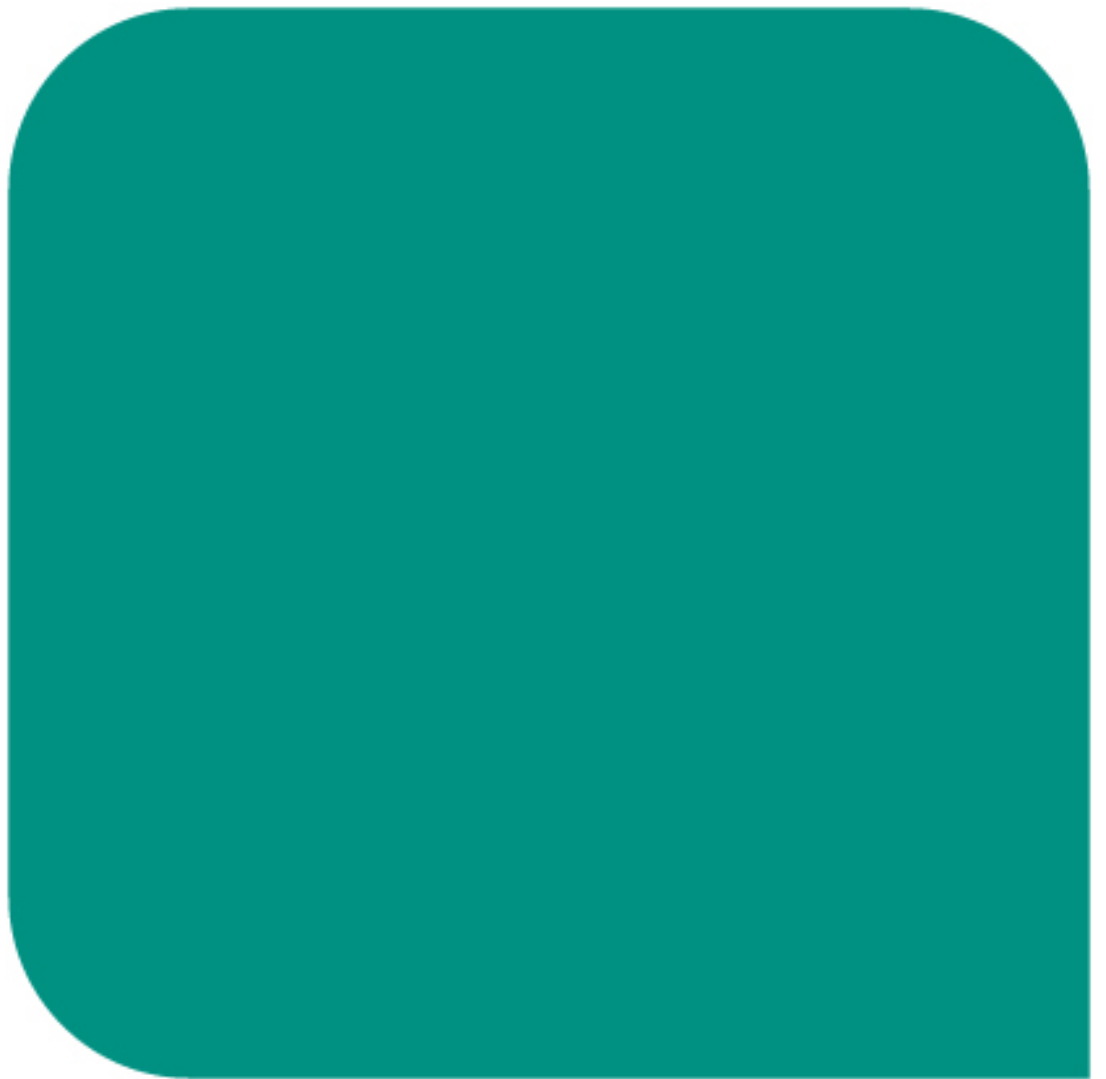# Diocese of Oxford independent safeguarding audit (June 2017)

The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) improves the lives of people who use care services by sharing knowledge about what works.

We are a leading improvement support agency and an independent charity working with adults', families' and children's care and support services across the UK. We also work closely with related services such as health care and housing.

We improve the quality of care and support services for adults and children by:

- identifying and sharing knowledge about what works and what's new

- supporting people who plan, commission, deliver and use services to put that knowledge into practice

- informing, influencing and inspiring the direction of future practice and policy.

Contents

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 Oxford was carried out by Susan Ellery (the lead auditor for this diocese) and Hugh Constant on 20, 21 and 22 June 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 Hugh Constant and quality assurance provided by Edi Carmi, the senior auditing lead.

The auditors would like to thank the senior clergy, and especially Bishop Steven, for handling the publication of the independent report into Peter Ball on 22 June alongside the audit.

1.2 THE DIOCESE

The Diocese of Oxford is the administrative area of the Church of England that, broadly speaking, covers the three counties of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. The total population is about 2.2 million.

The Diocese sits between the Cotswolds in the west and London to the east. It extends from tiny rural communities to the vastly different cities of Oxford and Milton Keynes (the largest, and fastest growing, urban area in the Diocese).

