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# **Diocese of Chelmsford independent safeguarding audit (April 2017)**



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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 CONTEXT

The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) has been commissioned to undertake an audit of the safeguarding arrangements of each diocese of the Church of England. The aim of these audits is to work together to understand the safeguarding journey of the diocese to date and to support the continuing improvements being made. Following pilot audits of four dioceses in 2015, an agreed audit model is being applied nationally during 2016 and 2017.

The audit of the Diocese of Chelmsford was carried out by Susan Ellery (the lead auditor for this diocese) and Sally Trench on 28, 29 and 30 April 2017.

The audit process incorporated an examination of files and documents, along with meetings with key individuals and a focus group of parish representatives. Details of the process are provided in the appendix.

This report was written by Susan Ellery with support from Sally Trench and quality assurance provided by Edi Carmi, the senior auditing lead.

There were no known limitations to this audit.

## 1.2 THE DIOCESE

The Diocese of Chelmsford is the second largest diocese in the Church of England in terms of population size and includes diversity on every measure. The Diocese spans the county of Essex, the unitary authorities of Southend and Thurrock, and the five East London boroughs of Newham, Waltham Forest, Barking & Dagenham, Redbridge, and Havering. The Diocese works with eight local authorities and two police forces.

The Diocese is organised into three Episcopal areas by an Area Scheme under which the Diocesan Bishop, the Bishop of Chelmsford, has delegated certain authority to the Bishops of Barking, Bradwell and Colchester in relation to the Archdeaconries in those areas. Since 2013, there are seven Archdeaconries. Each Archdeaconry comprises two or more deaneries, and within the deaneries there are currently 463 parishes.

The population of the Diocese is more than 3 million and it is set to increase rapidly over the next decade, with known housing developments alone adding 10 per cent to the population. Some of the most deprived parishes in the Church of England are found in the Diocese including Jaywick (Clacton) and parts of Newham. There are also some of the least deprived parishes in the Church of England, particularly around the town of Brentwood.

## **1.3 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT**

The report is structured into the following sections:

- Section 1: Introduction
- Section 2: The Findings of the auditors: the auditors have made links with the S. 11 (Children Act 2004) audit form completed by the diocese in preparation for the audit.
- Section 3: Conclusions providing an overview of what is working well, what needs to work better and a summary of considerations for the diocese.
- Appendix, providing detail of the methodology

### **1.3.1 Considerations for the diocese**

Considerations for the diocese are listed, where relevant, under each finding in section 2: The term 'considerations' instead of recommendations is used in the SCIE Learning Together methodology. The reason for this is that it is important that each diocese decides exactly how to implement the improvements indicated; this is likely to be different from place to place. Some considerations will be around taking specific types of action, whilst others will be alerting the diocese to develop their safeguarding planning in the future.

## 2 FINDINGS

### 2.1 SAFEGUARDING MANAGEMENT

#### 2.1.1 Leadership

The Bishop was able to describe his personal journey of increasing safeguarding knowledge and awareness, particularly in his time as a Suffragan Bishop when he dealt with a number of safeguarding incidents. He determined then that, should he become a diocesan bishop, he would make safeguarding a priority.

In 2012 the Diocese published a strategy, Transforming Presence, which has four priorities. Safeguarding is seen as sitting within them all but particularly within Serving with Accountability. The Bishop described how safeguarding is at the core of faith, and that the Church must be a safe place.

The auditors questioned how delegated leadership works in the three area bishoprics, and whether some are more tuned in than others? The area bishops have clear delegated authority but not autonomy and are accountable to the Bishop.

The Bishop has a very direct involvement in safeguarding via his membership of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Group (DSAG) (see 2.3). He described a close working partnership with the Chief Executive and Diocesan Secretary (one post, referred to as the Chief Executive henceforth). The Chief Executive is also a member of DSAG. The Chair of DSAG confirmed that both the Bishop and the Chief Executive always attend DSAG and take a full part in discussions.

The last Bishop's Chaplain, between April 2015 and January 2017, had prior to 2000 been an Assistant Director of Children's Services. As such, he had a sound understanding of safeguarding and HR processes (including management of disciplinary and capability issues). He talked with the auditors about how he had seen the overlap between his Chaplain's responsibilities in terms of the Clergy Disciplinary Measure, safeguarding and HR. He had built good working relationships with the HR Director and the Safeguarding Team. Before leaving, the Chaplain revised the job description for his successor to make the links formal and lasting. This job description is currently being used to appoint his successor.

Safeguarding is a standing item on the agenda at Bishop's Staff Meeting, which includes the area bishops, archdeacons, the Chief Executive and the Dean of the Cathedral. The Chief Executive or the archdeacon who leads on safeguarding in the team of archdeacons usually presents the item.

Safeguarding is included in the annual report presented to Bishop's Council. It is presented again as one of the strategic risks on the register kept and discussed annually by the Trustees of the Diocesan Board of Finance. The risk, as described in this excerpt from the draft 2016 Annual Report and Accounts, is summarised as follows:

*'Safeguarding is a high priority for the diocese and an area which has seen significant investment in capacity and capability over the last few*

*years. Nonetheless, the Trustees continue to consider safeguarding as a high risk. This is chiefly due to the unknown potential for new allegations of non-recent abuse, which may now come to light as survivors have greater confidence that the Church will take their disclosures seriously. Safeguarding allegations have a number of potential resource and reputational implications. For example: cases can absorb significant management and senior clergy time; there is the potential for financial claims; and PCCs may encounter difficulties if they are unable to demonstrate adequate insurance cover for the period in question. This risk also recognises the resource implications of developing national policy on safeguarding.'*

### **2.1.2 Links with the Cathedral**

Links with the Cathedral were described as strong. The fact that the Diocesan Office is opposite the Cathedral probably supports good working relationships.

