The Diocese in Europe Safeguarding Protocol

An introduction by the Right Reverend Robert Innes, Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe.

In recent times the issue of 'Safeguarding' children, young persons and adults who may be vulnerable has sadly become a matter of great concern. There are numerous recorded instances of failure by both individuals and institutions to provide a safe and secure environment for these groups. In particular there is abundant evidence that claims of abuse have been ignored (in some cases quite deliberately) by some institutions. Regrettably this has included parts of the Church.

To the vast majority of people such behaviour is utterly abhorrent. It can never be excused and for me the safeguarding of children, young persons and adults who may be vulnerable within our Chaplaincy communities is an absolute priority. Failure to achieve a safe and secure environment within our ministry is simply not an option.

The Diocese first issued a formal policy on this matter in 2012. Since then we have moved forwards in a number of areas and it is important that our approach can reflect the progress made in the past triennium. At the same time the opportunity has been taken to set out the requirements in a 'web friendly' manner. You will find that there are links to the relevant information set out within the text.

It is clearly essential that we have a coherent and consistent approach to safeguarding across the diocese. The requirements set out in this protocol (the formal diocesan policy and the accompanying means of its implementation) are based on current best practice across the Church of England. They set the minimum standards to be achieved across all Archdeaconries and Chaplaincies within the Diocese (even where the local legal and accepted practices may be less onerous). That we minister in numerous nations where the legal and social framework may be different from the UK is not a reason for any exceptions to this essential need.

As I have already stated, safeguarding is a top priority for me – and I expect this to be the case across our Diocese. We have a duty before our Lord to minister in a safe and secure place for all vulnerable groups. This protocol sets the standards we must achieve.

+ Robert

This revised Diocesan Safeguarding Protocol issued on 9th December 2015 has immediate effect.

Chaplaincies are to review and revise their local policies and procedures as soon as possible prior to their 2016 Annual Chaplaincy Meeting.

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