



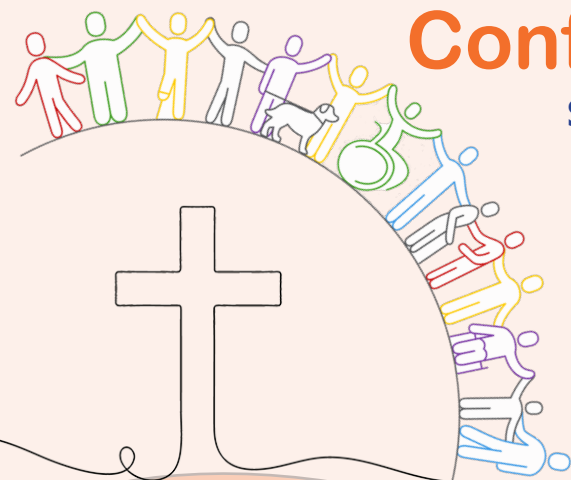
Lichfield Diocese's First Diocesan Safeguarding Conference

Saturday, 20 September 2025

9:30 am- 4:30 pm

Hosted by Telford Minster

A day to come together, to share good practice, to get answers from the safeguarding and admin teams and to learn from amazing speakers. Come with your questions for the Q&A session.



Programme

Coffee and refreshments will be available from

0930-1000

Welcome and housekeeping
(facilities, fire exits, order of the day, who's here and more)

1000-1010

Worship - (Archdeacon Megan)

1010-1020

Introduction to the Day (Bishop Michael / Sam Rushton)

1020-1040

Liz Jermy introducing our main speaker: Jo Douglas

1040-1045

MAIN SPEAKER - Jo Douglas: 'What is Trauma? Who does this happen to and what does it look like?'

1045-1130

Coffee Break

1130-1145

How can we become a trauma informed, safer space, church community?

11:45-12:30

Lunch

1230-1330

*If you are new to the role of Parish Safeguarding Officer, join the Bishop's Staff and Safeguarding Scrutiny Panel Members for lunch in the Walker Room

Lunchtime is the last chance to submit your questions for the Q&A session

Seminars

Safe Spaces – victim /survivor support
Dementia – safeguarding and managing risk

1330-1420

Coffee Break

1420-1430

Seminars

Safe Spaces – victim /survivor support
Dementia – safeguarding and managing risk

1430-1525

Question and Answer panel

1525-1610

Conclusion and Reflection (Bishop Michael)

1615-1630

A welcome message from Bishop Michael



Keeping all people safe, paying particular attention to those who are most vulnerable, and listening to the voices of victims and survivors - these are all values at the very heart of the Christian gospel, and they should guide us in all we do at every level of church life.

I and my brother and sister bishops are deeply grateful for the commitment, care and devotion with which so many in our diocese - particularly Parish Safeguarding Officers and our central safeguarding team - work so hard, day in and day out, to make our churches safer places for all.

I hope and pray that this conference will help us connect well with one another in this vital task and encourage and equip us all.

+Michael Lich

National Update for Lichfield Safeguarding Conference

Introduction of Regional Safeguarding Leads

I am Mandy McPhee, a member of the National Safeguarding Team and carry out the role of Regional Safeguarding Lead for the West Midlands Region. The region consists of the following dioceses: Lichfield, Birmingham, Worcester, Coventry, Gloucester and Hereford.

My role is to provide professional supervision to all Diocesan Safeguarding Officers and to Cathedral Safeguarding Officers where appropriate. I also have responsibility for carrying out quality assurance activity within each Diocese and Cathedral.

This new regional structure, and my role were introduced in response to key recommendations stemming from the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse. The whole country is split into eight regions each having a member of the National Safeguarding Team as a regional safeguarding lead.

The regional model is working well and establishing excellent working relationships between dioceses, cathedrals, the National Safeguarding Team and diocesan safeguarding panels. A regional network of Safeguarding Officers has been formed and meets 4 times a year where good practice is shared.

Independent Audits

A programme of independent audit regarding safeguarding arrangements is underway and moving gradually around the country. The Diocese of Lichfield's independent audit is scheduled for 2028. The National Safeguarding Team and its activities were audited in July this year and we await the report on its findings.

Safeguarding Structures

General Synod in its February meeting voted to initiate a programme of work regarding the future structure of safeguarding in the Church of England. The Safeguarding Structures programme is now underway and carrying out various engagement activities relating to two strands of work: Scrutiny and Operational safeguarding. Up to date information regarding this programme of work is available by accessing its dedicated pages on the main Church of England website.

Learning and Development including Parish Safeguarding Network and Resources.