The Chair of DSAG said that relationships between the Diocesan Safeguarding Manager (DSM) and the Cathedral are strong, and that the Dean sees the Cathedral as a large parish church in terms of safeguarding.

### **2.1.3 Culture**

The Bishop described the culture of safeguarding as 'The biggest change [he had seen] and the biggest challenge'. The structure (i.e. the area bishoprics), the diversity and the size of the Diocese have the potential to make culture change difficult to embed.

There was a view expressed that, generally, the younger priests are more aware of safeguarding but this is in the context of 78 per cent of clergy attendees at training being aged 50 or over.

Another view expressed was that, the nearer a member of the clergy is to the centre of the Diocese, the more likely it is that they will understand the centrality of safeguarding in their ministry. The Chair felt that it had more to do with attitudes than geography, citing the potential conflict between the body of knowledge about the behaviour of offenders with the imperative for forgiveness and renewal.

The retired Chaplain saw the shift from freehold to common tenure<sup>1</sup> as having led to a culture of greater accountability, which includes the acceptance of responsibilities in safeguarding.

Overall, it seems that the messages from the Bishop are strong and clear but, for a range of reasons, the response varies. Some encouraging signs were seen, such as the attitudes of the incumbents in the focus group and the positive responses to training.

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<sup>1</sup> See

<https://www.churchofengland.org/media/817445/2014%20%207%20summary%20of%20the%20legislation%20jan%202014.pdf> for information of tenure (common tenure) on clergy and on canonically licensed lay workers in receipt of stipend and/or housing.



The Diocese might consider the development of some indicators that would measure (perhaps by proxy) the extent of the embedding of safeguarding. Such indicators might employ 'soft' information such as 'stories' told about activities in parishes.

Overall, the auditors wish to emphasise that the reflective way in which people answered questions on culture suggests that culture change is very much on the agenda and that people are looking for opportunities to test the culture and to support change.

*(Reference: part 1 of S.11 audit: Provide a structure to manage safeguarding in the diocese. Also to part 2: The Bishop appoints a member of his senior staff to be the lead person for safeguarding.)*

### **Considerations for the Diocese**

*Consider how to develop and use a range of indicators that show or suggest the culture change that the Diocese wishes to see.*

## **2.2 DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING MANAGERS**

The Diocese has a Safeguarding Team comprising a full-time Diocesan Safeguarding Manager (DSM), a full-time Deputy Safeguarding Manager (Deputy SM), a full-time Safeguarding Assistant (who assists with administration, core groups, training and agreements) and a part-time administrator (currently 3.6 full-time equivalent). The team will shortly be increased by a full-time caseworker whose appointment is initially for six months (but is open to extension), in order to test out the need for an extra post.

### **2.2.1 Roles and responsibilities**

The posts of the DSM and Deputy SM have job descriptions that are in line with national models, and all team members are employed by the Diocese.

The team is based in the same room at the Diocesan Office and presented as a coherent team, with members working well with each other and understanding each other's roles. The DSM and Deputy SM work closely and were originally appointed at the same level.

The intention of the Chief Executive is to use the forthcoming increased capacity of the team to move the DSM to a more strategic role, holding fewer (but complex) cases. The DSM will provide formal supervision to the team in terms of minuted case decisions that are recorded on files. There is a plan (see 2.6 Training) to recruit a team of volunteer trainers and the DSM will train, supervise and quality assure the volunteers and the training they deliver.

### **2.2.2 Qualifications and experience**

The DSM and Deputy SM have considerable safeguarding experience in previous roles although no professional qualifications in social work or safeguarding. They have 20 years' experience of safeguarding allegations management between them.

The DSM has been an Education Welfare Officer and moved into the Education Safeguarding Services of Essex County Council when it was set up. She was responsible for the management of allegations, training and policy writing. In 2007, she became an Allegations and Safeguarding Officer, the Essex equivalent of a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

The Deputy SM is a Psychology graduate and worked in the prison service delivering programmes to drug users. She moved on to working in a similar service for offenders in the community and has experience of risk assessment and triage. She has also managed a team.

Both the DSM and Deputy SM have undertaken various training courses in risk assessment run by Mentor Forensic Services – all of which are at postgraduate level and accredited by Middlesex University. The Deputy SM has attended sufficient courses to apply to study for a Postgraduate Certificate in Behavioural Analysis and Forensic Psychology via the same organisation.

### **2.2.3 Management arrangements**

The DSM is managed by the Chief Executive. His background before joining the Diocese in 2011 was in strategy and asset management, most recently on the London Underground. He described his learning about risk and the management of risk in a service that had learnt tough lessons from the King's Cross fire in 1987.

The Chief Executive joined the Diocese shortly after the Bishop, in 2011, and in the wake of a small number of very difficult cases in the Diocese that have had a lasting impact. External reviews had been or were commissioned on all the cases and the Diocese resolved to learn the lessons from these.

The auditors found the Chief Executive to be knowledgeable about and supportive of good safeguarding practice. He has, for example, funded the professional training in risk assessment for both the DSM and the Deputy SM referred to above.

### **2.2.4 Supervision arrangements**

The DSM has not, to date, had formal professional supervision. The Bishop's Chaplain, between April 2014 and January 2017, was a former Assistant Director of Children's Services and had lectured in social work. He provided an informal mentoring service to the DSM but he was clear that it was not supervision. Had it been formal supervision, the auditors would have argued that he faced a potential conflict of interests between loyalty to his ecclesiastical superiors and good safeguarding practice.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser regulations (December 2016) state that:

*'The bishop of a diocese must make arrangements for ensuring that any person appointed as diocesan safeguarding adviser receives professional supervision at an appropriate level from a person with experience of work that is concerned with the safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults.'*

To complement the experience of the current post-holders, establishing supervision by a safeguarding professional, such as a social work manager, should be given priority.

