

Safeguarding Policy

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General Policy

Policy Statement and Principles

St Nicholas Cole Abbey Centre for Workplace Ministry Limited (“SNCA”) is a company limited by guarantee with company number 07780681 and a registered charity with charity number 1147429.

This policy should be read alongside the **House of Bishops’ Policy Statements ‘Promoting a Safer Church’ (2017)** (the “House of Bishops’ Policy”) and **‘Protecting All God’s Children’ (2010)** and the **Diocesan Safeguarding Policy ‘Promoting a Safer Diocese’ (2018)** (the “Diocesan Policy”) which, amongst other things, defines safeguarding as the action the Church takes to promote a safer culture and ensure that those who work, volunteer and worship in or visit our churches are kept safe.

The SNCA safeguarding policy applies the Diocesan Policy and House of Bishops’ Policy to the particular situation of SNCA and its various ministries. There are eight parts to the SNCA Safeguarding Policy:

1. The General Policy
2. The Children’s Policy – for those working with children (0-11),
3. The Youth Policy – for those working with young people (11-18),
4. The Vulnerable Adults Policy
5. The Domestic Abuse Response Policy
6. The Record Keeping Policy
7. The Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy
8. The Safeguarding for Small Group Leaders Policy

The full SNCA policy can be found here: <https://www.stnickschurch.org.uk/safeguarding/>

In line with the Diocesan Policy and House of Bishops’ Policy, SNCA is committed to:

- promoting a safer environment and culture;
- safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the church;
- responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation;
- caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons;
- caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons; and
- responding to those that may pose a present risk to others.

SNCA will:

- create a safe and caring place for all;
- have a named Church Safeguarding Officer (“CSO”) to work with the Minister in Charge (“MiC”) (a.k.a the incumbent) and the Directors/Trustees to implement policy and procedures;
- safely recruit, train and support all those with any responsibility for children, young people and adults to have confidence and skills to recognise and respond to abuse;
- ensure that there is appropriate insurance cover for all activities involving children and adults undertaken in the name of the church;
- display in church premises and on the church website the details of who to contact if there are safeguarding concerns or support needs;
- listen to and take seriously all those who disclose abuse;
- take steps to protect children and adults when a safeguarding concern of any kind arises, following House of Bishops guidance, including notifying the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (“DSA”) and statutory agencies immediately;
- offer support to victims/survivors of abuse regardless of the type of abuse, when or where it occurred;

- care for and monitor any member of the church community who may pose a risk to children and adults whilst maintaining appropriate confidentiality and the safety of all parties;
- ensure that health and safety policy, procedures and risk assessments are in place and that these are reviewed annually;
- review the implementation of the safeguarding policy, procedures and practices at least annually; and
- ensure that each person who works within this church community will agree to abide by this policy and the guidelines established by SNCA.

Overview of safeguarding responsibilities

The names and contact details of individuals with responsibility for safeguarding within the various SNCA ministries are set out at the end of this document.

1. The Directors and Trustees of SNCA have overall responsibility for safeguarding within all the various ministries undertaken under the SNCA umbrella. This policy is maintained, reviewed, and sanctioned by the Directors and Trustees. The Charity Commission's guidance states that charity Trustees must report any "Serious Incidents" occurring within their charity to the Charity Commission. This must be done as soon as is reasonably possible after it happens, or immediately after it comes to light.

2. The Church Safeguarding Committee is a source of advice and guidance on safeguarding issues. They will advise the Directors and Trustees on any matters relating to safeguarding, make recommendations for changes in policy and procedure and hold the MiC accountable for policy implementation.

3. The Church Safeguarding Officer (CSO)

- is the individual member of the Church Safeguarding Committee given responsibility for Safeguarding within SNCA and all its various ministries;
- may delegate some of their responsibilities to ministry leaders but will assist and advise ministry leaders if a safeguarding issue or risk arises and needs to be addressed;
- will also be included in decisions about whether to permit someone to be involved in ministry with children where their DBS check is blemished, or information is provided about them under the DBS scheme; and
- is held accountable in his or her safeguarding role, by the SNCA Directors and Trustees.

4. The Ministry Leaders

- are, where responsibilities have been delegated, responsible for safeguarding in their respective ministry areas on a day to day basis. This includes:
 - ensuring all caregivers within their area are recruited in accordance with this safeguarding policy and,
 - acting as safeguarding officers for any disclosures of abuse within the relevant ministry.
- are held accountable for their safeguarding role by the SNCA Directors and Trustees.

