



SAFEGUARDING OFFICE

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Southwark Safeguarding Office, St Gabriel's House, Westminster Bridge Road, London, SE1 7FQ

Tel: 020 7261 1606 Email: office@sgo-rcdsouthwark.org Website: www.rcsouthwark.co.uk

WISHING YOU A JOYOUS AND HEALTHY NEW YEAR!



Welcome to our winter newsletter! We hope you all had a happy and blessed Christmas and pray the new year has welcomed you peaceably.

In this issue you will find an introduction from the new chair of the diocesan Safeguarding Commission, Maureen Kotalawela, as well as more details about the rollout of online DBS applications which are now available.

In addition we have some induction days planned in the next few months for those new to safeguarding, and a reminder that we are always happy to visit your area to provide training on request - so please read on...



New Chair of Safeguarding Commission: Maureen Kotalawela

I am extremely grateful to Archbishop Peter for inviting me to take up the post of Chair of the Safeguarding Commission for the diocese. It is an opportunity to be of service in an important field of work. Following my interviews, I met the small and very hardworking team who implement the work of safeguarding for Southwark diocese. I shall be taking over from a very experienced chair and I have a lot to learn which is specific to this role. I have already been made very welcome by the team and commission members, and I look forward to learning quickly and becoming a real support for the future work and development of the Commission.

Here is a little bit about myself. After leaving school I became a medical laboratory technician but I also spent a lot of time in voluntary youth work in Brixton, centred on the parish of Corpus Christi. My involvement with some amazing young people and community schemes such as "Help on Arrest"

organised by local clergy, led me, six years later, to take up teaching. I qualified at St Mary's Twickenham and for fifteen years I taught at Tulse Hill boys' secondary school in Brixton while continuing the youth work.

This period of my life informed and developed the Christian values I had learnt as a child. I still have many friends from that time.

Subsequently, I taught in other Inner London state schools, I had a short spell as a school inspector but preferred being part of a school community. I then became the headteacher of a mixed secondary school in Lewisham and finally I spent seven delightful years as headteacher of St Thomas More RC school in Croydon.

In retirement I was Chair of Governors at a local Catholic secondary school for several years. Being Chair of the Safeguarding Commission is a challenge I am very grateful to be a part of and I look forward to contributing in any way that I am able.

Overseas Clergy

Priests who come to Southwark from overseas to provide short term cover for holidays are not required to obtain a DBS Disclosure unless they stay longer than six months.

The Chancery obtains a Testimonial of Suitability from their home diocese/religious order that they are a priest in good standing and where necessary processes their visa application.

Online DBS Applications

Online applications have begun to be used by our office and applicants can now complete their DBS form electronically, which some people much prefer (although the Self Declaration & Identity Verification forms remain paper-only at present). If an applicant wishes to make use of this method they will need to have a valid email address which you should forward to us when you request a DBS check for them. Once they have completed the online form they should let you know so that the other forms can be completed as usual and sent to our office together with photocopies of their identity documents. In the meantime we will still retain the paper DBS forms as an option for those who are unable to access the online version.

NCSC Information Cards

The National Catholic Safeguarding Commission (NCSC) has produced some useful information cards when someone is concerned about a child or adult at risk, which we sent to parishes earlier this year. Please continue to promote these cards in your areas and let us know if you need more sent to you.



Training

Our next **Induction Days** for newer safeguarding reps will take place on:

Thursday 22 February 2018 &

Saturday 17 March 2018

The venue will be the Safeguarding Office (St Gabriel's House, SE1 7FQ) and places are limited, so if you have become a safeguarding representative in the last year or so, and have not yet had the opportunity to attend an induction day, please get in touch as soon as possible to book your place!

Safeguarding Awareness Sessions

Our numerous safeguarding awareness sessions for parishes and clergy deanery meetings in 2017 were well attended and gave rise to some excellent training opportunities. So please do consider asking Helen Sheppard to come and do a similar session in your parish or deanery in 2018.

Email Signatures

We are requesting that Parish Reps and Secretary's add a signature to their emails, this enables us to find your address and send forms out efficiently. It should include:

- YOUR NAME**
- PARISH/AREA**
- ROLE**
- CONTACT NUMBER**



[Here to help!](#)

Please remember that if you need any advice about Disclosure applications or safeguarding issues in general we are always happy to receive phone calls & emails – don't hesitate to get in touch.

If you are NO longer a Parish Safeguarding Rep please do let us know by contacting us on either: office@sgo-rcdsouthwark.org or 020 7261 1606