

An anniversary to think about

A slightly belated happy new year to you across the district!

I wrote last month about the upcoming safeguarding audit. At this point, I'd simply like to remind you that if you are invited to contribute. Either through responding to a questionnaire or taking part in an interview, we would be pleased if you could aim to share some examples of good safeguarding practice in your own setting. Whether it's arranging training and encouraging others to attend, making sure there is a good level of compliance with safer recruitment or commenting on the advice you have received and support you have received from Howard as your DSO, and now Regional Officer, the audit team would love to hear about this. Thank you!

Changing the subject, last year saw the tenth anniversary of coercive control being made a criminal offence. Coercive control is a pattern of abuse involving intimidation, isolation, and financial control, but it significantly harms children and young people who witness or experience it, causing stress, depression, behavioural changes, and self-harm. It often requires intervention beyond criminal prosecution to achieve resolution and addressing its impact on those affected. If you are a fan of the Radio 4 serial the Archers, you may recall a long running story line that featured this theme a few years ago. It's a form of abuse that is both insidious and concealed and one that we may miss. Here is a link to a Women's Aid source of information about the topic that can help us as safeguarders in the life of the Church be more aware of the possibility of it occurring, sometimes under our noses.

<https://womensaid.org.uk/criminalisation-of-coercive-control-reaches-10-year-anniversary/>

You can google 'Lincolnshire coercive control' for more details of local cases that have reached the stage of conviction, but be warned, they make for grim reading. If you have any concerns, however niggly they may seem, that someone you know may be experiencing this sort of behaviour, do contact Howard for further advice.

Elsewhere in our world it all feels a bit out of control, and we can sometimes feel quite helpless. So, it can make good sense to think locally about the things we can get to work on and take control of such as ensuring we maintain our good safeguarding practice. We have much to be proud of Lincolnshire District!

I'm much less happy about, and I admit to feeling slightly numbed by, my team losing to Macclesfield in the FA cup. But move on and live another day is my current motto!

Grahame Snelling
Chair Lincolnshire District Safeguarding Group