



Safe & Sound - No. 19 - July 2009

References for Volunteers

The whole purpose of Safeguarding is lost if we do not - as a minimum - ensure that all volunteers are properly recruited. The flowchart on Page 35 of the Parish Pack sets out the procedure step-by-step, and makes it clear that the parish rep must take up written references on all volunteers.

I appreciate that this means a lot of work, but I do not think that we can avoid it - and I say 'we' because I have had to do it my own parish. The CRB Disclosure tells us only that the volunteer has no criminal convictions, but it says nothing about the suitability of that person for that role in your parish - and references from two people other than the parish priest and the parish rep can be important indicators about the volunteer. The need to nominate referees also provides another deterrent for anybody who plans to abuse our children, young people and vulnerable adults. Our national body CSAS sees references as a vital part of the process, and Suzanne and I support that position very firmly.

If you have recruited a great number of volunteers, and have faced opposition on this point, it may help to start with one or two who you know would be happy to co-operate. Then you can move on to the more reluctant, making the point that others have agreed to it, and it is in any case required by CSAS. A computer is a great help in preparing the letters to the referees, but if you do not have one, or are not able to produce these sorts of letters, I am ready to help either with a duplicated letter or with a computer template - just tell me what you want.

Writing to referees also raises the question of a role description. Every volunteer should have one for the role that they do in your parish. We have various suggestions available that you can adopt outright, or amend to suit your parish - again, just say what you want.

May I also say that I am very concerned about the number of Confidential Declaration Forms (CDFs) that reach us at the same time as the CRB Disclosure application. We ask for the CDFs to be sent in first so that Suzanne can take up with the volunteers anything that they declare on the CDF before we proceed to the Disclosure application. In recent weeks we have seen six or more CDFs in which volunteers have declared something that requires further investigation by Suzanne - but the volunteers are already in post and have submitted a Disclosure application. This can't be right, and may well prove embarrassing to either volunteer or rep - and may expose the parish to risk.

Please check through the flowchart and ensure that you follow the steps in the correct order - and if you have any questions, please call and talk them through - we are happy to help in any way that we can.

And a last note - references for SVP members can be left to the Conference Secretary....

Contact: Stephen: ☎ 0113 2618 046 ✉ safeguarding@dioceseofleeds.org.uk
Suzanne: ☎ 0113 2618 059 ✉ suzanne.mitchell@dioceseofleeds.org.uk
✉ Safeguarding Office, Hinsley Hall, 62 Headingley Lane, Leeds, LS6 2BX

Training for Parish Reps

We have now fixed the details of a series of short and very practical training sessions to be held here at Hinsley Hall (St Monica's) on various dates in the Autumn/Winter, as here.

Saturday 5 September	10.00 - 12 noon	Wednesday 9 September	19.30 - 21.30
Wednesday 4 November	19.30 - 21.30	Saturday 7 November	10 - 12 noon
Wednesday 13 January	19.30 - 21.30	Saturday 16 January	10 - 12 noon

The one-off sessions will concentrate on immediate and short-term issues such as:

- ✚ accurate completion of paperwork
- ✚ how to talk to volunteers in the parishes
- ✚ how to help reps and parish group leaders to see their way into the Parish Pack
- please tell us if you don't yet have your Parish Pack
- ✚ how to agree role descriptions, and how to obtain references
- ✚ any other practical issues that those attending want to raise.

We will **not** be discussing the longer-term implications of the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) - and there will be a further round of training on ISA and its implications once all the details are confirmed - but not before May 2010.

Tea, coffee and biscuits will be provided free of charge, and we will aim for a relaxed and informal - but busy - atmosphere. Parish reps in the process of appointment are very welcome to join us, and you may stay for as long or as short a time as you wish.

We would like to limit numbers to a **minimum of five, and a maximum of 14** - so do please tell us as soon as you can which of the sessions you wish to attend. There is no need for apologies.

And if none of these dates suits you, and you would prefer to call in at some other time that suits you better for a one-to-one session, just let us know and we'll put the kettle on!

Stephen Hanslip

Holidays for Suzanne and Stephen

Please keep the paperwork coming - but please also be prepared for some delays over the next few weeks while we take our summer holidays.....

Stephen:	Last day at work: Monday 27 July	Returning on: Wednesday 5 August
	Last day at work: Friday 21 August	Returning on: Wednesday 2 September
	Last day at work: Wednesday 30 September	Returning on: Monday 19 October
Suzanne:	Last day at work: Friday 31st July	Returning on: Wednesday 11 th August
	Last day at work: Wednesday 2 September	Returning on: Saturday 5 th September