Because the DSM does not have professional supervision, it is not possible to consider how supervision is linked to continuing professional development and annual appraisals by her line manager. The auditors think that these factors will need to be considered when setting up a supervision contract.

The Diocese has identified supervision in its development plan. Given the difficulty in sourcing appropriate supervision, the Diocese has suggested that a national list may help dioceses find appropriate independent professional supervisors.

### **2.2.5 Any potential conflicts of interests to DSA's independence**

The auditors saw no potential conflicts of interest.

### **2.2.6 Adequacy of resources**

The adequacy of resources is kept under review by the Chief Executive in the context of a rapid increase in referrals, a high number (39 at present) of safeguarding agreements and the demand for training. Although the Diocese is not a rich diocese, it has committed to growth in the Safeguarding Team since the appointment of the DSM and Deputy SM in 2013.

The Chief Executive said that he has not yet encountered resistance to expanding the team when annual budgets are approved. The core budget for safeguarding in 2017 is 2.5 times what it was in 2011.

The team is clearly very busy but, once the additional caseworker has joined, capacity may be sufficient to cover the needs.

*(References: part 1 of S11 audit. Appoint a suitably qualified DSA, and provide financial, organisational and management support. The adviser must have full access to clergy files and other confidential material.*

*Part 6: The DSA's role is clear in the job description and person specification. And The DSA has sufficient time, funding, supervision and support to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities, including local policy development, casework, advice, liaison with statutory authorities, training, personal and professional development and professional registration.*

*Part 8: The DSA should be given access to professional supervision to ensure their practice is reviewed and improves over time.)*

#### **Considerations for the Diocese**

*Consider how to enable the DSM and Deputy SM to undertake professional safeguarding qualifications.*

*Consider the need for the identification of a suitably experienced and qualified supervisor for the DSM, such as a social work manager.*

*Consider how professional supervision might support continuing professional development and feed into the annual appraisal process.*

## **2.3 DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING ADVISORY GROUP**

### **2.3.1 The Chair**

The Chair of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Group (DSAG) is independent and has exemplary experience and knowledge of safeguarding, being the former Chief Executive of a major children's charity and the former Chair of the Independent Safeguarding Authority (now part of the Disclosure and Barring Service). He continues to work in a self-employed capacity.

The post is voluntary. The Chair is a practising member of the Church of England within the Diocese but holds no other office.

### **2.3.2 Composition of Group**

The DSAG comprises:

- The Diocesan Bishop
- The Bishop's Chaplain (post currently vacant)
- The Chief Executive
- Two archdeacons
- Two independent members (in addition to the independent chair): a former Deputy Chief Constable and a former Inspector of Prisons
- Two members from statutory agencies: the Head of Quality Assurance (QA) & Safeguarding (Children) and the Safeguarding Adults Board Development Manager from the County Council
- Senior Diocesan staff: currently the Director of Communications and the Children's Adviser
- A safeguarding consultant who also works with another diocese
- The DSM

### **2.3.3 Clarity of purpose and function**

The DSAG meets quarterly. It is well integrated into diocesan processes via the membership of both the Bishop and the Chief Executive. Communication between the Chair and the Bishop is at least quarterly, but can be more frequent and, if needed immediately, as the Chair can ask to meet the Bishop outside the DSAG.

The Terms of Reference were last revised in December 2016. The auditors noticed that the Group has 18 roles and functions and questioned how a group that meets four times a year can, in practice, monitor and review them all, especially as it also monitors and reviews the annual Safeguarding Development Plan. The Chair explained that each meeting focuses on two or three of the roles and functions, but (assuming three at each meeting) this means that each role or function can only be covered once every 18 months. The auditors suggested that the Terms of Reference be reviewed to provide a more manageable number of roles and functions. It will be sensible to undertake this in line with guidance on Diocesan Safeguarding Groups in the anticipated new national safeguarding policy.

The Terms of Reference do not specifically list a quality assurance role, although several of the roles and functions might include QA, and particularly:

*‘To discharge its responsibilities by processes of scrutiny, support and constructive challenge having regard to the National Church’s Practice Guidance on safeguarding.’*

The auditors discussed with the Chair whether the group might usefully ask itself the question, ‘How do you know that safeguarding is improving?’ and consider how to find qualitative as well as quantitative data.

The Chair wishes the DSAG to think further about how the interests of survivors and the perspectives of children might be better represented in DSAG discussions, recognising that these are complex issues.

The DSM prepares a very useful report for each meeting that covers data on DBS applications, case-loads, training and partnership working as well as national developments and this is discussed and noted by the meeting, with actions listed.

The evidence of the minutes of the DSAG is that the meeting moves briskly but effectively through the agenda. The roles of attendees are noted and there is an action log at the end.

The attendance of the Bishop was seen to support the speedy resolution of an issue whereby the DSM and Deputy SM met, on one occasion, with hostility when delivering training. Following discussion at DSAG, the Bishop requested that all archdeacons attend C3 training (National Framework training for clergy and lay ministers) in their area (two attendances each per year). The archdeacons are able to give the theological context for safeguarding and have a degree of authority whereas the Safeguarding Team relies on influence.

