



# **Mothers' Union: Coventry Diocese**

## **Safeguarding Policy and Procedures**

## **Safeguarding in Mothers' Union: Policy Commitment**

The following policy commitment was agreed by the Worldwide Trustee Board of Mothers' Union in November 2018:

As an organisation concerned with Christian principles and ministry in family life, the nurture and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults is at the heart of Mothers' Union. Both individually as members and collectively as an organisation, Mothers' Union has a duty to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults, doing everything possible to ensure that they are safe when involved in Mothers' Union activities.

We will follow the safeguarding policies and practices issued by the Anglican Church, and the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) charter for the safety of people within the churches of the Anglican Communion.

In addition, the safeguarding policies and practices of the Diocese of Coventry will be followed.

Mothers' Union in Coventry Diocese will promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults by aiming to prevent abuse from occurring, to protect those who are at risk of abuse and to respond well to those who have been abused. We will follow procedures to enable the identification of those who may present a risk to others and, should this occur, seek appropriate pastoral support for them.

### **Guidance for Mothers' Union in Coventry Diocese**

1. At the first Trustee meeting in each year the trustee board will re-visit and adopt the current Anglican diocesan (Coventry) safeguarding procedures for their activities. This will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
2. The diocesan trustee board will nominate a member (Safeguarding Contact):
  - a. • to have an overview of the safeguarding aspects of Mothers' Union activities across Coventry diocese, including liaison with the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer;
  - b. • to ensure that safeguarding requirements are met for all activities or initiatives in the diocese; and
  - c. • to be part of the MU Britain & Ireland Community of Interest for Safeguarding.
3. Annually, the board should review the roles in Mothers' Union activities in the diocese that include direct involvement with children, young people and adults at risk to ensure that those volunteers involved in the activities:
  - a. • are appropriately recruited;
  - b. • receive training, either in line with the diocesan guidelines or those of a partner organisation with whom Mothers' Union is working;
  - c. • are aware of the relevant reporting procedures to deal with safeguarding concerns and allegations.

It is expected that Mothers' Union, at diocesan or local level, will follow the safeguarding policies and practices of the Anglican church (Coventry Diocese), or those of any other external organisation that Mothers' Union is working with.

Guidance documents are provided <https://www.mothersunion.org/safeguarding> to assist the diocesan trustee board in the area of safeguarding and to offer good practice guidelines to make it easier for Mothers' Union groups, branches and individual members to 'do the right thing' when it comes to safeguarding. Good safeguarding practice does not create barriers to our Mothers' Union outreach, but makes it possible for us to engage with vulnerable groups in our communities appropriately and safely, both for them and for our members.

No one is expected to know everything about safeguarding, but by following guidance and talking to those who have expertise in this area, we can show that we are doing everything possible to safeguard all those who come into contact with Mothers' Union. If any Mothers' Union member, group or diocese chooses not to follow current guidance and a safeguarding incident were to occur, this can result in a loss of insurance cover and incur other liabilities, as well as having a negative impact on the reputation of Mothers' Union.

## Seven Safeguarding Steps for Diocesan Trustee Boards

### Step 1

Nominate a member to be the Safeguarding Contact for Mothers' Union in the diocese. Currently Karen Morris

### Step 2

Make contact with the Coventry Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. Currently Sarah Price

### Step 3

At the start of each year, accept and minute the adoption of Mothers' Union safeguarding policy commitment; re-visit and accept Coventry Diocese Mothers' Union Safeguarding Policy

### Step 4

For all Mothers' Union events and activities, follow the appropriate procedures and practices for those working with children and adults at risk

### Step 5

Regularly review all Mothers' Union activities in the diocese and determine the appropriate recruitment and training requirements

### Step 6

Make local groups/branches aware of the need to liaise with their Parish Safeguarding Officer or the Mothers' Union Diocesan Safeguarding Contact if there is no one appointed in the parish.

### Step 7

Raise awareness of safeguarding with all MU members as **safeguarding is everyone's business**

## **Safer Recruitment & Safeguarding Training: Who is Responsible?**

The most important part of safeguarding is making sure that everyone who volunteers to be involved in activities with children and adults at risk does so through a safer recruitment procedure and receives an appropriate level of training. Mothers' Union activities involving children and adults at risk fall into one of three categories.

