

SAFEGUARDING (with John Wylie)

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John's presentation was split into three broad sections: Safe Church; current impressions; and training. Here are some notes, which are by no means exhaustive.

Safe Church

- John's focus is on 3 key areas: training, prevention, and investigation.
- There are some fundamentals for congregations:
 - What is the practical response to a given situation: that should be the focus rather than knowledge of legislation or specific terms, per se.
 - Good communication – congregations should be welcoming to those who enter their space(s) and should help members to know what to do / how to respond to safeguarding-related situations.
 - Consider what might reasonably be the worst case scenario and plan accordingly
 - U18s will have a range of needs: ask what they are and respond appropriately.
 - With pastoral visiting, it is key to set out what is meant by this term in your congregation and, again, plan accordingly (think, too, about lone working for visitors as well as needs of those being visited)
 - Vetting, i.e. PVG Scheme membership. Two forms: children and vulnerable adults.
 - Priests need both types.
 - Those doing regular work with children without their parent/carer present need membership of children's scheme.
 - Those doing pastoral visiting, specifically on behalf of the congregation, need to have membership of vulnerable adult scheme.
 - **Any technical questions about PVG—how to apply or who needs it—should be directed to Daphne Audsley in GSO.**
- The law around PVG is going to change, probably in 2024.
 - Currently an offence to appoint someone who is barred from working with the vulnerable group in question. This will change to being a criminal offence to appoint someone who is not a PVG member for the required scheme. How this works in practice when it is the Vestry who is the employing body is being worked out (it might sit with Rector/Priest or Vestry Secretary), but change is coming!
 - PVGs will also need to be renewed every 5 years.
 - SEC have processed 4,000 PVG applications since 2012 and not all of these will still be working for the SEC. Whilst it is the responsibility of the individual to notify Disclosure Scotland when they stop working for an employing body, SEC GSO will, in the coming months, conduct an audit, via congregations, of who are PVG members. This will also include checking Bishops' authorisations for those in recognised ministries.
- It is, and will remain the case, that unless someone is undertaking regular work with children or vulnerable adults, it is illegal to add them to the PVG Scheme.

Current Impressions

- SEC is in a different place from other churches and organisations regarding historical abuse claims, largely because they have/had very few schools or residential homes.
- He has no systemic concerns across the church.
- Training has not been where is needed to be, and this is being addressed as a priority (see below).
- It is important for those in ministry and leadership to look after themselves: cannot keep others safe if struggling yourself.
 - **Ask for help: contact John early if have any concerns or questions.**
 - Avoid *rescue complex* and, instead, know where to get help and signpost people.
 - If unsure whether the matter involves a safeguarding concern, pick up the phone to someone else, be it PVG coordinator in the congregation, the Diocese Protection Officer, a colleague, or the team at the GSO.
- John is the single point of contact between the police and the SEC.
 - Have helplines and contact details readily available.
- Highlighted how another word for 'safeguarding' could be 'well-being'. It is here to support the congregations in mission, not to direct mission.

Training

- It is recognised that, historically, training in the SEC could have been better.
- No replacement for face-to-face training, discussion and interaction.
- Focus of training being developed for the SEC is to do it through the prism of risk.
- There is a need to roll-out training across the SEC but only John to do so. Therefore, being done in phases.
 - Phase One – Diocesan Protection Officers and Congregational PVG Coordinators (across 360 charges). By 31st March 2024, each of these people will have been offered a training session. Glasgow and Galloway have been done and Edinburgh in process of being done.
 - Phase Two – those in recognised ministries, and vestries. Input was sought on what ought to be included in clerical training. Offerings included:
 - Confidence to discern safeguarding concern.
 - Theological underpinning.
 - Maintaining vigilance.
 - Good boundaries.
 - Domestic violence.
 - Once the detailed changes of law on PVG is known, Daphne will provide technical training to those who need it.
- There is still time to attend training based in Edinburgh Diocese.

KEY POINT: Know the contact details outlined below!!

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