*(Reference: part 1 of S.11 audit: Provide a structure to manage safeguarding in the Diocese. Also to part 2: The Bishop appoints a member of his senior staff to be the lead person for safeguarding.)*

### **Considerations for the Diocese**

*Consider how to make the number of roles and functions more manageable for the DSAG, when reviewing the Terms of Reference following the publication of the anticipated new national safeguarding policy.*

*Consider whether the Group should adopt a quality assurance function and, if so, how it might work.*

## **2.4 GUIDANCE, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

The Diocese published its own policy and practice guidance in 2014. It is easy to find on the website and is endorsed by the Bishop. The auditors found it to be well written and comprehensive.

The Diocesan Synod adopted the policy when it was published.

The Diocese intends to adopt national policy and practice guidance formally once it is complete. Meanwhile, the evidence from casework is that the Safeguarding Team is following national practice guidance, e.g. core groups, risk assessments and safeguarding agreements. The Chair of DSAG checked the consistency between national and local policy and practice guidance in December 2016 and was satisfied.

There are currently no links to national policy or practice guidance on the website, but there is such a comprehensive list of links to local practice guidance that, at the moment, it would probably be confusing. The DSM might consider planning the transfer to national material so that the Diocese is ready when Promoting a Safer Church is published.

*(Reference: part 1 of the S. 11 audit: Ensure the Diocesan Synod adopts the House of Bishops' safeguarding policies, together with any additional diocesan procedures and good practice guidelines.)*

### **Considerations for the Diocese**

*Consider planning the transition from local to national policy and practice guidance in order to be ready when Promoting a Safer Church is published.*

## **2.5 CASEWORK**

The overall quality of the casework seen, by both the DSM and the Deputy SM, was very sound and the auditors found nothing that caused anxiety. Responses were timely, supportive and thorough.

Parish Focus Group members were complimentary about the work of the Safeguarding Team, describing the team as 'excellent', 'always helpful' and having 'every confidence' in team members.

### **2.5.1 Quality of risk assessment and safeguarding contracts**

The DSM and Deputy SM described how they produced a format for risk assessment that predated the Type A assessment on the national guidance, and have continued to use their own model. The auditors found the format to be comprehensive and used well on both the examples they saw, which were of convicted offenders. The assessment meeting included the subject and asked the subject to describe their offence(s). Other stakeholders were included in the assessments.

The DSM explained that the risk assessment format has evolved over the last three years, and was based on formats both she and the Deputy SM had used in previous roles. They have incorporated some of the theory and practice learnt at the Mentor Forensic Services courses.

One risk assessment was notable because the subject had a firm plan to move out of the Diocese within a short time span but the team pushed on and completed the risk assessment and safeguarding agreement nonetheless. At the subject's request, they shared it with his new diocese.

Where people pose a risk but are under investigation, on bail, or the police have decided on No Further Action but the reasons for investigation still exist, the Safeguarding Team uses a shorter form of risk assessment. If convicted, the team returns and does a full assessment.

The Safeguarding Team has also produced a risk assessment format for use with blemished DBS checks (i.e. DBS checks that show offences). The auditors saw three examples of these, two of which followed on from previous, less formal risk assessments by area bishops. All three DBS risk assessments were thorough and sensitively handled.

The two safeguarding agreements seen were robust and signed by all parties. There was evidence of regular reviews on files.

There is a plan to move the Safeguarding Assistant into managing the less complex safeguarding agreements. Given the high number of agreements to be reviewed annually, this makes sense.

*(Reference: part 1 of S. 11 audit: Provide access to a risk assessment service so the Bishop and others can evaluate and manage any risk posed by individuals or activities within the Church.)*

## **2.5.2 Quality of response to allegations**

The response to allegations was prompt in every case seen, and the actions taken were proportionate and timely.

In one case, the DSM struggled to put right faulty past practice (where the Safeguarding Team had not been referred to) and was persistent in trying to make headway.

There was evidence of good joint-working with the LADO and with the MOSOVO (Management of Sexual or Violent Offenders) team.

In the one adult safeguarding case seen, the DSM had tried very hard to refer a member of a congregation who had multiple vulnerabilities to Adult Services, requesting a multi-agency meeting. The case illustrated the high thresholds in Adult Services and framework within which they operate.

In all cases seen, it was clear that the DSM makes the decision whether to refer to statutory agencies and that this is what the Diocese expects.

The Diocese developed the model of a core group several years ago, as a result of the Bishop (before joining this diocese) and one archdeacon both having felt very alone in difficult safeguarding incidents. Core groups are chaired by one of the independent members of DSAG. The Bishop was clear that they have led to better decision-making and an end of isolation.

The core groups have a consistent agenda that ensures issues such as potential media interest and legal challenges, and insurance are considered alongside agreed casework actions.

### **2.5.3 Recording systems**

All recording is paper-based at present. Only members of the Safeguarding Team have access to case files, which are kept in locked but not fire-proof cupboards.

The recording seen was well written and complete. The practice of adding multiple copies of the same emails in order to save the most recent did make reading files more laborious than it might have been. The danger is that important information is missed as one is skim-reading emails already read.

A brief case chronology at the front of files gives a useful summary of events.

### **2.5.4 Multi-agency feedback for this audit**

The request for multi-agency feedback was answered by a LADO and an officer in MOSOVO.

The LADO reported that, 'I can confirm that I have received regular referrals from the Safeguarding Team, in relation to consultations regarding general safeguarding matters and allegations reaching the thresholds for LADO involvement. I have also contacted the Safeguarding Team to ask for their assistance with safeguarding matters. As an example, when we are notified by the police of an investigation concerning an employee or volunteer that the Diocese is involved in, I have contacted the Safeguarding Advisers to agree any safeguarding measures that need to be put in place while an investigation is taking place. During this I have been confident that the advisers have a good understanding of safeguarding and that they have put in place appropriate risk assessments and safeguarding measures to help manage risk during an investigation. I have recent experience of the Safeguarding Advisers providing appropriate challenge and support in a situation when a group was reluctant to make a referral to the DBS. Appropriate action was taken to ensure that this referral was made and suitable safeguards were put in place.'