### **1. The activity is managed and delivered in conjunction with the local church or the diocese:**

- **Mothers' Union will follow the safeguarding policy of the local church/Coventry diocese.**
  - i. Volunteers will be recruited, have the relevant criminal records checks and be trained in line with the safeguarding policies and procedures of the local church/Coventry Diocese and will respond to safeguarding concerns through the Parish Safeguarding Officer or the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser

### **2. The activity is in partnership with an external organisation, such as a prison, hospital, contact centre, school etc.:**

- **The partner organisation takes responsibility for safeguarding**
  - i. Mothers' Union volunteers will be recruited according to the safeguarding procedures of the organisation involved, who will also be responsible for undertaking appropriate criminal record checks if required. Members will be made aware of the partner organisation's safeguarding policy and how to respond to safeguarding concerns.

### **3. If the activity is solely the responsibility of Mothers' Union:**

- **Mothers' Union Safer Recruitment and Training Procedures will apply**
  - i. The procedures can be found in the Mothers' Union document, from the Safeguarding lead at Mary Sumner House: "Safer Recruitment in Mothers' Union" (attached to this policy document). This includes:
    1. Steps to safely recruit volunteers
    2. Model Volunteer Role Outline
    3. Volunteer Information Form
    4. Self-declaration Form for volunteers
    5. Reference letter and form

## **The Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) and Criminal Records Checks**

### **DBS checks for Mothers' Union trustees**

The Charity Commission for England & Wales recommends that all trustees of charities working with children and vulnerable adults have an enhanced DBS check. This is not dependent on a trustee having any direct contact with vulnerable groups. As part of the body responsible for decision making relating to work with these groups, each trustee should be an appropriate person to undertake such decisions. The Church of England and the Church in Wales have similar requirements for members of PCCs which sponsor and approve work with children and adults at risk.

The B&I Group have agreed that Mothers' Union trustees in England and Wales must have a DBS enhanced check for working with both children and vulnerable adults issued in the past three years and that each diocesan Mothers' Union is responsible for the DBS checks of its trustees. DBS checks are for working relating to children or adults or both groups. In most instances, diocesan trustees will require checking for both groups as Mothers' Union activities are likely to involve both children and adults at risk.

It is recommended that each diocesan Mothers' Union should:

- Register with one of the safeguarding agencies who offer electronic DBS checks.
- Appoint an appropriate individual to be responsible for administering the checks, being informed of check results and maintaining appropriate records.

Thirtyone:eight is recommended as a safeguarding agency. It is a Christian organisation specialising in supporting faith groups and widely used by Anglican dioceses as well as Mothers' Union for the central staff. There is an annual registration fee as well as an administration charge for each check, but this includes access to their safeguarding helpline. Some agencies only offer a processing service for DBS checks.

A trustee who has had an equivalent check with another voluntary organisation and is registered with the DBS Update Service can give permission for their record to be checked via that service by the diocesan Mothers' Union. Further information about the DBS Update Service can be found at

<https://www.mothersunion.org/sites/default/files/resources/public/DBS%20and%20criminal%20rec%20ord%20checks%20England%20and%20Wales.pdf>

It is recommended that Mothers' Union trustees who are DBS checked register with this service, once they receive their certificate. There is no charge for volunteers to register – but it must be done within 30 days of the 'date of issue' displayed on the DBS certificate.

Similarly, a Mothers' Union trustee with an equivalent current certificate as a volunteer within the Church of England or the Church in Wales can use that certificate through the portability provisions of the DBS system.

There are provisions which avoid the need for volunteers to complete multiple Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) applications, provided that the check is:

- For a voluntary (not paid) role
- The same level of check is required
- Relates to the same group (i.e. working with children or adults or both)

### **Update service**

It is possible for volunteers to register free of charge with the DBS Update Service, ***provided they do so within 30 days of the date of issue of the DBS certificate.***

This means a volunteer doesn't need to go through the online DBS application and checking process when they apply for another voluntary role. Instead, they need to produce their original DBS certificate with its 12 digit reference number, their full name and date of birth, which allows their current status to be checked on line by the new organisation they are volunteering with.

