**Safeguarding Newsletter for LSRs, DLPs, Clergy and Religious Autumn 2015**

1. **Annual Safeguarding Gathering**

The gathering took place at St Patricks on Saturday 26th September 2015 and was attended by approximately 100 people – it was difficult to register everyone because of the pressure of numbers!!! A report is attached. We will circulate formal evaluation in due course, which will include ideas for training and follow up.

Apart from Christopher Pearson, Acting Chair of the National Catholic Safeguarding Commission, all speakers were lay people from within the Diocese, including Bob Levesley, LSR at St Francis’ Sheffield, who spoke about supporting people who are vulnerable and the requirements of the Mental Capacity Act. As a result of feedback from this session Bob and Lisa will be meeting to develop a strategy for rolling out this information.

1. **Training and E-learning**

* One of the questions posed in advance of the event from the sisters at Kirk Edge related to our pastoral approach to those who sexually offend.

Supporting offenders and those who have caused harm to others is proportionally the fastest growing area of safeguarding “casework”. 11th October was Prisoners Sunday and many of you will have been reflecting on what this means for ministry, and our mission for social justice.

As a former Probation Officer, a job whose historical origins are in “church missionary” work, I was often frustrated that offenders were seen as the “other”, a class apart.

Safeguarding Reps and Clergy are aware of and live the Catholic Church’s commitment to inclusion and supporting rehabilitation, which is an element of TACOS. It is important, however, that this work is done within the framework of safe practice and existing policy and guidance.

Your attention is drawn to training sessions on Managing and Supporting Offenders, which will be delivered in 2016. Contact Jo for details. Please also note Covenant of Care guidance.

* We are also trying to develop a series of workshops about disability awareness, hopefully with a local disability rights group. This follows a number of complaints, largely about attitudes and access, partly arising from Tom Garrud’s work on health and safety and partly from the increasing recognition of the requirements of disability legislation. Please also note the article “People who make a difference” Tablet 31/10/2015 and the Christian Disability Charity www.throughtheroof.org.
* Please note the information about e-Learning. We will shortly be providing information on the website. From November the office will issue guidance to individual DBS applicants, at the point of completing their DBS, about what training it would be helpful for them to do. The Safeguarding Commission is fully in support of e-learning but notes the importance of face to face training as well.
* Parish or specific group training continues to be available upon request.

1. **DBS Issues**

Attached to this newsletter is a reminder about the invitation to participate in the pilot training for E-Bulk which is implemented by Jo Pearson, our Safeguarding Administrator.

Until further advised Reps should continue to complete paper applications. We will gradually phase in E-Bulk from December 2015.

In the interim, (on request and by post) we are sending a sample copy of a completed DBS form, with a summary of ongoing errors and guidance for avoiding them! One of the features of the e-bulk system is the requirement for specificity, so, at line 61 you can only record Child and Adult Workforce if the person is definitely doing work/ministry in both child and adult roles. In other words, we can no longer have a “catch all”.

Some roles however, for example Extraordinary Ministers for Communion should henceforth always be checked against Child and Adult workforce.

The good news is that we are boosting our capacity to approve existing DBS checks from other roles and organisations, if people have registered those via the Online Registration Service. Reps need to ask if individuals have done this before renewing their DBS check. Further guidance will follow.

1. **Website**

The Diocesan website has changed! Emma Shaw has been working on this alongside Hugo Terruzi, a St Marie’s parishioner, and is currently working to ensure that the transfer of information has gone smoothly. We have already identified some glitches so perhaps you could have a look and advise us if there are things missing or need to be put in a different place.

1. **New Appointments**

This is the final reminder that we are re-advertising vacancies for a new HBA Facilitator and Commission Chair. Please also note advertisement for Chair and Panel Members of the new National Victims and Survivors Advisory Panel set up by the National Catholic Safeguarding Commission. For details of the latter see NCSC website or contact the safeguarding office about any of them.

There is also a current vacancy for an Anglican Safeguarding Advisor for the Diocese of Sheffield. Sue Booth will be known to some colleagues from training, and is now happily retired. After an interim replacement and a review of the role, a permanent post is now being advertised at <http://www.sheffield.anglican.org/other-vacancies>.

1. **Final Reflections**

Working with Sue Tym of Family Focus and Hallam Diocese Caring Services is a great privilege as she and the team diligently and thoughtfully work on a range of family support issues. Sue co-ordinated Diocesan responses to the marriage and family life questionnaire. Reflections at the time of the Synod on the family stresses and strains which have led to safeguarding involvement led down some unusual routes.

The DSC recently spoke to an older adult who has struggled with issues of sexuality all his life and is increasingly isolated. This is not strictly a safeguarding issue, except that this is a man in great distress who has so far not been able to access the support he needs, because he has felt unable to talk about these issues. Support is now being provided via the safeguarding office.

There are many fora, not least in our work in the Hurt by Abuse project where people have expressed sadness and frustration about not being able to talk about personal issues of sexuality and sexual behaviour and the problems this has caused. This is a complex issue. We recognise that for many the deliberations of the Synod will have opened new doors and new reflections, but know also that some may be disappointed and disheartened, particularly some who have questions about sexuality.

In reaching out to each other about these issues we can at least share information. There is a very useful leaflet available via Hallam Caring Services or this office, which refers to www.everybodyswelcome.org.uk/lesbiangay.html.

**Go well, journey in hope and love one another.**

**The Safeguarding Team**