The MOSOVO police officer said that, 'My contact with the Diocesan Safeguarding Team has mainly centred around the safeguarding in respect of Registered Sex Offenders who want to attend church. The team has prepared safeguarding contracts and attended meetings to ensure that visitors to the church are safeguarded from harm. My contact with the team has always been positive. I am able to comment on the efficiency of the team in putting these contracts in place and reviewing them. Their knowledge and expertise around this sensitive area has been highly valued by my team.'

The MOSOVO officer also described two recent cases in which joint-working with the DSM had been effective and helpful to his team.

## **2.6 TRAINING**

### **2.6.1 Delivery**

Training is delivered by the DSM, the Deputy SM and the Safeguarding Assistant. The new caseworker will also deliver training. The archdeacons join the trainers in delivering training.



The Diocese faces a huge challenge in terms of training due to its scale. About 1,000 clergy and lay ministers require training at C3 level, and a further 6,000 or more volunteers at C1 foundation level safeguarding training (for those in the Church who have safeguarding responsibilities or who have contact with children, young people or adults who may be vulnerable)<sup>2</sup>.

Volunteer trainers are being recruited to support delivery of training at C1 and C2 level to PSOs, church wardens, etc. from September 2017. C2 level training is for those with safeguarding leadership responsibilities or with responsibilities for leading activities involving children or vulnerable adults.

The Safeguarding Team developed an online basic awareness training in adults and children's safeguarding as a means to address a training need that could not be met face to face. This covers the content of C1, most of C2 and part of C3 training modules.<sup>3</sup> Some members of the focus group regretted the loss of the face-to-face training they used to receive but understood the rationale for e-learning.

The lead site auditor used both the adults and children's e-learning courses and found them to be well-designed and informative. The Bishop introduces the training in a short video clip at the beginning, which gives weight to the content. In the children's package, some of the phraseology might be updated and a couple of definitions widened, and this was discussed with the DSM.

The DSM and Deputy SM have modified the national C3 training for clergy while keeping the content and learning objectives, in order to make it more interactive. They have added videos and exercises as well as some additional content, e.g. about the age of consent and female offenders. They have also incorporated the S1 (Safer Recruitment) training that clergy must have.

### **2.6.2 Who is trained?**

Management reports show who has completed the e-learning and a high take-up was reported. According to the DSM's report to DSAG in March 2017, a total of 2,836 people had completed the children's e-learning since its introduction in late 2013, and 1,072 had completed the adults' course introduced in June 2014. It is recognised that given the estimated 6,000+ volunteers mentioned above (in delivery section), there are still many volunteers to be engaged with the e-learning.

An inevitable weakness of e-learning is that it is remote and cannot build the relationships that encourage people to attend training. The focus group spoke favourably of the training they received, although they would prefer face-to-face training. One person thought it should include content on how to protect yourself, as a volunteer.

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<sup>2</sup> See Practice Guidance, Safeguarding Training and Development Jan 2017 for further explanation of training modules.

<sup>3</sup> See Practice Guidance, Safeguarding Training and Development Jan 2017 for further explanation of training modules.

Feedback from clergy training shared with the auditors shows, to date, that 54 per cent rated it Excellent and a further 40 per cent rated it as Good. Individual comments were also seen and most emphasised the breadth of learning received.

A Focus Group member noted the impact of clergy training, and said that it gave safeguarding more credibility and heightened importance: their incumbent subsequently wanted to meet with the Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSOs) to find out more about how safeguarding works, and is now more involved.

The Parish Focus Group did feel that there is a training gap in terms of training specifically for PSOs. The auditors understand that the intention is to use volunteers to support the delivery of this from September 2017, using the C1 and C2 national modules, but Focus Group members were unaware.

In the early stages, there was some clerical resistance to training and some sessions had to be cancelled due to low numbers. A combination of taking training out to areas with the Diocese and the support of the archdeacons, who follow up those who do not attend, have improved take-up.

The DSM's report to DSAG (March 2017) shows that 48 per cent of clergy have now attended the new modified C3 training, and 67 per cent have attended either the new or the previous clergy training. Almost 300 clergy or lay ministers still require training in 2017.

In 2018, the C3 refresher training will need to commence as it will then be three years since the first clergy training.

The Safeguarding Team has developed a briefer version of C3 for retired clergy who hold Permission to Officiate (PTO) but are inactive. The Bishop acknowledged that some PTO holders have been reluctant to be trained. He holds an annual event for retired clergy and last year, he spoke at this event about the theology of safeguarding followed by a talk to introduce the training given by the DSM and Deputy SM. He had seen an improvement in the number signing up for training since. All PTO holders are expected to attend training.

#### *2.6.2.1 Organisation and recording systems*

The Diocese does not have a separate training plan but training forms a significant part of the Safeguarding Development Plan, with nine areas of activity.

The Safeguarding Assistant keeps records of who has been trained and will issue reminders about refresher training from 2018.

*(Reference: part 1 of S.11 audit: Select and train those who are to hold the Bishop's Licence in safeguarding matters. Provide training on safeguarding matters to parishes, the Cathedral, other clergy, diocesan organisations, including religious communities and those who hold the Bishop's Licence.*

*And to part 8: Those working closely with children, young people and adults experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect ...have safeguarding in their induction and are trained and have their training refreshed every three years.)*

## **2.7 SAFE RECRUITMENT OF CLERGY, LAY OFFICERS AND VOLUNTEERS**

Six Blue Files were chosen at random, two from each area, to check for evidence of Safer Recruitment.

