Telling stories

The weather has changed and it feels properly autumnal after the relative warmth of October. The countdown to Christmas has begun as John Lewis and other traders start to tell stories through their adverts that may get us talking about all manner of things from family relationships to the state of the country. Or we might just let them wash over us.

So, what's our safeguarding story as we edge towards the end of the year? On the day that Russell Brand was sentenced there is a real sense that the abuse of fame and power can be challenged, and justice won, but to get there can be a long and arduous journey for victims and survivors. I wonder then if our safeguarding journeys follow the same trajectory. Getting our message over and being heard, countering the argument that the safeguarding agenda is a bit over the top and overcoming resistance. Hopefully, that's not the case in Lincolnshire, and the audit earlier this year proved that we do have a good story to tell. But keeping it going will take time, energy, and commitment.

As a district, we now have a safeguarding strategy plan that we agreed in the summer and almost six months on from its drafting it's probably time for us to start checking on how we are doing. One of the main reasons for writing the plan was because the district is keen to ensure everyone in our safeguarding network feels well supported, able to tell the safeguarding story and its importance to everyone in our churches. Our District Safeguarding Group next meets at the beginning of February so before then Howard Smedley as the Regional Officer for Safeguarding and myself will plan how we collect the information we will need to judge whether we are on target.

But one thing we should perhaps try to do is understand the reasons why some folks are reluctant to engage with the agenda. What's their anxiety, what's their fear? What's their story? Instead, can we perhaps do better at explaining what safeguarding is designed to achieve, and if we spot any barriers, can we make efforts to integrate them into the solution? We can't let things drift, we don't want to leave people unsupported or feeling got at, but we do want to aim to maximise support for all who make a contribution to making sure the correct safeguarding policies, and procedures are fully in place. That's a win-win situation and in the end the best story of all to tell.

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