5. The Children's Champion is tasked with ensuring that the needs of the children and young people in the church are recognised and addressed.

6. The Vulnerable Adults Champion is tasked with ensuring that the needs of vulnerable adults attending any of our meetings are recognised and addressed.

7. Caregiver refers to anyone serving in any role within the church which involves any oversight of children, young people or vulnerable adults. All caregivers share a particular responsibility for:

- loving the person as Christ loves them

- setting an example of proper Christian conduct
- praying for those in their care and pointing them to God's word

Important:

- All caregivers must read **Section A** of the relevant policy.
- They must then read any additional information from **Section B** of that policy that is relevant to the area of ministry they are serving in.
- A list of key contact details can be found on the last two pages of each policy.

If an existing caregiver moves to serve in a different ministry area, they must read the relevant information for the new area before commencing their role. All caregivers are required to complete the online Diocesan safeguarding training.

Responding Well to A Disclosure or Concern of Abuse

This guidance has been abbreviated from the Church of England Safeguarding e-manual. The full version can be found here: [Responding Well to Victims and Survivors of Abuse | The Church of England](#). This guidance relates to any disclosure or concern of abuse whether this is recent or in the past. Historical abuse must be treated as seriously as recent abuse and each individual must be treated with pastoral sensitivity.

In 2020, the National Safeguarding Team (NST) commissioned [Survivors Voices](#) to contribute to the development of national standards in responding well to victims and survivors. Through a survey and focus groups with victims and survivors, they identified the following as “what good looks like” in responding well to victims and survivors:

1. Survivors know that they are heard, understood, believed and will be supported.
2. The response by Church Bodies and Church Officers to disclosures is victim and survivor-centred and does not cause further trauma to the person disclosing.
3. People with safeguarding responsibilities understand the impact of trauma and the best way to respond to it.
4. Churches create a culture of listening, transparency and respect that makes it safe to disclose.
5. Victims, survivors and church workers know what process will be followed if someone reports abuse.
6. Survivors are helped to receive the support they need, both from the Church and other people and organisations.
7. Safeguarding concerns are acted upon appropriately, transparently, with accountability and in a timely fashion.

Principles for responding well

1. Clarifying early that information might be shared

A relational approach involves honesty and transparency by church staff and volunteers receiving disclosures. This will involve clarifying that the information disclosed might be shared with others (such as the CSO, DSA and statutory authorities) for safeguarding purposes.

2. Providing a safe space for disclosure

Church staff and volunteers should listen to disclosures where confidentiality and privacy can be guaranteed and interruptions avoided. Some victims and survivors may want a quiet place while others may need suitably public places which are visible to others because this makes them feel safe. If the conversation is planned then it is preferable to allow victims and survivors to choose the location and time. Care should be exercised to avoid locations which might trigger negative emotions for the victim or

survivor. If the disclosure is spontaneous, the person disclosing abuse should be asked if they would like to speak in a more private space.

3. Making a record of the disclosure

Church staff and volunteers should make an accurate record of what the victim or survivor discloses. To ensure accuracy, it may help for them to show the notes they have made to the victim and survivor and ask them to confirm that it is an accurate record of the conversation.

4. Reflective listening

Research suggests that victims and survivors *“want to be actively listened to when they tell their story...”* Listeners can show “active listening” by reflecting back what the speaker says and what they hear, not in parrot-fashion, but by clarifying points and checking the meaning of phrases, words, or even events. This will enable the listener to understand what the disclosure means to the victim or survivor, while also showing empathy, humanity and care about recovery and healing.

5. Understanding the victim’s or survivor’s position

Survivors disclosing abuse may feel as if they are reliving, rather than just remembering, some truly awful events. Victims disclosing recent or ongoing abuse may still be fearful of their abuser. How they are responded to at the point of disclosure can have a profound effect on whether they trust the Church to protect and/or support them. Church staff and volunteers can assure victims or survivors of their safety by explaining that they will immediately inform the MiC / CSO who will determine and take the required safeguarding measures. For some victims and survivors a response that recognises their humanity, their right to care, safety and the support of the Church can be powerful first steps to their healing.

6. Going at the victim’s and survivor’s pace

Victims and survivors should be allowed the space to disclose at their own pace and discretion. Church staff and volunteers listening to disclosures should avoid pressing for information and provide the required time for the conversation to unfold without either participant feeling rushed. They should also not ask leading questions. The extent of disclosure should rest with the victim or survivor, who should feel in control of their story – within the boundaries of good safeguarding practice – and what is going to happen with it.

