

Starting a new activity in the diocese

Whenever diocesan trustees 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 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 your members will be directly engaging with beneficiaries and these may include children, young people or adults at risk, then you need to follow safeguarding procedures.

Who is responsible for Safeguarding?

If your activity is being organised in conjunction with the **church** (for example, supporting a church homelessness project by helping to staff a centre) then the Anglican diocesan procedures will be followed for Safer Recruitment and the training of volunteers. Talk to the Provincial/Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser at an early stage of the process as s/he can offer advice about the safeguarding implications and the safer recruitment procedures to follow.

If the project is happening in partnership with **an external organisation** (for example, Mothers' Union 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 your Anglican diocese or province. If you are in any way unsure, do speak to your Anglican diocesan/provincial safeguarding adviser in the first instance.

If the activity is the sole responsibility of Mothers' Union, or a partner organisation expects Mothers' Union to be responsible for safeguarding issues, contact the Safeguarding Lead at Mary Sumner House. There is a Mothers' Union Safer Recruitment process to follow, but you will need to establish appropriate reporting procedures in case of a safeguarding concern or allegation.

Finding and supporting volunteers

Whichever organisation is responsible for safeguarding, you must follow the procedures for recruiting volunteers. Safer recruitment is not unnecessary paperwork – it is to make sure 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.

Volunteers also need to have written information about safeguarding procedures and practice guidelines. *Responding to Safeguarding Concerns* is a Mothers' Union resource which gives general guidance, but it is important to provide specific information about who to contact should concerns about abuse or suspected abuse occur.

All Mothers' Union members and friends 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.

The organisation with responsibility for the recruitment of volunteers is responsible for providing access to safeguarding training appropriate for particular roles. If you are unsure that relevant training is available for any groups of Mothers' Union volunteers, the Provincial/Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser should be able to advise you.

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

What about a one off event?

Safeguarding is equally important for one off events, such as a Family Fun Day, or running a baby change at a local show, 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, ask the event organisers about the safeguarding procedures to follow, including the safer recruitment of volunteers. If you don't feel confident that these offer a sufficient level of safeguarding, speak to your diocesan/provincial Safeguarding Adviser in the first instance.

For events on church premises, ask the diocesan/provincial Safeguarding Adviser about the procedures to follow, including safer recruitment and training.