

## **Safeguarding Report November 2023**

The St James Safeguarding Group: Janet Penny, David and Jane Fulford last met this September 2023 to follow up on various issues and during the year have had short discussions in person and by email.

DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks are done mainly on line through APCS ([www.criminalrecordchecks.co.uk](http://www.criminalrecordchecks.co.uk)) as the Diocese provider. A DBS check enables employers to check the criminal records of employees, volunteers and potential employees, in order to ascertain whether or not they are suitable to work with vulnerable adults and children.

APCS, as a Registered Umbrella Body have specialised in processing disclosures working with the criminal record check system since its inception in 2002. APCS has reduced the administrative fees for parishes and has worked for the Diocese of Oxford and parishes since 2017. This online service has become available so any new application for a DBS check can now be done using this service and their response is much quicker.

An Update Service is available for people who are applying for a new DBS check. They can sign up for the DBS Update Service within 28 days of applying for the check. It is free for volunteers. They can also sign up for 30 days after receiving their DBS certificate. The person's date of birth is also required. This provides another number, which can be used to check a person's DBS status. The status is updated yearly, so the person does not need further DBS checks.

Janet Penny, as Recruiter and Administrator at St James' gives out application information to assist applicants in being DBS checked (or paper forms if needed). She has a database of the names and reference numbers for all those who have been DBS checked. In the unlikely circumstances the applicants cannot use the online system themselves, they can be assisted by the recruiter/administrator to make the application.

David Fulford, as Validator assigns a reference number to each applicant, so their online forms can be completed. The Validator can use the paper form to provide relevant information to the online system on behalf of anyone not online. The Validator checks the relevant information with each person and fills in the details on their online form. Applicants can now present their details in-person so checks may be done. APCS now bills the church monthly for any DBS checks done.

Jane Fulford, as Parish Safeguarding Officer, together with the appropriate Youth / Children's worker and the Vicar, will meet with anyone who has a problem regarding suitability for working with children or young people and also keeps a list of those who have been DBS checked as well as records of training completed.

The training system is regularly updated by the Diocese under the Anglican Church leadership and we continue to follow the updated diocesan policy.

I am pleased to say that DBS's are all presently up to date and that Safeguarding Training for Basic Awareness and Foundation Training has been completed by all those who are in responsible roles. We are now encouraging people to do their training updates online.

Time has been taken to review and implement our safer recruitment action and policy.

Our Leadership Team and Authorised Preachers have all completed updates in Leadership Training. Jane has completed Safer Recruitment and all the appropriate training for Safeguarding Officers. She attended the area meeting for Berkshire. PCC members and others are working on completing the Domestic Abuse Training.

At St James our services continue in person and are also delivered by live streaming. We continue to put all the relevant safeguarding policies and risk assessments in place as regards all church activities and meetings in person and online. These include meetings, youth work, worship and pastoral care and many more meetings are happening in person.

We have agreed to follow the Diocesan definition of a vulnerable adult:

*'A person aged 18 or over whose ability to protect themselves from violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation is significantly impaired through physical or mental disability or illness, old age, emotional fragility or distress, or otherwise; and for that purpose, the reference to being impaired is to being temporarily or indefinitely impaired.'*

We are using the Parish Dashboard set up for the Church of England at St James which is very helpful as it makes safeguarding administration and governance simpler for everyone. Jane plans to attend a workshop about the new Safeguarding Hubs in December.

For further information please see the Oxford Diocesan Safeguarding Handbook updated March 2019 and the Website: [www.oxford.anglican.org/mission-ministry/safeguarding](http://www.oxford.anglican.org/mission-ministry/safeguarding)

Approved and Accepted by the PCC on 21/11/2023

Jane Fulford

Rev'd Laurence Smith