7. Checking on well-being

While disclosing abuse is difficult for victims and survivors, they may feel more cared for if the church staff member or volunteer regularly checks on their wellbeing during the disclosure. Also with the victims agreement, make arrangements to check on their well being afterwards.

8. Remaining non-judgmental and being self-reflective

Listeners should be aware of their own emotions during disclosure. They should demonstrate appropriate empathy and avoid overt displays of shock and upset. The focus should be on the survivor’s emotions, not the listener’s, who should express deep concern for the victim or survivor whilst remaining calm themselves. If the listener is struggling to manage their emotions in the course of a disclosure, they should inform the victim or survivor disclosing to them and connect them with another person who is able to hear the disclosure – for example, the Mic / CSO.

Church staff and volunteers should remain non-judgmental during a disclosure. They must take what they are being told seriously, respond empathetically and then act by speaking with those with safeguarding responsibility in the Church Body. It is not their role to judge whether disclosures are “true” or “credible”. The response must therefore not be one of disbelief.

Next Steps In Responding To A Disclosure Or Concern Of Abuse

1. Respond

If it is a direct disclosure, respond to the victim/survivor according to the guidance outlined above. Explain what will happen next - that you will seek advice from the MiC / CSO who will determine the required safeguarding measures. If there is any current risk to children or adults, they should be informed that their identity and the identity of the respondent will be shared with the MiC / CSO and may be shared with the statutory agencies. Assure the victim that you will let them know the outcome of that discussion.

