Archdeacons' Briefing No 2
December 2008

Issues in the Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults

Welcome to the Second Edition of **Archdeacons' Briefing** which is concerned with the protection of children and vulnerable adults in our church communities. It includes:

- Notification of the publication of new Diocesan Child Protection Guidelines
- Revised advice on who should checked through CRB Procedures
- Information on the development of the Independent Safeguarding Authority

Please ensure all appropriate people in your parishes are aware of the contents of this Briefing.

We hope the advice is straightforward and useful but please do not hesitate to contact us or the Child Protection Officer (the Rev'd Jean Skinner 0191 if you need any clarification or help in these matters.

Geoff and Peter

1. Notification of the publication of new Diocesan Child protection guidelines

The latest Child Protection Guidelines for the diocese were launched at the November Diocesan Synod. Copies have been sent on CD to all PCC Secretaries and they have been asked to:

- Acknowledge safe receipt with the return slip provided.
- Make a hard copy to be kept in the Church Office
- Ensure all the appropriate people in the parish are aware of their existence.

2. Revised advice on who should checked through CRB Procedures

Guidance for CRB Checks

In the light of advice from the CRB, and our new Child Protection Guidelines, please find below revised guidance about who should be asked to apply for CRB disclosures in our parishes.

The basic principle:
CRB disclosures should be obtained for all church members who, by virtue of the regular duties of their voluntary position in the church, have opportunities to have sole care of, or sole access to, children or vulnerable adults.

We expect that this will include:

- Leaders of: Sunday School, Youth Group, Parents and Toddlers, Crèche Group.
- Churchwardens
- Vergers and Caretakers in paid positions.
- Stewards and Guides (where appropriate)
- Organists
- Servers who have the responsibility for training &/or supervising children who are servers.
- Pastoral Assistants (such as bereavement or sick visitors and those licensed by the Bishop to take the Reserved Sacrament to the housebound)
- Choir Director where there are children in the choir, plus we would advise 2 choir members who could stand in for the Director as necessary.
- Bell ringers where children are permitted to enter the bell-tower. Tower captains and all officers of each ringing band. Those who train ringers and those who organise ringing meetings and tours.
- Schools Liaison Officers and any similar posts.

Please note this is not meant to be an exhaustive list but general guidance. If you are not sure about any particular parish post the Child Protection Officer is available to offer advice.

3. Information on the development of the Independent Safeguarding Authority

The Diocese of Newcastle **Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) – your questions answered**

What do I need to do?

Parish clergy and 'Responsible Caring' groups don't need to do anything just yet. We simply want you to know about the ISA, about its origins and remit, so that you will understand why changes will be introduced from autumn 2009.

Why has the ISA been set up?

The Soham murders made authorities ask questions about how an individual was able to go unnoticed for so long. In response to these questions, the 'Bichard Enquiry' was set up. The Bichard Enquiry resulted in the establishment of legal requirements through The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. This Act requires the establishment of the Independent Safeguarding Authority (a non-departmental public body which will administer lists of barred people).

What does the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 require?

- The ISA scheme will make all decisions about barring unsuitable people from working with children or vulnerable adults.
- The ISA scheme will administer the 2 separate lists.
- The Act defines 'controlled' and 'regulated' activities (in which 'employment' refers to volunteers also)
- It will be illegal for anyone who is on the barred list to be 'employed' in a **regulated** activity.
- Someone who is on the barred list will be able to be involved in **controlled** activities, but only with appropriate safeguards.
- The Diocese will offer guidance about regulated and controlled activities in due course.

When will the ISA come into being?

The ISA will become 'live' from 12th October 2009.
The register will be built up gradually over five years. Priority will be given to people entering new employment, then to those whose CRBs are oldest, until all current employees are registered.
The ISA will direct the timetable of registration for all those already in 'employment'. This means that as a Diocese we will need to be proactive

about any people entering into new ‘employment’, but will need to wait for the ISA to inform us when it is time to register all those already in ‘employment’.

Once the ISA is up and running, what will be happening?

- ISA will maintain a register of people who are registered and not barred
- People will not find themselves on the barred list without proper and rigorous independent investigation
- Employees/volunteers must apply to be put on the register. To apply for a regulated or controlled activity without being on the register will be illegal.
- Employers (= volunteer agencies) wanting to engage anyone in a regulated or controlled activity must check their registration status with the ISA scheme first (not to do so will break the law).
- Employers (= volunteer agencies) must inform the ISA of certain relevant information about a registered person (e.g. if they are sacked or removed from an activity. Not to do so breaks the law).
- The ISA will inform current employers of any change in registration status.

It is expected that ISA registration and checking will be administered centrally through Church House in the same way as CRB applications have been. Each parish church will need to ensure that only those who have been registered are involved in regulated activities – to have an unregistered person ‘employed’ in this way will be illegal.

Why is everyone being asked to renew their CRB disclosures after 5 years?

In the light of ISA registration being introduced as a rolling programme over 5 years, the House of Bishops has given guidance to Dioceses that new CRB disclosures should be applied for after 5 years.

What is the difference between the ISA and the CRB?

- They are different agencies and offer different things
- the first time a person applies for ISA registration, an enhanced CRB will also be provided – the application will actually be made through the CRB
- CRB applications can be made separately once a person is ISA registered
- future checks with the ISA (which will be carried out online & cost nothing)
    - will confirm whether a person is registered
    - but <u>will not</u> provide a CRB check, i.e. will give no information about criminal records, nor any information about why someone is barred.
    - <u>will not</u> mean that references and speaking to previous employers are no longer needed.
- Once the Diocese has registered an interest in a person, the ISA will inform us if the person is subsequently barred.

It is expected that a lot of our volunteers will need to be registered for other reasons too – their employment or other voluntary activities. They will only need to register once. Subsequently prospective 'employers' will simply be

- able to check their registration on-line. This will make checking ISA status much simpler.
- The registration of volunteers will cost nothing, but if a volunteer subsequently enters paid employment to carry out a regulated/controlled activity, they will need to pay in connection with that employment.
- The first time those in paid employment apply for registration with the ISA it will cost £64.

How will we find out more about ISA?

- A number of Diocesan officers (the Archdeacon of Northumberland, the Child Protection Adviser, the Bishop's Chaplain) are attending ISA-training events and will feed information through to deaneries and parishes as appropriate.
- Further information, in more details and regularly updated, can be obtained from www.isa-gov.org

The Diocese of Newcastle
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