

St Andrew's Safeguarding Report for APCM 2026

We enter our third year as a blended church we have increasing number of people of all ages attending our church which is amazing, though alongside a larger church we need to continue to ensure the safety and well-being of all our congregation. This is done in a number of ways.

Safeguarding Officer:

Each church within the Church of England is required to appoint a Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) to be the link between the church and the diocese concerning safeguarding matters. The role of the PSO is to be the named person that volunteers and church members report any disclosures or safeguarding concerns to. If required, the PSO will refer on any concerns to the Diocese Safeguarding Team and/or to the statutory service (Local Authority) in which the child or vulnerable adult/adult at risk resides.

An adult at risk (formerly vulnerable adult) is defined as someone aged 18 or above who may need community care services for reasons such as mental health, disability, age or illness considered vulnerable if they are unable to look after themselves, protect themselves from harm or exploitation or unable to report abuse.

An adult is considered be at risk if they are unable to safeguard their own well-being, property, rights or other interests, is at risk of harm and is more vulnerable because they are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity

This role is regularly communicated within the church to ensure church members are aware of this role and who they should approach with any concerns. Information of the Parish safeguarding officer (PSO) and team can be found on the website, there safeguarding poster around the building including the notice boards, doors and toilets.

Safeguarding Team:

The Safeguarding Team consists of Sue Griffiths (PSO), Will Kemp (Vicar), Dean Gargano (Youth and Schools Pastor), Lucy Marsh (Children's and Young Family Pastor), Gareth Harper (Associate Vicar) and Ellie Zaragoza (Safeguarding Administrator, Church Administrator and PA to Vicar). The team met on the 2nd March to review the safeguarding policies, procedures and training.

Importance of Safeguarding:

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and vulnerable/at risk adults, protecting them from abuse or maltreatment and preventing harm to their health or development. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Proverbs 31v 8 says 'Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute.' As a church we want to ensure that the children and adults at risk in our community are protected and recognise the calling and duty to love and care for the vulnerable and marginalised and protect all from abuse.

At St Andrews we want to ensure we have clear procedures in place and a culture where ensuring everyone is safe is a key priority and taken very seriously. We want to ensure we are a church where people are able to speak out about any concerns they have and any concerns are dealt with in a professional manner, with no covering up or matters being brushed under the carpet.

We are aware that the wider church has failed in this area with regards to historic abuse and sadly continues to fail where church leaders have abused their positions of authority and exploited church members, and this highlights the importance of having clear policies and procedures with regard to safeguarding.

Volunteers/DBS checks:

All youth and children's volunteers are overseen by our staff – Youth Pastor, Dean Gargano, and Young Families and Children's Pastor, Lucy Marsh who are both safely recruited and have enhanced DBS clearance.

All volunteers and staff working with the youth and kids' team have a DBS check prior to undertaking this role and are required to read and sign our induction pack detailing all the policies and procedures, which have been updated this year.

We currently have 8 members of staff, 1 intern, 20 kids team volunteers, 15 youth team volunteers, 12 pastoral visiting team/home communion team and 20 members of the PCC, who are all safely recruited and up to date on safeguarding training.

All team members for youth, kids, PCC and safeguarding team are required to have DBS checks and these are renewed every three years. Alongside this, 9 members of the pastoral team also have DBS checks, these are the volunteers who go into people's homes.

Training:

Our staff, PCC and volunteers are all required to complete the Chichester diocese Basic Awareness r(C0), the Foundation Training (C1) and raising awareness of domestic abuse, this training has been introduced in the last 12 months. In addition, all members of the Safeguarding Team and clergy are required to attend Safeguarding Leadership training (formally C2).

In the last year the following training has been undertaken by staff and volunteers

Training	Number
Basic	21
Foundation	20
Raising awareness of domestic abuse	34
Safer recruitment	8
Safeguarding Leadership	1
In-house	40

All staff and safeguarding team members are up to date with all their training, all members of the PCC have completed their basic and foundation training with 3 left to complete the raising awareness of domestic abuse training.

Alongside diocese training we also require volunteers to attend our in-house training which is run by myself supported by Will, Gareth, Lucy or Dean.

The diocese requires volunteers to complete their online training every three years but at St Andrew's we made the decision for our volunteers to attend our in-house training every two years so that training is refreshed more regularly, and so that the volunteers are in regular close contact with our Safeguarding Team.

There are 3 training sessions planned for the coming year: 4th June 2026, 22nd September 2026 and 27th January 2027.

We are now using the parish hub, a Church of England tool to maintain our DBS and training records.

We do appreciate that our volunteers often have attended safeguarding training in their work life or other settings and can feel frustrated by this. However, safeguarding is such an important area and being up to date and refreshed in the training is vital.

'Keep Safe':

As well as regularly communicating about the role of the Parish Safeguarding Officer to the whole church family, it is also important to be a church that promotes children learning more about what they can do to try to keep themselves safe. We promote a message which encourages children and young people to speak up, at the same time recognising the challenges and reasons why children might not feel able to.

In October 25 we held our safeguarding Sunday at which Colin Perkins the Diocese safeguarding lead preached, we used the Thirty-one: eight package "Raise your Roar with Roary" to communicate this message, the focus is to raise your roar when you feel worried or upset and not to keep worries to yourself. In addition, children were given activity sheets to back up this message. Our safeguarding leaflet was also shared with the youth and adults that day.

Our safeguarding Sunday this year will be Sunday on 13th September 2026.

Disclosures:

Any disclosures made are dealt with and referred on where required. The safeguarding team are made aware of any disclosures made on a need-to-know basis. The PCC receive regular reports from the PSO and are informed of the number and nature of referrals. The PSO has received referrals/emails/had conversations about 14 adults, 6 youth and 4 children during the last 12 months and has managed and dealt with all of these on a case-by-case basis. With 10 of these incidents Sue asked for advice from the Diocese.

Safeguarding Policies:

In 2025 we are transferred to the National Safeguarding Dashboard, a national tool being introduced to all churches in the diocese to provide a check list and supporting documents covering all the expected standards in safeguarding. This has been a lot of work, but we are near completion of all the Mandatory requirements and doing well working through the Safeguarding standards.

Current policies can be viewed on our church website. In line with the diocesan policy our new website has a link on its home page directly to these policies. Specific policies are in place regarding work with young people around social networking and texting.

Conclusion:

Colossians 3v23 teaches us about doing our best. The Message translation says:

‘And don’t just do the minimum that will get you by. Do your best. Work from the heart for your real master, for God.... Keep in mind always the ultimate master you’re serving is Christ. The sullen servant who does shoddy work will be held responsible. A follower of Jesus doesn’t cover up bad work.’

It is important to remember this when we think about safeguarding; sometimes regular safeguarding training can feel unnecessary and reviewing safeguarding policies isn’t the most exciting subject, but as a church we want to ensure that we are doing our absolute best in the area of safeguarding, because of how important it is and how costly this can be if things go wrong.

I always think it is worth highlighting that safeguarding is all of our responsibility and as a church we want to be a family who care for each other and make sure the vulnerable are protected from harm.

I can appreciate that reporting on a concern can feel daunting and often in a church setting, where we are the family of God, this can be a barrier, as we always want to think the best of people and we want to avoid conflict and feeling uncomfortable. But I would always encourage people to share any ‘niggles’ or anything they are not sure about with the Parish Safeguarding Officer. It is the Parish Safeguarding Officer’s responsibility, in consultation with the Diocese Safeguarding Team if required, to decide whether further action is required.

Sue Griffiths, Parish Safeguarding Officer, St Andrew’s Burgess Hill.

11.4.26