A Statement of Particulars (similar to a contract) was seen on all files. Where the person had moved from another diocese, there was a Clergy Current Status Letter.

However, other evidence of Safer Recruitment varied and the auditors understand that practice differs between the Episcopal Areas. Most had an application form on file but not all had references, and one file showed two references and not three. Some had evidence of the right to live and work in the UK. Some had a Confidential Declaration on file.

The Diocese has the benefit of a part-time (two days per month) Independent Reviewer who scrutinises Blue Files to ensure that documentation within them is correct and to see whether there are any causes for concern. The Reviewer also looks out for gaps and conflicting information. The role came out of regulations and agreements in relation to Blue Files and safeguarding passed by the House of Bishops in 2007, and its Past Case Review in 2013.

The role encompasses an understanding of data protection, safeguarding and HR, alongside a working knowledge of the Church of England. It does not replace the role of the Chaplain in relation to the files, but supports the Chaplain in scrutinising and flagging up any potential issues. An ongoing process involves completing a checklist for each file to try to ensure consistency of information.

The auditors would suggest that the role of the Independent Reviewer is modified to encompass an agreed set of standards for evidence of Safer Recruitment across the whole Diocese.

The Independent Reviewer adds a green sheet to the Blue File to signal an audit to find out whether there are any past safeguarding concerns. Instead of a one-off review of the Past Cases Review (undertaken across the Church of England in 2008/09), Chelmsford has a dynamic system of review.

The auditors saw evidence, in one case reviewed, of the Independent Reviewer flagging up a potential historic safeguarding concern to the DSM.

The auditors checked the HR files of five diocesan lay employees and found solid evidence of Safer Recruitment on them all.

The Blue Files of all the clergy subject to a safeguarding allegation or concern, and where the auditors reviewed the file, were checked for evidence of safeguarding.

The Diocese uses a simple and effective system of adding a lilac coloured sheet to the front of the Blue File that advises the reader to refer to the Safeguarding Team. This was present on every relevant file.

*(Reference to part 7 of S.11 audit: The Diocesan Secretary has implemented arrangements in line with the House of Bishops' policy on Safer Recruitment 2015. And to part 1: Keep a record of clergy and church officers that will enable a prompt response to bona fide enquiries...where there have been safeguarding concerns, these should be clearly indicated on file.)*

### **Considerations for the Diocese**

*Consider whether to agree common standards across the Diocese for evidence of Safer Recruitment on the Blue Files.*

## **2.8 DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE (DBS)**

The administration of DBS checks was contracted out to Access Personal Checking Services (APCS) in 2014. However, parishes do not use APCS directly but apply via the Diocese. The safeguarding administrator acts as an evidence checker before the electronic checks are made by APCS, due to DBS criteria.

The administrator and safeguarding assistant deal with all enquiries about eligibility. The evidence from the Focus Group was that PSOs quite often want a volunteer to have a DBS, due to their access to vulnerable adults or even children (e.g. in a choir) but find that they are not eligible.

The Safeguarding Team keeps records of DBS checks on Excel spreadsheets but noted that they are slow due to the volume of information (about 60 checks a month). Reminders are sent to clergy but not to volunteers as they are a parish responsibility.

In the part of the Diocese covered by the Metropolitan police force, there is a problem of waiting times: currently about 18 weeks. Because of this, the clergy receive a reminder five months before the expiry of their DBS with a system of escalation through the Archdeacon to the Area Bishop if they do not re-apply. If a clergy DBS expires and it is due to their failure to apply in time, they are requested by their Bishop to step back from duties. The auditors understand that this was done very recently.

Blemished DBS checks are assessed by the DSM or Deputy SM (see 2.5). For Ecclesiastical Office Holders, ministers and other significant appointments, the assessment is signed off by the Area Bishop. Some parish DBSs are signed off locally if the DSM considers that this is appropriate.

Overall, despite the high volume of DBS checks, the system seems to run well. The Focus Group raised no particular issues other than eligibility.

The DSM has made four referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service since being in post (since August 2013) and has assisted a voluntary organisation to refer.

## **2.9 COMPLAINTS AND WHISTLEBLOWING**

### **2.9.1 Complaints**

Complaints and whistleblowing are both included in the Diocesan Safeguarding

Policy. A search for 'Complaints' on the diocesan website yields only brief information about complaints about the clergy.

The policy states that complaints may be made in the following circumstances:

- If the Diocese or parish, or any other organisation within the Diocese, does not follow up an allegation of child abuse or the abuse of a vulnerable adult in accordance with this policy.
- If there is a failure of communication with the child or vulnerable adult, or anyone else who is involved in the investigation.
- If there is a failure of the pastoral support system.
- If there are failures to carry out the policy at diocesan or parish level.

Complaints may be made by phone, email or a letter. The policy does not state phone numbers or addresses. It also asks complainants to contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Team while allowing for a complaint directly to the DSM or Chief Executive. Given the growth in the team, it might be better to ask complainants to contact the DSM or the Chief Executive only.

The complaints procedure comprises three stages: informal resolution, investigation and appeal panel. Time limits are set for each stage, and the Diocese allows for an independent investigation to be commissioned by the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive makes the decision at this point.

The complainant may then appeal. The Appeal Panel will consist of three people appointed by the Diocesan Bishop and the Diocesan Safeguarding Reference Group Chair. No panel member should have been involved in the safeguarding issue concerned. The panel decision is then final.

The auditors reviewed a file which evidenced the complaints process working in practice.

Overall, the complaints policy is basically sound but would benefit from revision. Although it refers to reviewing and improving practice, it does not set out how this will happen. Instead, it is implied via the statement that all complaints will be reported to DSAG, Bishop's Staff Team and included in the annual safeguarding report to Bishop's Council.

