

COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON'S CONNEXION

Volunteer Safeguarding Lead

The Connexion is looking for a volunteer Safeguarding Lead to help us support our congregations in maintaining good safeguarding practice.

This is an important and rewarding role, but it is not intended to be an onerous one. Safeguarding matters arise only occasionally, and much of the role involves keeping in friendly contact with our congregations, offering guidance when needed, and making sure that our policies and records remain in good order.

The role would suit someone who is approachable, organised and comfortable offering calm, practical support to others. Previous safeguarding experience would be helpful, but a willingness to learn and become familiar with the relevant guidance is equally important.

What the role involves

Keeping in touch with our congregations

Once a year, the Safeguarding Lead has a brief conversation with each congregation/leadership team to check that safeguarding arrangements are working well and to ask whether any concerns or issues have arisen. A short summary is then provided to the Trustees, with a brief paragraph prepared for inclusion in the annual report.

Sharing helpful safeguarding information

Two or three times a year, the Safeguarding Lead sends a short email to congregation safeguarding contacts highlighting useful reminders, changes in guidance or matters of particular interest.

Helping with DBS checks

The Safeguarding Lead liaises with the Recruitment Lead who arranges DBS checks through Thirtyone:Eight. The process includes an online element and checking an applicant's original identification documents. There is some initial learning involved in becoming familiar with the system, but once understood this becomes a straightforward administrative process and checks are only required when needed.

Being a source of support

From time to time, a congregation may need advice about a safeguarding concern. The Safeguarding Lead provides a listening ear and helps the local leaders think through the appropriate next steps. This will normally involve a telephone conversation followed by a short email or further call to make sure that the matter has been dealt with appropriately.

The Safeguarding Lead does not work with difficult situations alone. Specialist safeguarding advice can be sought and appropriate agencies involved.

Keeping simple and appropriate records

Good safeguarding requires us to demonstrate that appropriate action has been taken. The Safeguarding Lead therefore keeps clear, confidential records of relevant conversations, checks and actions.

Keeping our guidance up to date

The Safeguarding Lead periodically reviews the safeguarding policies and procedures

available to our congregations, making updates when guidance or requirements change. From time to time, an additional short procedure or guidance note may also be needed.

Time commitment

This is a **voluntary, flexible and relatively light-touch role** rather than a regular weekly commitment. There may be periods when very little safeguarding work is required.

The main routine commitments are the annual contact with congregations, two or three safeguarding updates each year, occasional DBS applications and periodic policy reviews. Additional time is only required if a congregation contacts the Safeguarding Lead for advice.

Much of the work can be carried out from home, by telephone or email, and arranged at times that suit the volunteer.

The person we are looking for

We would particularly welcome someone who:

- is approachable, discreet and a good listener;
- is organised and comfortable keeping straightforward records;
- is able to offer calm and sensible advice;
- is comfortable using email and online systems;
- understands the importance of confidentiality;
- is willing to learn about safeguarding requirements and good practice; and
- would enjoy helping our churches provide safe, welcoming environments for everyone.

Why take on the role?

Safeguarding is an essential part of the care we offer within our churches. This role provides an opportunity to make a genuine contribution to the life of the Connexion without requiring a large or fixed time commitment.

It is a role built largely around **support, encouragement and reassurance**: helping local congregations know that they have someone to turn to, ensuring good practice is maintained, and giving Trustees confidence that our safeguarding responsibilities are being taken seriously.

For someone who enjoys helping people, bringing order and clarity to important matters, and making a meaningful contribution behind the scenes, it can be a very fulfilling voluntary role.

For more information contact David Lockett: secretary@cofhconnexion.org.uk