

## Safeguarding Newsletter – October 2023

### World Mental Health Day, 10th October

This month we marked World Mental Health Day, praying for those who suffer from mental health difficulties or who have been impacted by mental health in any form. Mental health concerns are the most common referrals we receive as a team, and we are also aware of the impact of working with trauma, such as in the field of safeguarding, on professionals and volunteers. As a team we are committed to looking at developing further support and training so that we are well equipped as a diocese to meet any challenges in this area, and we will share details of these with you as soon as they are available.

### 2025 Safeguarding Audit and Compulsory Dashboard Usage

Bath and Wells are due to be audited in March/April 2025. A lot of the focus will be on parish safeguarding and as such we want to support our parishes in being as prepared as possible. The best way to be prepared is to ensure you are signed up to the Parish Dashboards so you can easily evidence the work you are doing and that it complies with national guidance.

While the Parish Dashboards were initially set up by an independent provider to assist parishes, they have now entered a partnership with the National Safeguarding Team and, as such, the expectation is that all parishes use them.

To get started go to the [Safeguarding Dashboards](#) website where you will find some useful support and guidance. Please also [book onto our PSO induction course](#) if you haven't yet done so. In the new year we will be contacting all parishes who have yet to get started to try and assist you. Please note if you haven't been using dashboards due to being in a very small congregation there is the potential to create a Benefice Dashboard, as long as the governance structure is the same for all parishes.

I have received the following quote from a PSO about her dashboard experience:

“Since we began to use the Dashboard, and, in particular, the Safeguarding Hub extension, we have felt much more confident about levels of up-to-date training and in date DBS checks for all the volunteers, lay readers, employees on our team.

Previously, we had used a system that relied heavily on keeping a very watchful eye on renewal dates, and, inevitably, we missed some from time to time. The Dashboard sends alerts in good time, prepares everything we need for safeguarding reports at PCC, reminds us to update policies, and indicates the levels of training needed for each volunteer.

It's so helpful and reassuring to know that we're not going to miss anything. Using the Role Creator and People Manager sections of the Safeguarding Hub has also enabled us to think through each role description and the risk assessments very carefully, and this has been a useful process. Adding in the data did take a while, but has certainly paid off in the long run. There aren't many perks to being a PSO, but having a 'Green Light' is like a big 'Thank You' and makes one feel one's done a great job!”

## 2025 Audit

The audit focuses on five standards:

1. Prevention
2. Culture, Leadership, and Capacity
3. Recognising, Assessing, and Managing Risk
4. Victims and Survivors
5. Learning, Supervision and Support



I will be sharing in greater detail over the next few months what is being looked at. As part of this process, I will be putting together working groups to explore how we evidence and develop these areas. If anyone would be willing to volunteer a few hours of time to help shape this work, I would be ever so grateful if you would [email me directly](#).

## Move to three-yearly DBS Checks

In January 2022 the National Church brought in new guidance requiring that Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) checks are reviewed every three years as opposed to five years. The final date for us to be fully compliant with this is 31 December 2023. Please can all PSOs review their records to ensure that anyone requiring a review by this date has this process undertaken prior to this deadline.

Please can I ask that you don't contact myself directly about DBS but instead email the DBS mailbox [dbs.safeguarding@bathwells.anglican.org](mailto:dbs.safeguarding@bathwells.anglican.org). We received up to 100 emails a day about DBS and respond based on date received. If you have an emergency in this area you can contact 31:8 directly or Leonie.

## DBS Training Event – 6 December 2023

Thirtyone:eight will be delivering training for our Parish Safeguarding Officers in December. We have requested this to support you with our new processes. This will initially only be offered to those of you who have registered for a new account via the recent correspondence with Leonie. Leonie will be contacting you with details of how you can book onto this training. Initially this will be offered for up to 40 participants on a first come, first served basis. If you are not successful, please register for the waiting list and if there is demand we will purchase further sessions.

Learning objectives for this session are to have:

- A basic awareness of what safer recruitment is, where DBS checks sit within the process and why it's important.
- A good knowledge of creating online DBS applications.
- A good overview of how to manage online DBS applications, including checking ID documents, completing section Y, tracking application, viewing results, and creating reports.
- A good understanding of the criteria for enhanced checks and how to use the Interactive Eligibility Guide to apply this to roles within your own organisation.
- A good knowledge of how to obtain criminal record checks from overseas and an awareness of the risks of not carrying these out.
- A good awareness of the DBS update Service and how this can help remove the need for applicants to apply for multiple disclosures.

## Wells Cathedral

Did you know the diocesan Safeguarding team also provides safeguarding services to Wells Cathedral? If you are a Cathedral volunteer, you can contact myself or Jo with any safeguarding concerns. Jo works from Wells Cathedral one day a week.



## PSO Forum and training

Please note that the next date for the PSO Forum will be 17 January at 3pm. I'm aware that I've been having a couple of requests for an evening forum. I'm sorry but at present I have not been able to make this work due to having young children. I do hope to be able to offer some in person forums next year if the demand is there. The next PSO training will be on 25 January, from 10am to 1pm. I'd like to also welcome PSOs who are not brand new in role as these sessions are helpful for developing the PSO role, as much as they are for preparing new volunteers. With good attendance rates I'm happy to put more on.

## Train the Trainer

I'm pleased to announce these sessions will be coming back in 2024. The aim of these sessions is to provide people with the skills to deliver online training such as Basic and Foundation as live, in person events. Please keep an eye on our training events via the diocesan events page and as soon as we can release the dates for booking, we will. The first session will be on 11 January, 10am to 1pm at Flourish House and we hope to release this date for bookings very soon.

## Safeguarding Sunday – 19 November 2023

It is almost that time of year again folks. After a very successful event in 2022 we are looking to do even better this year. It really is a chance to celebrate all that your parish does to protect children and vulnerable adults. To register click the following link. [Safeguarding Sunday |](#)

[Thirtyone:eight \(thirtyoneeight.org\)](https://thirtyoneeight.org) I'm also asking for volunteers who can promote the event on your websites and social media streams. Perhaps you

could include a short video, or photo of your church, alongside a description of what it is to be a part of a faithful and safe church community. Please see my launch video [Safeguarding Sunday 19 November 2023 - YouTube](#)



Find out more about how you can get involved on our diocesan website:

<https://www.bathandwells.org.uk/safeguarding-sunday-2023.php>

With warm wishes

**Ben Goodhind**

Diocesan Safeguarding Manager  
Diocese of Bath and Wells

## Diocese of Bath and Wells – Safeguarding team



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### Out of hours cover

Please contact the safeguarding Helpline on 0303 003 1111 during out of hours (It operates 5pm - midnight on Mon-Fri; 7am - midnight on Sat and Sun), on bank holidays and other absences.