The learning and development team continue to develop and update learning and development material used in parishes and dioceses. This includes facilitating a Parish Safeguarding Network, consisting of diocesan safeguarding staff and parish safeguarding officers who meet regularly online. The Parish Safeguarding Network have co-produced a set of resources for parishes and PSOs, which are accessible via the main Church of England website.

Policy Development

The policy development team are updating and refreshing safeguarding policy. A new managing allegations policy has just gone live. Work is continuing to replace the parish safeguarding handbook with a parish safeguarding tool kit accessible via the Church of England website.

Conference Speakers

Joanna Douglas - Main speaker - Trauma Informed Theology

Joanna is a qualified teacher working with students living with complex trauma-related mental health needs.

Alongside her teaching role, Joanna is a PhD candidate researching trauma-informed theology, which combines the fields of psychology and theology, having previously gained a master's degree in this field. As a Christian trauma survivor herself and an active member of Leeds CofE Diocese, Joanna is passionate about building trauma-informed churches.

Joanna aims to make her research in this field accessible to all Christians in a way that equips our Christian worshipping communities to adequately and appropriately support trauma survivors within our congregations.

Joanna Naomi Douglas
BA (hons.), PGCE, QTS, MA.



Sarah Thorpe - Seminar on Dementia and safeguarding

Sarah Thorpe has worked since 2014 as the Dementia-Friendly Church Enabler for the Diocese of Lichfield. She is glad to work with any churches that want to join our Diocese-wide dementia-friendly church network:

- keeping connections with people through advancing dementia;
- supporting one another across the network as we raise awareness and share ideas, resources and experiences; and
- journeying together as we listen and learn and go deeper in our spirituality and faith, through the unchosen challenges of dementia.

Sarah's dad had dementia in the last years of his life – and, in her home church in Shifnal, this prompted her to start a dementia group which celebrates its 12th birthday this month. Sarah also offers spiritual companionship and works for Chaplaincy Plus, a Christian support network for people working in Birmingham; before that, she worked in law for 30 years, as a solicitor in London and Birmingham.

Email: sarah.thorpe@lichfield.anglican.org
Mobile: 07982 248949

Clair Street & Gemma Dodd - Seminar on the work of Safe Spaces

Safe Spaces is a free and independent support service, providing a confidential, personal and safe space for anyone who has been abused by someone in the Church or as a result of their relationship with the Church of England, the Catholic Church in England and Wales or the Church in Wales

Clair joined First Light in April 2024 as the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Support Manager, running the Independent Sexual Violence Advisory service for Devon and Cornwall. She then managed various teams within the integrated Safer Futures Domestic Abuse service in Cornwall.

Clair is an experienced manager who has worked in health and social care since 2000 in a range of services and settings, including drug and alcohol, prison outreach, homelessness, community outreach, and mental health.

Gemma began working in the charity sector as a Youth Support Worker, helping young adults develop the skills to live independent lives. From there, she moved into Substance Abuse Support and then supporting the homeless to access services including mental health support, drug and alcohol services and access to GPs and nurses.

She joined Safe Spaces in March 2023 to broaden her knowledge and focus on a new specialism, supporting those affected by church-related abuse.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Team

Neil Spiring - Diocesan Safeguarding Officer - and Team Leader working on diocesan safeguarding policy development, casework, issues regarding adults at risk and children. He is a qualified social worker as DSOs must be.

Peter Hurd - Assistant Diocesan Safeguarding Officer, - an experienced, qualified Social Worker. Peter is deputy for Neil Spiring, when he is not available, as well as working on casework, safeguarding issues involving Children and Adults at Risk and supporting parishes with safeguarding advice.

Kim Hodgkins - Assistant Safeguarding Officer - works alongside the DSOs with casework and to support clergy, Parish Safeguarding Officers and parishes in safeguarding matters and supports the safeguarding training programme.

Sarah Fullard - Safeguarding Training Adviser - leads our in-person and online safeguarding training programme

Emma Allen, Laura Curry, Maria Farrington - Safeguarding Practitioners - are experienced safeguarding professionals who work alongside Neil and Peter on casework.

Sue Lord - DBS Administrator - the first point of contact for queries that are not covered on the website about DBS applications submitted through the diocese

The team are based at the diocesan offices in Lichfield, though all spend a greater or lesser proportion of their time out and about, meeting clergy and Parish Safeguarding Officers, delivering training locally and working with other professionals on casework.

Safeguarding contacts:

For non-emergency reporting of safeguarding concerns please contact us on safeguarding@lichfield.anglican.org or phone 01543 306030 option 2.

In an emergency where there is imminent risk of significant harm, please contact the police on 999 or your local social services department.

Out of Hours and for weekend emergencies please call the Emergency Safeguarding number 0303 003 1111 (option 2).