establishment of safe, caring communities which provide a loving environment where there is a culture of informed vigilance regarding the dangers of abuse.
- 2.4 The *safeguarding and protection of children* is everyone's responsibility, not just parents or those who have formal responsibilities for children. Procedures and formal processes alone, though essential, will not protect children. The community, including all its members, needs to be aware of the dangers and be prepared to report concerns and take action if necessary.
- 2.5 The child's welfare is the *paramount consideration* in matters of private or public law affecting children which come before the family courts. The Church accepts and extends this principle to all areas of its work with children. Where conflicts of interest arise between the welfare of children and that of adults, it is the welfare of children that will be given priority.

- 2.6 **We will carefully select and train all those with any responsibility for children within the Church in line with safer recruitment principles, including the use of criminal records disclosures and registration with the relevant vetting and barring schemes.**
- 2.7 Vetting procedures and safer recruitment guidance for the Church of England are set out in detail in companion guidance document *Safeguarding Guidance for Safer Recruitment*. The relevant vetting and barring scheme for the Church of England is that provided by the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) (See 5.7 for further details). The suitability of an applicant or nominated volunteer for work with children should not be solely dependent upon vetting checks and CRB disclosures. Someone whose CRB disclosure is clear may still be unsuitable and the other safer recruitment processes must always also be used.
- 2.8 In England, registration with the ISA is a statutory requirement for a number of people who work with children. Advice about how this new requirement will be phased in will be made available to each diocese via the bishop or the diocesan safeguarding adviser. (See 5.7 for further detail about the current arrangements.)
- 2.9 It is the policy of the Church that:
- all those who regularly work with children, including those who work on a rota, should have enhanced CRB checks and ISA registration;
 - those who work only occasionally will be asked to apply for CRB checks and ISA registration if they fulfil the ISA threshold requirements;
 - those who manage or supervise people who work with vulnerable groups will also be required to be ISA registered and obtain CRB checks.
- 2.10 **We will respond without delay to every complaint made which suggests that an adult or child may have been harmed, co-operating with the police and local authority in any investigation.**
- 2.11 The Church accepts that, through its workers, it is responsible for children who are entrusted to churches by their parents: in the church building, on church property and other premises being used, and during church activities. Responsibility extends to travel between places, when it is organized by the church. However, a church is not responsible for private arrangements made by parents.
- 2.12 The term ‘complaint’ can cover an allegation, disclosure or statement; something seen or something heard. The complaint need not be made in writing but, once received, it must be recorded and acted upon.
- 2.13 **We will seek to offer informed pastoral care with anyone who has suffered abuse, developing, with him or her, an appropriate ministry.**
- 2.14 The Church does not investigate allegations of abuse or neglect of children itself but refers them to the appropriate statutory agencies. The Church may need to make preliminary enquiries to establish the accuracy of information being passed to the statutory body.

- 2.15 If a child comes to notice as having suffered abuse in the past, church officers will notify the appropriate authorities to ensure that the matter is on record.
- 2.16 Support will be offered to adult survivors of child abuse, who will also be encouraged to make a statement to the police if they have not done so before. The Church has issued separate guidance on work with survivors⁶.
- 2.17 **We will seek to challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust.**
- 2.18 We are aware that those in positions of trust and responsibility, in the Church as elsewhere, may be subject to temptation to abuse their power and exploit or harm others. We seek to take action to deal with any abuse.
- 2.19 Allegations of abuse or misconduct in relation to children by church officers will be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and investigated in accordance with his or her advice.
- 2.20 **We will seek to offer pastoral care and support, including supervision and referral to proper authorities, of any member of our church community known to have offended against a child or vulnerable adult.**
- 2.21 If a member of a church community comes to notice as having a conviction, caution, reprimand or warning for offences against children, or has been barred from working with children, or is considered to *present a risk to children*, we will seek to draw up a written agreement, where it is safe to do so. The agreement will contain safeguards as explained in detail later on. Breach of this agreement, or other concerns, may lead to a referral to the statutory agencies.
- 2.22 **In all these principles we will follow legislation, guidance and recognized good practice.**
- 2.23 This will involve, in particular, openness among those with a legitimate need to know, confidentiality for those not directly involved, and the sharing of information with the statutory authorities.

⁶ *Responding Well to Those Who Have Experienced Sexual Abuse*, House of Bishops, 2011.