

## District Safeguarding Update

I've been pondering what to write about for this week's newsletter.

I'm not a football fan but I have been watching England play in the Euro's. Perhaps, because I'm not that invested, I went to bed on Sunday night sad we lost but glad the tournament was over – glad because I know episodes of Domestic Violence increase significantly during such sporting occasions. I appreciated how well the England team played, yes, they lost but they gave it their all. I'm sure you will be able to sympathise with my dismay the next morning, when I turned on the news, to hear about the dreadful racist behaviours of some 'fans'.

On Monday, Phoebe Parkin, Methodist Youth President, posted the following on Facebook. I think she summed up my feelings so eloquently but also shone a light on several safeguarding issues. I'm proud that, as church, we stand against the issues Phoebe speaks about and want to encourage you to keep working to disable these practises: "I know that there are many others who could express this more eloquently than me and I know my voice is a tiny one. But I want to use whatever platform I have, however small it is.

*What I have seen today, after England lost to Italy last night, has deeply disappointed and upset me. The racism towards Sancho, Rashford and Saka is abhorrent. They represented England so well and should be as proud of themselves as I am of them. It doesn't matter whether they play for England or are young, or whatever – they shouldn't be treated like that because they are human. The domestic violence towards (mostly) women is abhorrent. Nobody should have to place their hopes of safety in the results of a football match. The drunken vandalism and hooliganism before, during and after the match is abhorrent. What gives anyone the right to smash up things because there is a football match on? The toxic nationalism shown by some England supporters is abhorrent. Burning Italian flags, booing during the national anthem, and violently attacking Italian fans is inexcusable. I have family who are Italian and I am heartbroken at the thought that they could have been one of the people beaten by England supporters.*

*I love football and truly believe it can bring out the very best in people – sportsmanship, teamwork, resilience and entertainment. Football isn't the problem. The problem is that we live in a society where sexism, racism, nationalism and violence are enabled. Where not enough of us (including myself) actively work to challenge even the lowest levels of sexism, racism and nationalism.*

*I really hope England are successful at the 2022 World Cup. But I hope that whatever the results are, I can be proud of those supporting in the crowds as well as of the team on the pitch."*

Phoebe Parkin 12.7.2021

As ever, if you have any questions or concerns please give me a call on 07483 362 735 or email me at [safeguarding@sheffieldmethodist.org](mailto:safeguarding@sheffieldmethodist.org)

Many thanks

Alison Hill