

Dear all,

Since joining the Diocese of Liverpool this year we have both seen just how important getting safeguarding right is. We want our diocese and all our churches and worshipping communities to be and feel like places that are safe for all. We are very aware that a rich and diverse people come in contact with churches and Christians across our diocese. Many can be vulnerable, or encountering us at a time when they are vulnerable. So, we must have a safer church. We must be safe and welcoming for all.

We know that the diocese came under increased scrutiny earlier this year following the Channel 4 news report into our bishops. That was something that we are still learning our lessons from. But that is not the whole story. We have a strong commitment to good practice in safeguarding. We have strengthened our excellent safeguarding team who in turn have nurtured and developed excellent Parish Safeguarding Officer dedicated to getting safeguarding systems and processes right.

However, we are not, nor cannot be complacent. Nor can we leave it to others. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. We cannot leave it to others, we must all play our part in creating a safe environment in all of our church activities.

Your parish will have a safeguarding policy and should be displaying information about who to contact if you have any concerns. But here's a reminder. If you are or you think someone is in immediate harm or danger then contact the emergency services on 999. If you are uncomfortable with a situation or have a general safeguarding concern then contact the diocesan safeguarding team on safeguarding.team@liverpool.anglican.org

If you need immediate advice from the team then ring St James House during office hours or contact 31:8 for out of hours support on 0303 003 1111. You can find this and more on our website at www.liverpool.anglican.org/safeguardingmatters

After several years of service our Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser Andy Holmes retires in November to move to Australia. We would like to thank him for his dedicated, professional service and advice and we offer our prayers for the next chapter of his life. We are delighted that temporarily his deputy Mick Murphy will be acting as Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser while we recruit for a full-time replacement.

Over the next few months how we keep people safe and free from harm will be audited by INEQE. INEQE (<https://ineqe.com/>) is an independent organisation whom the Church of England has appointed to audit all the diocese and Cathedrals in the Church of England. The audit will help us improve on what we are doing. They will be asking you to complete a survey about your thoughts on safeguarding so look out for more information in November.

0151 709 9722

St James' House, 20 St James Road, Liverpool L1 7BY
enquiries@liverpool.anglican.org | www.liverpool.anglican.org

If you are a survivor of church-based abuse, you may find it hard to trust what we are doing, but your views are very important to us. We value listening and learning about what we can do better so please do speak to the team.

Over the next few weeks you will get a number of updates via the diocesan bulletin with helpful information about good safeguarding practice and the INEQE audit. This will include details on how you can use Safeguarding Sunday to promote good practice, what you need to know to support safeguarding where you are, and more details about the INEQE audit.

Thank you for taking safeguarding seriously and doing all you can to make your church, your worshipping community a safer place for all.

Kindest regards,

Rt Revd Ruth Worsley, Interim Bishop of Liverpool

Sharon Parr, Diocesan Secretary and Cathedral Chief Operating Officer

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