The Update Service can only be used for:

- standard and enhanced checks (not checks where barring information is required)
- the same level of check and
- the same workforce (children, adult or both)

More information about the DBS update service can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-update-service-applicant-guide/dbs-updateservice-applicant-guide>

### **Portability**

Some volunteers may have an existing DBS certificate for other church related activities which could meet the requirement for a DBS check through portability. To meet the portability requirement, their DBS certificate must be seen and meet the following criteria:

- Issued for a role within the same Anglican diocese, for example as a PCC member or a Sunday school teacher
- Apply to the same "workforce" (children, adult or both)
- Eligible for the same/lower level of criminal record check as the other (or previous) role
- Be current and not in need of renewal (Mothers' Union in B&I require DBS certificates to be renewed every 3 years, unless registered with the Update Service)

DBS certificates relating to current employment or from other voluntary organisations (including Girlguiding and the Scout Association) or from other Anglican dioceses are not acceptable.

## **Mothers' Union activities in Coventry Diocese**

When members are considering new activities – or expanding existing ones – it is important to think about the safeguarding implications. If you are asking members and friends in your branch or diocese to make knitted items, or pack toiletry bags, for example, where items will be taken to a collection point for distribution, then there are no additional safeguarding concerns other than the overall well-being and pastoral care of the members. But if members will be directly engaging with beneficiaries and these may include children, young people or adults at risk, then safeguarding procedures need to be followed.

### **Who is responsible for Safeguarding?**

If the activity is being organised in conjunction with the church (for example, supporting a church homelessness project by helping to staff a centre) then the church safeguarding procedures will be followed. For more information: <https://www.coventry.anglican.org/safeguarding>

If the project is in partnership with **an external organisation** (for example, MU members staffing a Play Area in a prison), the safeguarding procedures of the partner organisation will apply. Before setting up a new partnership agreement, you should always ask to see the Safeguarding policy and procedures of the external organisation, which should be at least as stringent as those of Coventry diocese.

If the activity is the sole responsibility of Mothers' Union, or a partner organisation expects Mothers' Union to be responsible for safeguarding issues, then follow the Mothers' Union and Coventry Diocese safeguarding processes.

### **Finding and supporting volunteers**

Whichever organisation is responsible for safeguarding, the procedures for recruiting volunteers must be followed. Safer recruitment ensures that the right people are volunteering to work with children and adults at risk and an important part of Mothers' Union commitment to do everything possible to ensure that children and adults are safe when involved in Mothers' Union activities.

All MU members who are involved in any capacity in an activity or event involving children and adults at risk should have completed basic safeguarding awareness training so they are able to recognise safeguarding concerns. They should also know how to respond and who to inform, as well as being aware of the boundaries of confidentiality. Developing our understanding of safeguarding will help bring about a safer environment for everyone. Training is available for any groups of Mothers' Union volunteers, through Coventry Diocesan Safeguarding Team.

Mothers' Union insurance cover is also dependent on safeguarding policy and practice being followed.

Safeguarding is equally important for one off events, such as a Family Fun Day, even if any children or adults at risk are supervised by their own relatives or carers. If Mothers' Union is involved as a part of a larger event, the safeguarding procedures of the event organisers should be followed.

## **Reviewing Mothers' Union Activities**

On a regular basis, and at least once in the triennium, the trustee board must review all Mothers' Union activities involving children, young people and adults at risk, happening in the diocese. This includes activities organised by the diocese, those in partnership with other organisations and those organised by a local branch or group.

Coventry MU Safeguarding Contact should check with those organising the activities that all those involved have been recruited through the relevant Safer Recruitment procedure and completed the appropriate level of safeguarding training. Safeguarding training should be refreshed every three years.

Many Mothers' Union members are engaged in projects and activities that are led by statutory and other voluntary organisations, such as prisons, schools and contact centres, which have their own safeguarding policies and procedures for volunteers working with them. When working with partner organisations, diocesan trustees need to be clear which safeguarding policies, procedures and practice guidelines are being followed, including the responsibility for carrying out any criminal record checks required and the provision and updating of safeguarding training.

If there is any uncertainty about the robustness of the policies and procedures of an external organisation, or where the responsibility for recruiting and reporting procedures lies, trustees should ask for guidance from the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser or contact the Mothers' Union Safeguarding lead at Mary Sumner House.

## **Mothers' Union Diocesan Safeguarding Contact: Role Description**

Mothers' Union Diocesan Safeguarding Contact in Coventry Diocese is the key link between members and trustees concerning safeguarding matters. It is recommended that a Trustee undertakes this role.