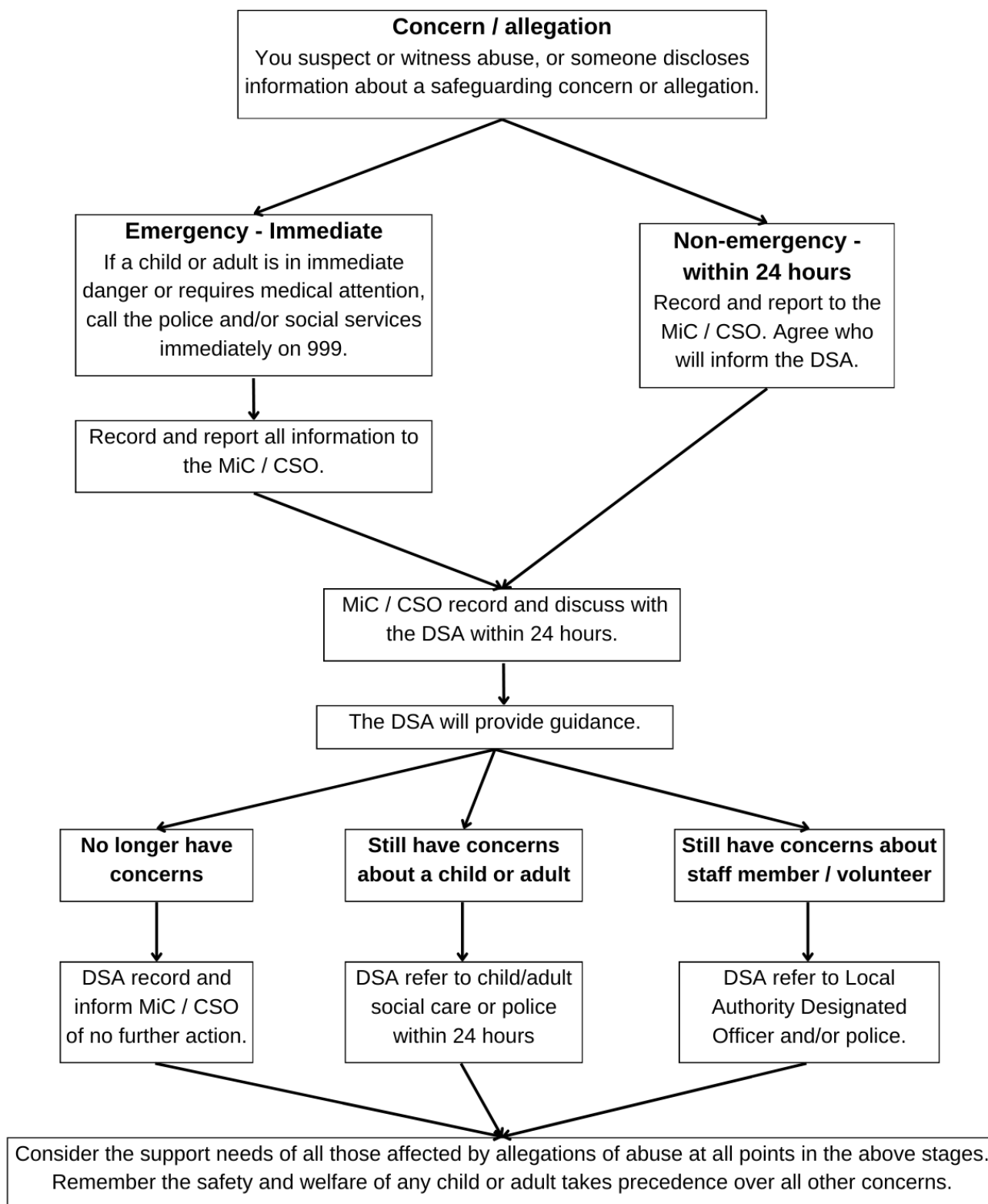
2. Record

Make an accurate record of the disclosure (preferably within one hour, but always within 24 hours). Record dates and times of these events and when you made the record. Record what was said and when, what you said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g. a description of the activity/situation). Keep all handwritten notes, even if subsequently typed. Such records should be kept in a secure place.

3. Report

- **Emergency:** If you believe a child or adult is in immediate danger of significant or serious harm, contact the police. Ring 999.
- **Non-emergency:** Contact the MiC as soon as possible. If the allegation is against the MiC, contact the CSO. If neither are available, contact the DSA directly. Contact details are at the end of this document. The MiC / CSO will then seek advice from the DSA within 24 hours. The MiC / CSO will act upon all directions given by the Diocese in the timescale given. They will also consider whether any additional action is required.
- You retain the right to report serious matters directly to Social Services or the police. Even so you must also contact either the MiC or CSO.
- If you are not sure whether this is a concern that needs reporting or not, it is always best still to check with the MiC or CSO. You don't need to mention names initially unless advised to do so.
- Apart from telling the MiC / CSO, the information must be treated as confidential and not shared with other church members.
- Do not investigate the concerns of abuse yourself. Do not contact anyone who may be implicated in the allegation or disclosure, even if they would normally be contacted as part of the procedure, until advice has been sought from the DSA or statutory agencies.
- Consider your own feelings and ask the MiC for pastoral support if needed. Ensure that you follow up with the person once you have received advice on how to respond.

Please note that disclosures may be from adults regarding abuse that happened to them when they were children, or from children regarding abuse that happened to them when they were younger. Historical abuse must be treated as seriously as recent abuse, and each individual must be treated with great pastoral sensitivity.



SNCA's Ministries

The ministries undertaken by SNCA include:

1. **St Nick's Church Sunday services** (Sunday morning);
2. **St Nick's Church Small Groups** (Wednesday evening);
3. **London Bridge Talks** (Tuesday lunchtime);
4. **Fleet Street Talks** (Wednesday lunchtime);
5. **Victoria Talks** (Wednesday lunchtime);
6. **St Nick's Talks** (Thursday lunchtime);
7. **One-to-one Bible reading**
8. **City Partnership Groups** (Monday lunchtime, Tuesday morning and Thursday morning);
9. **Women in the Word on Friday (WWF)** (Friday morning);
10. **Training sessions** e.g. SLOBS (Study Leaders Own Bible Studies), WMT (Word Ministry Training), evangelism training
11. **Occasional events** e.g. Christianity Explored, guest events, church weekends away, socials.

Ministry with provision for children and young people

The only ministry that makes formal provision for children and young people is **St Nick's Church**. This primarily involves Sunday church with provision for crèche, Sunday school, and youth meetings, but also includes weekends away and occasional seminars. This ministry must comply with the SNCA Safeguarding policies in their entirety.

Ministries with no provision for children and young people

The remaining ministries undertaken by SNCA do not make formal provision for children and young people. The parts of SNCA Safeguarding policies relating to children and youth are not relevant to these ministries. However, where families make informal arrangements for the care of children and young people, they must take full responsibility for assessing the suitability of any volunteer.

Vulnerable adults – all ministries

For the purposes of this document, we have opted to use the term 'vulnerable adult' in place of 'adult at risk' due to this being a more familiar term.