### **2.9.2 Whistleblowing**

The whistleblowing policy sets out very clearly what whistleblowing is, who might want to do it and why. Information is given about the Public Disclosure Act (1998) and the point is made that the Diocese will allow volunteers the same rights and protections as employees.

The policy asks the whistleblower to contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Team and says that the DSM will decide what to do. Given that the team has grown since the policy was written, it might be better to require concerns to be sent to the DSM alone.

The whistleblowing policy is also largely sound but would benefit from revision.

It might make sense to uncouple both policies from the Safeguarding Manual before the adoption of Promoting a Safer Church. At the same time, direct links might be added to the website.

*Reference: part 1 of S. 11 audit: Provide a complaints procedure which can be used by those who wish to complain about the handling of safeguarding issues. Also part 4: There is an easily accessible complaints procedure including reference to the Clergy Disciplinary Measures and whistleblowing procedures.*

### **Considerations for the Diocese**

*Consider a revision of the complaints and whistleblowing policies.*

## **2.10 QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES**

The tracking of quantitative data about a range of safeguarding activity is included in the DSM's report to each DSAG, namely DBS applications, case-loads and training. This is circulated before the meeting and discussed at the meeting.

The Safeguarding Development Plan sets out objectives and lists actions, the lead person, timescales and commentary. It is a standing item on the DSAG agenda, although the auditors noticed that time constraints prevented it being discussed in December 2016.

As noted above (2.3), the auditors discussed with the Chair of DSAG how the Group might find out whether its scrutiny is making a difference, and might adopt a QA function.

The Parish Focus Group gave the auditors some useful feedback about the extent to which safeguarding is embedded in its parish. It might be possible to develop the use of focus groups to gather 'softer' information about culture change and attitudes.

### **Considerations for the Diocese**

*Consider how to develop quality assurance through qualitative information as well as quantitative data.*

## **2.11 MONITORING OF SAFEGUARDING IN PARISHES AS PART OF ARCHDEACON'S RESPONSIBILITIES**

The auditors talked with one of the seven archdeacons. She was a social worker before ordination and sits on the DSAG. She is also the longest serving archdeacon in the Diocese and spoke about the positive changes since her arrival in 2004.

The Archdeacon said that, as a team, the archdeacons started to ask questions in the parishes about safeguarding but found that the publication of the Safeguarding Policy in 2014 and the spread of e-learning allowed them to become more focused and move away from 'tick box' style questioning.

The annual Articles of Enquiry use similar questions each year. The auditors saw the 2017 version in which the parish is asked about the adoption by the Parochial Church Council (PCC) of the parish safeguarding policy, the annual PCC review of the policy, use of online training, storage of DBS records and the name and contact details of the PSR.

The same set of questions is in the Parochial Inspection Form. The inspections take place every three years.

The Archdeacon said that she makes up a spreadsheet of information gathered and that her colleagues are starting to do the same. The archdeacons read all the responses. In 2016, they talked to each incumbent where the answers were incomplete and pointed out how serious a responsibility it is. All have now complied.

The auditors asked the Archdeacon whether she thought a parish self-audit tool would be useful, but she thought it was too soon. The auditors took this to mean that PSRs may not, as a group, feel ready to take on such an exercise. This might be more possible after the training planned for PSRs and church wardens (see 2.6).

The PSRs are key people in terms of embedding good practice and awareness in the parishes. The PSRs on the Focus Group were organised and active, but one commented that some of the PSRs 'frightened' her, indicating that they were less able.

The auditors questioned how much support the PSRs receive? They are given a resource pack on appointment but it was acknowledged that they would benefit from greater ongoing support. PSRs in the Focus Group thought that group meetings at area level would be useful, would increase their confidence and would lessen their isolation.

#### **Considerations for the Diocese**

*Consider moving towards the use of a parish self-audit tool.*

*Consider ways in which to further support PSRs in their role.*

## **2.12 RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS**

The Diocese has an arrangement with a neighbouring diocese whereby it is able to use its Authorised Listeners for adults who make an allegation of abuse (typically but not exclusively historic). To date, although the service is offered it has not been used. There were no clear views about why, although the DSM expressed some unease about the lack of clarity about the role, the required training and supervision.

The Diocese has funded counselling in the past and would do so again if the need was identified.

The auditors were provided with a paper presented to the recent DSAG by the Children and Families Adviser, titled Listening around the Diocese. The paper describes several examples of children's views being heard and acted on, including

a child having an input into diocesan strategy and children requesting a school pilgrimage to a church dating from 654AD. The Diocese is self-critical in its national survey (2015) about listening to children but is actually active and responsive, although perhaps more in some areas than others.

### **Considerations for the Diocese**

*Consider why Authorised Listeners are not being used and whether they might be commissioned in a way that improves take-up.*

## **2.13 INFORMATION SHARING**

There was some evidence from the records seen that other agencies were not always quick to share information and that parishes did not always share. But this dated back to three years or more. Within the last two years, the information sharing seen was prompt and appropriate and the DSM reported no problems. Given the number of statutory agencies within the Diocese, this is a real achievement.

There was good evidence of the Safeguarding Team working well with other dioceses and other denominations. The Deputy SM talked of constructing a joint safeguarding agreement with her Roman Catholic equivalent.

One case seen was referred by the national team after a survivor in the Diocese wrote directly to Lambeth Palace. The transfer of information and case responsibility was measured and thorough.

The DSM spent a day at the Scouts HQ, which is in the Diocese, shortly after her arrival. She has used their learning in how to persuade volunteers of the need for references and DBS checks when working with some of the PSRs who are experiencing the same issues.

