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**Author: Emily Hassan**

Safeguarding update, June 2024

# Safeguarding in religious communities

The National Safeguarding Team closed the consultation for this guidance yesterday (Friday 14th June). As this guidance had already been substantially revised in 2020, there are very few changes, and those are mainly with regards to providing more clarity and advice. The main change is that the document has been separated into guidance for recognised and acknowledged communities, which has allowed for more bespoke guidance to be given to both. This is also however a helpful section on healthy cultures and, specifically for recognised communities, a section on obedience.

# PSO National Group

As the PSO National Group is currently focussing their work on creating a healthy safeguarding culture.

Firstly, they made a video as PSOs, introducing the use of the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard. PCCs will find this the most useful tool to support the shared responsibility for safeguarding in parishes. This has been disseminated to all of our PSO’s.

Secondly they are working on a ‘Welcome pack’ and are collating documents to share as a useful and practical reference source. This will be a welcomed addition to the PSO induction training we are offering and the induction folder which all new PSO’s are given when they move into post.

# Evaluation of the Independent Survivor Support Service

An independent evaluation (2024) has been completed for ‘Safe Spaces’ (run by First Light). The evaluation reports that the service which supports victims and survivors of church-related abuse in the Catholic Church of England and Wales, the Church of England, and the Church in Wales has had a positive impact on the wellbeing and resilience of survivors.

The report, published on 23 May 2024 is based on the views of survivors engaged in the evaluation, consultations with staff, as well as the monitoring reports.

It also highlights areas where the transition from the pilot project to the new service could have been smoother.

As a diocese we continue to work collaboratively with Safe Spaces, referring when appropriate and liaising with them for cases where they are offering advocacy support.

# Guidance for training and safeguarding bellringers

The Central Council of Church Bell Ringers has released guidance on the training and safeguarding of bell ringers for clergy, PCCs and church officers. It gives some history on the practice as well as routes for training and ensuring that safeguarding practices are upheld. A link to download the PDF guidance brochure is available in the e-bulletin and will also be circulated to all PSOs.

# Local updates

1. Following successful recruitment, Andy Hawkins has joined the Diocesan Safeguarding team to replace Liz Hastings. He will be working Mon – Wednesday and will also take over Liz’s patch covering Fareham and Gosport and will be the link for Portsmouth Cathedral. Andy is a retired police Detective Inspector with a wealth of experience in public protection. He was also the lead for Operation Marmion which is Hampshire Constabulary’s dedicated team who tackle non-recent child sex abuse perpetrated within an institution or by a person of prominence.
2. The team continues to work hard on transferring data from Safebase to MyConcern. All cases have been created on MyConcern and there are now just 120 records left with documents to migrate to MyConcern. We are anticipating that this will be completed by the end of July 2024. Once completed the Safeguarding Team will no longer require access to RDS.