None of the ministry areas make formal provision for vulnerable adults. However, the Vulnerable Adults Policy outlines considerations relevant to all ministries where vulnerable adults may be in attendance (which is all ministries).

Guidance for the Staff Team

The Staff Team

The church Staff Team refers to all who are employed as staff of SNCA, including Ministry Trainees, Cornhill students, and other named volunteers, whether or not they are in the employment of the church. The following guidance covers staff in their work outside SNCA's specific ministries.

1. Day to day working on site

In the course of a working day children and vulnerable adults might be present in the SNCA church building as a result of the operation of the Wren Café or otherwise.

Staff members are free to interact with any such children within the church buildings as long as they are in public and there is no way their actions could be misconstrued by a third party.

2. Events in the buildings involving children or vulnerable adults

When a building is in use for an event involving children or vulnerable adults, staff are free to enter the building if they have good reason to do so. Such a staff member need not be screened, but must remain in the background of the activity and must not be in a situation where they are alone with a child or vulnerable adult.

Staff members are free to use the toilets in the building when in use for an event involving children or vulnerable adults.

3. Starting any ministry involving children or vulnerable adults

From time to time church staff might be involved with organising ministry which includes provision for children or vulnerable adults (for example a one off event for adults which requires a crèche, or a weekend away for small groups that has children signed up to it).

Any such ministry must not commence without assessing its safeguarding implications, and acting accordingly. At an early stage of planning, advice must be sought from members of the Church Safeguarding Committee and their directions followed.

Staff members must be aware that the process for screening a caregiver can take about 6 weeks. No caregiver can commence their role until the Safeguarding Evidence Checker has confirmed the screening as complete.

4. Visiting speakers

Church staff may from time to time wish to invite visiting speakers to speak and/or lead an event hosted by SNCA and its various ministries. As to this:

- (1) Those who are ordained within the Church of England must have a Permission to Officiate or a Licence from the Bishop from their diocese to speak and/or lead, and must be of good life and standing. As such, if a church staff member intends to invite a person who is ordained within the Church of England to speak and/or lead, then he or she will need to ensure that these requirements are fulfilled. The inclusion of a clergyperson's name on the [National Clergy Register](#) should be taken - without the need for any further checks or references - as "good and sufficient evidence" that the clergyperson is of good standing with authority to minister in the Church of England. There is no requirement or obligation for any further permissions to be sought or given.
- (2) Guest speakers who are not ordained within the Church of England should provide a character reference to satisfy that they are in good standing with their church. External speakers should ordinarily provide a church leader or ministry supervisor as their referee.
Guest speakers should also provide evidence of a recent DBS certificate where appropriate (for example, obtained through employment, volunteering, or ministry roles). Whether a DBS

certificate is required will depend on the context of the engagement, including whether the speaker is likely to be perceived as holding an ongoing position of trust and/or whether vulnerable adults are known to be present. Where a recent DBS certificate is not available and a new DBS check is not considered necessary/feasible, the guest speaker should instead complete a Declaration of Suitability Form.

- (3) Guest speakers who have been part of the SNC church family for less than one year should nominate a mature Christian whom they have ministry connections outside of SNC to provide them with a reference.
- (4) Whatever action is taken for each visiting speaker, including any decision regarding DBS certification or a Declaration of Suitability Form, should be documented.

Screening procedure for caregivers

Every applicant who wishes to serve in any ministry area involving children, young people or vulnerable adults must complete a screening process prior to serving. To ensure safe and quality care, all caregivers must meet the following criteria in order to work with children, young people or vulnerable adults.

1. Recruitment

- All caregivers must be people in good standing with the church.
- All caregivers must be 18 years of age or older. However, with the prior approval and direction of the Children's Coordinator, young people who are aged 14+ can assist with children's work. Such volunteers contribute towards the number of children not the number of adults when it comes to required ratios.

2. Assessment

- All caregivers should have a conversation with two people - the Children's Coordinator and one other church member - to confirm their suitability for the role. They should be asked questions, made aware of the role description and have the opportunity to ask any follow-up questions needed.
- All caregivers must complete a Diocese of London Confidential Declaration Form, requiring the honest declaration of any criminal convictions.
- All caregivers must complete a volunteer application and agreement form requiring a Christian testimony and a signed declaration of having read the relevant policy.
- All caregivers must provide the names of two people to act as personal referees, which will be followed up. Referees must not be relatives/partners, current parish clergy, or church staff.
- All caregivers must have a completed DBS form for the applicable Enhanced level Disclosure or provide access to the same level of disclosure using the DBS update service. Details of how to do so will be sent to the caregiver via email. DBS checks will be updated as needed in line with the requirements set by the Diocese (every 3 years as of the end of 2023).