The main tasks are:

- To have an overview of all Mothers' Union activities in the diocese involving children and adults at risk, including keeping a record of these activities and where responsibility for safeguarding lies.
- To create a working relationship with the Anglican Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser for their advice and guidance on safeguarding issues relating to Mothers' Union activities organised in conjunction with the local church, including safer recruitment and access to safeguarding training.
- To ensure that the Trustee Board is kept up to date with current safeguarding practice and procedures
- To ensure that all Mothers' Union volunteers working with children and adults at risk are recruited through the relevant Safer Recruitment procedure and undertake appropriate training;
- To keep diocesan trustees aware of the safeguarding implications of new and existing activities with children and adults at risk
- To seek advice and guidance from the diocesan safeguarding team relating to contact with local statutory agencies in any instances where Mothers' Union is acting independently of the church.
- To record and report any safeguarding concerns that may arise in the diocese
- To ensure that all diocesan trustees have up to date and appropriate criminal records checks
- To be the nominated diocesan contact on the Safeguarding Community of Interest (MSH).

## **Safeguarding Incident Reports to central Mothers' Union**

If an incident relating to abuse, or suspected abuse, of a child, young person or adult occurs, and once the procedures for reporting such incidents have been followed, the Diocesan President and/or the Mothers' Union Diocesan Safeguarding Contact should discuss with the Anglican Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (or if with a partner organisation, their lead on safeguarding)

- The nature of the information which, whilst appropriately respecting issues of confidentiality, should be passed to the Safeguarding Lead of Mothers' Union (currently Marian Pope), so that any appropriate lessons which have been learnt from the specific incident can be more generally applied to Mothers' Union activities.
- The nature of the information, which, whilst appropriately respecting issues of confidentiality, should be passed as soon as possible (via the Safeguarding Lead of the Mothers' Union) to the Mothers' Union's insurers.

As a minimum, the following information should be reported:

- Diocese and date of the incident
- An incident summary - a brief anonymised summary of the incident or allegation of abuse
- The individual(s) to whom the incident was initially reported – including the name(s), position held and contact details
- The action taken as a result of this incident - this should include:
  - ♣ the channel through which the incident was reported (e.g. the MU diocesan safeguarding contact or that of another organisation);
  - ♣ any involvement of statutory agencies (e.g. social services or the police)
  - ♣ names, positions and contact details
  - ♣ as well as the action taken.
- Where the full record of the incident and the subsequent action is held – including both the location and the method of storage (e.g. paper, electronic) and who has access to this information at the time of reporting.
- Any action recommended to the diocese to reduce the likelihood of a similar occurrence – especially if this could be helpful for other Mothers' Union dioceses

A full record of all safeguarding incidents should be kept securely\* by the MU diocese involved and be accessible, if ever necessary, to future diocesan trustees who may have a legitimate need to access the information, for example, Diocesan President, MU Diocesan Safeguarding Contact

Safeguarding Incident records must be kept for a minimum of 50 years in case of a public liability claim.

\* Paper records should be held in a filing or storage cabinet, which is kept locked and has limited key holders. Electronic records should be kept on a password protected external drive, not on a PC or laptop, as this may more generally be accessible and could be lost if a PC crashes.

## **Safeguarding Terms and Definitions**

We all need to be kept safe, regardless of our situation. But at certain times and in certain circumstances in life, the need for safeguarding is greater. Generally, safeguarding is focussed on two groups of society who are seen to need particular care:

### **Children and Young People**

The term "child" is used to include all children and young people who have not yet reached their 18th birthday. However, the term "young person/people" is sometimes used for those aged between 14 and 17.

### **Adults at Risk**

Vulnerability in adults is not easy to define, but can best be viewed as a person aged 18 or over whose ability to protect himself or herself from violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation is significantly impaired, either temporarily or indefinitely, through physical or mental disability or illness, old age, emotional fragility or distress. This may include:

- People with a mental health problem or mental illness (including addictions or dementia)
- People with a physical disability
- People with a sensory impairment
- People with a learning disability
- People who are frail and/or experiencing a temporary illness.
- People experiencing personal trauma

The term "adults at risk" is now widely used in terms of social care, but "vulnerable adults" can be found in legislation and related documents.

## **Safeguarding and Insurance**

Insurance cover for activities where members come into contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults whilst representing Mothers' Union is provided on the basis that safeguarding policies, procedures and practices are in place and being followed. Failing to meet this requirement could invalidate the terms of our insurance and result in dioceses being liable for any claim made against them.