



Safeguarding Update to Diocesan Synod November 2023

Introduction

In my first report to Diocesan Synod as Head of Safeguarding I wish to take this opportunity to record my thanks for Sarah Acraman's work over the previous 13 years.

I also want to express my thanks for all those in the parish setting who continue to develop and apply safeguarding in the local setting.

The year has seen many major developments with the diocese playing a lead role in many national projects.

Bishop Philip led on the National Redress Scheme and Simon Cade continues to steer the IICSA 1 & 8 Project.

The Safeguarding team has also led in the areas of training, risk management, has been part of the Pathfinder Project developing a regional oversight capacity, and we have been leading on the work around National Quality Standards.

There are however areas of huge risk and challenges remaining.

The Team

Andy Earl
Head of Safeguarding
Diocesan Safeguarding Officer

Jo Pomery
Assistant Safeguarding Officer
Cathedral Safeguarding Advisor

Mandy Wells
Diocesan Safeguarding Trainer

Jo Bell
Safeguarding Governance Officer

Simon Vaughn
Operations Team Safeguarding Administrator

Our Year

- Victim Survivor Conference
- Cathedral Review/ Visitation
- DSA to DSO
- Changes to the team
- New Case Management System
- Safeguarding Dashboard & Hub
- Management of Risk



Casework

The routine business of responding to referrals and concerns continues to occupy most of our working week, liaison with our statutory partners remains positive and cooperative.

We are grateful for the great work done by our Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSOs) in passing concerns and queries to us.

Many of the issues raised relate to poor relationships or poor culture and we work hard to advise and resolve, we have assisted in the development of a Code of Behaviour to address some of these types of issues.

Our Statutory figures for 2022

Total number of safeguarding concerns and allegations received during 2022 where the concern/allegation is about an individual posing a direct risk to a child or adult because of their actions.

	CHILD (current)	CHILD (non-recent)	ADULT
DIOCESE	3	0	8
CATHEDRAL	2	2	3
TOTAL NO. OF CASES	5	2	11

This mirrors the earlier years' return and forms only a small part of the casework we engage with.

Managing Risk

The Church is one of the very few organisations that has both those that may pose a risk and those who may be classed as vulnerable or indeed as victims and survivors within its community.

The system that we employ to manage those individuals has undergone a national change in both Risk Assessment and the nature of the Safety Plan that is generated. Each Safety Plan has a local reference group that works with the safeguarding team to manage the risk locally. I am grateful to all those who take on this task.

We currently have 15 plans in existence, and all are being re-assessed and formatted to meet the new national template.

DBS

We continue to assist in Safer Recruiting and this year saw us sign up for electronic ID checking as an option to speed up processing times. The DBS is now valid for three years and we are in the process of implementing this change from the earlier five-year validity.

YEAR	NUMBER OF CHECKS
2022	558
2023 (Up to October 1, 2023)	418



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Casework Management

We have migrated our past cases and paper archives into the National Case Management System - My Concern - ensuring that our records are stored in one place with easier access and interrogation.

This was a huge undertaking and saw of 1,500 separate case documents and files being transferred. I am grateful to the team and our partners for the work put into this migration.

Governance

Our Governance post was vacant until the end of September 2023 and so our focus has been on re-establishing the role of the Diocesan Advisory Panel which is independently chaired by Justine Hosking.

The panel provides oversight and scrutiny to our process and procedures and involves senior representation from both the diocese and cathedral along with many of our statutory partners. With the development of National Standards and external Audit, we are developing a work plan and strategy to ensure that we are able to evidence good practice against these new Standards and ensure that we remain focused to ensure the best outcomes possible.

I have begun to engage with the Deanery implementation Teams and individuals in deaneries to discuss ways of working as a deanery to deliver appropriate safeguarding.

The rollout of the Parish Dashboard and its younger sibling the Safeguarding Hub continues to provide support for parishes enabling them to meet governance and Safer Recruiting Standards.

Training

Our Diocesan Safeguarding Trainer Mandy Wells with support from our cohort of assistant trainers continues to deliver the Leadership course online. We delivered 40 courses during 2022 and have been one of the first dioceses to roll out the new leadership module since April 2023.

The format remains a pre-course workbook followed by two 90-minute sessions and a closing reflection. The qualification is valid for three years.

The number of office holders that requires training continues to grow and our number of volunteers also grows year on year.

AUTHOR: Andy Earl, Head of Safeguarding

DATE: October 2023



	2020	2021	2022	2023
No. of Leadership course participants	132	346	382	252
PSO delegates	22	45	51	65
Basic	261	479	596	452
Foundation	194	426	434	346
Domestic Violence	0	8	164	383
SRPM	8	65	65	76

One area of concern is the low level of uptake for Safer Recruitment People Management (SRPM) training. To appoint safely to any role requires at least one person with the SRPM qualification. The aspiration is one per parish or benefice.

Engagement in the Domestic Violence training has been lower than expected. Those undertaking Leadership training are required to complete the Domestic Violence training. Domestic violence forms a large part of our caseload and discussions.

These low levels of uptake are mirroring the national picture.

The biggest risk the diocese faces is office holders not completing the required Leadership training.

Clergy	PTO	Readers	LWL	LPM	Churchwardens	PSO
118 (120)	148 (149)	88 (91)	135 (254)	80 (221)	128 (358)	90 (200)
98.5%	99.5%	95.5%	53%	36%	36%	45%

With the new Governance Officer in place, we can now begin the process of contacting the individual office holders and addressing the shortfall in training.

The plan for Churchwardens is to:

- Engage with each person and invite them to complete Basic, Foundation, and Leadership training within the next three months.
- Develop a centrally managed system of follow-up for those who don't complete the training.

For those who do not complete the training, the plan is:

- Develop an escalation process.
- Letter from the Bishop.
- Early communication to ensure all those who are nominated for office have completed training at point of appointment.
- No Churchwarden to be commissioned until safeguarding training completed.
- Suspension under the Churchwarden Measure if there is failure to follow House of Bishops' Guidance.



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External Audit

The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) recommended that the process of independent external audits continue and the diocese and cathedral will be audited in spring 2024.

Aspirations

- Reward Compliance.
- Survivor Worship.
- Develop identified 'Safe to Worship' churches.

In Conclusion

There remain many challenges for us as a Church and our approach to safeguarding needs to exemplify our commitment to love one another.

The work on developing healthy cultures will not only address the internal divisions that exist in some of our communities, it will also message very clearly to a wider world the Church has something valuable to share:

- A safe place where all are welcomed, all are treated with respect, a place where we acknowledge and manage risk.
- A community that **recognises** when abuse or harm occurs, **responds** appropriately, **refers** with confidence, and **records** the actions.