## **2.14 LINKS WITH NATIONAL SAFEGUARDING TEAM**

The DSM has worked with the national team (see 2.13) and has from time to time sought advice and guidance. The DSM was aware of the direction of travel of the national team.

In the past there had been some tension because Chelmsford had developed its own risk assessment format, clergy training and e-learning ahead of the national team. The Diocese reported positive working relationships more recently, particularly with the national casework manager. Members of the team had been invited to participate in development of policy, e.g. risk assessment guidance and plan to adopt the national guidance when completed.



## 3 CONCLUSION

This section provides the headline findings from the audit, drawing out positives and the areas for improvement. The detail behind these appraisals are in the Findings in section 3.

### 3.1.1 What's working well?

Safeguarding practice within the diocese is well developed and demonstrates a multitude of strengths, namely:

- The Bishop shows real commitment to safeguarding and can describe his own growth in awareness of the place of safeguarding in the Church.
- The Diocese has the advantage of reaching an awareness of how fundamental safeguarding is and what happens when it goes wrong and as a result has developed good solutions that are now national practice, e.g. core groups.
- Everyone has acknowledged that culture change is a challenge but it is clearly a high priority. Safeguarding is seen as everybody's responsibility and the Bishop talks about using every opportunity in all kinds of settings to express safeguarding as a core value.
- The safeguarding system is not dependent on one, or a few individuals, and would not collapse if key people were not available. The system is strong enough to continue and incorporate new people and continue with the shared and recognised task.
- The Diocese has shown a willingness several times to find the funding to increase the size of the team. The Bishop and the Chief Executive have obviously worked well to achieve this.
- The Safeguarding Team contains excellent people who have made a real difference while building on earlier work. They work as a team and support each other.
- The casework seen was of a uniformly high standard. Responses were prompt and there was evidence from the Focus Group of a high regard for the team's accessibility, quality of advice and support.
- The risk assessment tools in use are excellent. The use seen of the tool was comprehensive and reflective. The blemished DBS risk assessments seen were sensitively managed in the context of offences from the past.
- The safeguarding agreements were robust and clear, signed by all the right people and reviewed on time.
- The team had been very proactive in building relationships with partner agencies, statutory and voluntary, not letting the number of statutory agencies be a barrier. As a result, networking and information sharing work well and support good safeguarding.
- Feedback from the Focus Group about training was positive. The team has put a lot of work into creating effective training material including e-learning and

face-to-face courses. The initiative of archdeacons attending training for clergy shows their commitment very publicly and contributes to the change in culture that everyone is trying to achieve.

- The DSAG has an excellent Independent Chair and now has good participation from a senior level in both adults' and children's social care. The Bishop sees his attendance as useful and it makes communication immediate.
- The role of archdeacons in monitoring safeguarding in the parishes is evolving and looks set to further develop safeguarding practice.
- Relationships with the Dean and Chapter are good and the Cathedral sees itself, in terms of safeguarding, as a large parish church.

### **Areas for further development**

- There has been enormous achievement in terms of positive cultural change, but of course this also remains the ongoing biggest challenge, especially across such a large and diverse area, and three area bishoprics.
- Quality assurance is at an early stage and the DSAG has a role in developing this: what QA should look like and how best to do it? The quantitative aspect of QA is more easily developed and the archdeacons are in a good place to collect information, whereas the qualitative aspect is tougher and needs a lot of thought.
- The Terms of Reference for the DSAG list 18 elements and this seems too much for a group that meets quarterly.
- The DSM does not currently have professional supervision and this is an acknowledged gap. The auditors felt that it is more important that the supervisor is a strong safeguarding professional than someone who is embedded in the Church, not least because the Church sometimes needs to be challenged about why it does things in a particular way.
- Some of the PSRs said they found it a lonely job. Ongoing support for PSRs, as distinct from case-based support (about which they were very positive), would help them to feel more a part of a system especially if they are meeting resistance in their parish.
- There was a view that an incumbent can be in a lonely place and struggling with the face-to-face reality of living on the job and sometimes feeling personally threatened. While the auditors had no knowledge of the support that is on offer, it may be worth thinking about how to extend useful support to clergy who feel torn in several directions.

## **APPENDIX: REVIEW PROCESS**

### **DATA COLLECTION**

#### **Information provided to auditors**

- Background information about the Diocese
- The Safeguarding Development Plan
- Minutes of the DSAG December 2016
- DSM's Reports to DSAG December 2016 and March 2017
- National Safeguarding Audit 2015
- Terms of Reference for DSAG
- Job description for the DSM
- Job description for the Independent Chair
- Articles of Enquiry 2017
- Parochial Inspection Form
- Paper on Listening Around the Diocese by the Children and Families Adviser
- Copy of e-bulletin about the Safeguarding Policy 2014

#### **Participation of members of the Diocese**

Conversations were held with the following people:

- the Bishop
- one of the seven archdeacons (by 'phone)
- the former Bishop's Chaplain (by 'phone)
- the Independent Chair
- the Chief Executive
- the DSM and Deputy SM
- the Safeguarding Administrator

The Parish Focus Group comprised the following roles:

- three incumbents
- three PSRs (including a representative from the Cathedral)
- two church wardens
- one youth worker

#### **The audit: what records / files were examined?**

A total of 16 case records were reviewed; eight were of clergy or lay ministers and eight were of parishioners.

Six clergy Blue Files were chosen at random for evidence of Safer Recruitment. Five diocesan HR files were also reviewed for evidence of Safer Recruitment.

The Blue Files of all the clergy who had been subject of an allegation and where the safeguarding file was reviewed by the auditors were checked for evidence of the safeguarding concern.

#### **Limitations of audit**

There were no known limitations to the audit.