3. Appointment

A caregiver can begin their role **only when** the following have been completed:

- The Diocese of London Confidential Declaration Form and the Volunteer Agreement form have been filed as complete;
- the personal references have been sent for, received, and reviewed as being acceptable; and
- a satisfactory DBS Disclosure outcome has been received from thirtyone:eight, or retrieved using the DBS update service.

4. Data Protection

All completed records of screening procedures will be kept securely and indefinitely. SNCA will have record of the following:

- the Diocese of London Confidential Declaration Form;

- two personal references (which will be available to the Diocese of London Safeguarding Team (DST) should they request it);
- Volunteer Application and Agreement form;
- DBS disclosure certificate reference number; and
- Any additional notes pertaining to the above.

5. Training

All volunteers are asked to complete the online Church of England safeguarding training upon recruitment.

As for ongoing training, the following is in place:

- Each time rotas are sent by email the leaders are reminded about safeguarding.
- Leaders are encouraged to give each other feedback after each session.
- Each group has a document containing a specific brief for the leaders to refer to which reminds leaders about safeguarding and safety.
- There is an annual safeguarding push during which all leaders are given key safeguarding reminders, are set a safeguarding quiz, and are sent the updated policies and risk assessments. All Sunday School and Youth leaders are also encouraged to attend a children's work training day run by a larger partner church where possible.
- We ask all leaders to refresh their online safeguarding training every three years.

Contact Names and Details

Safeguarding Committee

Frank Owusu-Sekyere (Chair)
Church Safeguarding Officer
safeguarding@snca.co.uk

Matt Bridges
Assistant Minister (Ministry Leader for Victoria Talks)
Children's Coordinator; Children's and Vulnerable Adults' Champion
matt@snca.co.uk

Tricia Owusu-Sekyere
Trustee

Susannah Williams
Operations Manager and Lead Safeguarding Recruiter
susannah@snca.co.uk

SNCA Staff

Chris Fishlock
Minister in Charge
chris@snca.co.uk

Matt Bridges
Assistant Minister (Ministry Leader for Victoria Talks)
Children's Coordinator; Children's and Vulnerable Adults' Champion
matt@snca.co.uk

Tom Barnardo
Minister (Ministry Leader for London Bridge Talks & Fleet Street Talks)
tom.barnardo@snca.co.uk

Sarah Quinlan
Women's Minister
sarah@snca.co.uk

Lizzie Price
Women's Minister for London Bridge Talks & Fleet Street Talks
lizzie@snca.co.uk

Susannah Williams
Operations Manager and Lead Safeguarding Recruiter
susannah@snca.co.uk

Carrie Fishlock
Finance Manager
carrie@snca.co.uk

Suzie Burden
Projects Manager
suzie@snca.co.uk

Phyllida Stuart
Children's Work Administrator and Safeguarding Recruiter
phyllida@snca.co.uk

National Contacts

Diocese of London

Helpline: 02079321224

safeguarding@london.anglican.org

Thirtyone:Eight

Helpline: 0303 003 11 11

<https://thirtyoneeight.org/>

City of London Corporation Children and Families Team

020 7332 3621 (Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm)

020 8356 2710 (weekdays after 5pm, weekends and bank holidays)

City of London Social Care Services

020 7332 1224 (Monday to Friday, 9am - 5pm)

020 8356 2300 (weekdays after 5pm, weekends and bank holidays)

Child Line NSPCC

Freepost 1111, London N1 0BR Child Protection Helpline,

Tel. 0800 1111 0808 800 5000

(full number is just these 8 digits)

Family Lives (previously Parentline) 0808 800 222

Domestic Violence Helpline (for females) 0808 2000 247

Mankind (for males) 01823 334244

Police non-emergency phone line 101

Further resources

‘Protecting all God’s children: The Child Protection Policy of the Church of England’, 2010

‘Policy for Safeguarding in the Diocese of London’, 2015

‘The Church of England, House of Bishops, Parish safeguarding handbook’ – promoting a safer church, October 2018

‘The Care Act 2014, and the Care and Support Statutory Guidance 2016’ (Chapter 14)

London Multi Agency Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures 2015

www.london.anglican.org/support/safeguarding