Nine local authorities sit within the Diocese but it is covered by one police force, Thames Valley Police.

Eight hundred and fifteen churches are organised into 626 parishes. There are 610 ordained clergy (stipendiary, house for duty and self-supporting) with responsibilities in parishes: and a further 550 with Permission to Officiate. This last figure includes retired clergy and, for example, college chaplains. There are also nearly 320 licensed lay ministers, including those in training. The parishes in the Diocese employ about 140 youth and family workers.

The Diocese is organised into four episcopal areas Oxford, Reading, Dorchester and Buckingham. The Bishop of Oxford is responsible for the city only, and the Bishop of Dorchester takes the rest of the county of Oxfordshire. The see of Reading corresponds to the Berkshire area (now six unitary local authorities), and the see of

Buckingham to the county of Buckinghamshire and the unitary Milton Keynes. Four archdeacons cover the same areas as the bishops.

One area bishop remarked that members of congregations quite frequently don't realise that they are in the Diocese of Oxford, relating instead to their area bishop. This may be exacerbated by the unusual status of the cathedral (see below).

The cathedral is Christ Church Cathedral, a collegiate chapel of the University of Oxford as well as the diocesan cathedral. As such, it is exempt from the jurisdiction of the Diocese in which it lies, and organises its own safeguarding.

Nine religious communities have houses within the Diocese, largely as a legacy of the Oxford Movement in the 19th century. In addition, there are three theological education institutions, training future clergy. And, of course, there are the colleges that make up the University of Oxford, many of which employ chaplains, as well as Oxford Brookes University, the Open University and the Universities of Buckingham and Reading

1.3 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The report is organised 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. 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 its safeguarding planning in the future.
- 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 along with any limitations of the audit.

2 FINDINGS

2.1 SAFEGUARDING MANAGEMENT

2.1.1 Leadership

The Bishop has a good grounding in safeguarding, primarily through parish ministry in Enfield and Halifax and his previous appointment as Bishop of Sheffield where he felt he had a 'learning curve'. Part of the learning has come from being criticised, very publicly at times, for a perceived mishandling of a serious abuse allegation whilst the Bishop of Sheffield.

The Bishop moved to Oxford in 2016 and the auditors asked for his first impressions. He was concerned about the level of DSA resource (see 2.5) and was relieved to find plans in place to increase it.

The Bishop sees his lead in terms of holding the final responsibility for safeguarding. His priority is to have good systems in place for the care of survivors, and the auditors' view is that the Diocese has some way to go in this area (see 2.12).

The Bishop's lead is delegated to the Bishop of Reading, and the Bishop's view is that, in a diocese the size of Oxford, the delegated lead is better held by a bishop than an archdeacon, in order to give the safeguarding agenda the necessary profile.

The Bishop of Reading sees his role as keeping abreast of changes in safeguarding regulation and practice and maintaining an overview of safeguarding in the Diocese, on behalf of the Bishop of Oxford. He is a member of the Diocesan Safeguarding Panel (see 2.3) and acts as a link between the panel and Bishop's Staff. He also sits on the Case Review sub-group of the panel.

The delegated lead does not have scheduled meetings with the DSA, although aims to be 'on hand' for him. He is one of the two bishops who do not have their office at Church House and consequently the DSA had less day-to-day contact with him than an area bishop who is not the delegated lead. It feels that this needs some working out.

The Bishop of Reading does not have any line management responsibility for the DSA (see 2.2). Neither does he get involved in decision-making about safeguarding, such as when or whether to refer to statutory agencies.

2.1.2 Structure

Safeguarding has reported to the Human Resources Panel since January 2017. On a formal basis, this happens twice a year. The HR Panel reports into the Bishop's Council.

The previous DSA attended Bishop's Staff as and when he saw the need. The Diocesan Secretary suggested a more formal arrangement for the DSA to attend three times a year and this would make sense.

The previous DSA reported annually to Bishop's Council. The auditors proposed that the annual report should be presented by the Independent Chair of the Diocesan Safeguarding Panel, accompanied by the DSA as this makes for clearer accountability (see 2.3).

2.1.3 Links with the Cathedral

As a Royal Peculiar and a college chapel, Christ Church Cathedral is unique among English cathedrals. At present, the Cathedral makes its own arrangements regarding safeguarding.

The auditors saw evidence that the previous DSA had worked for the Cathedral on a freelance basis, but this was several years ago. Should the Cathedral wish to move towards a more formal arrangement (perhaps a service level agreement), the auditors would advise the inclusion of agreement regarding the DSA's professional freedom to act in terms of decisions to refer to statutory agencies.

2.1.4 Culture

The culture of safeguarding is very strong in the senior clergy team. The auditors met or talked with all four bishops and one archdeacon, and all took safeguarding very seriously, were knowledgeable about national and local issues and want to get it right. The auditors thought that the fact that the Diocese asked to be included in a recent Serious Care Review (see 2.5) was evidence of a learning culture.

Senior clergy talked about a wide range of safeguarding-related topics that reflect the wish to learn and improve. These included:

- spiritual abuse and the potentially fine line between charismatic leadership and behaviour that can be grooming or bullying
- the need to change the annual Ministerial Development Review so that it includes any safeguarding issues, even if it might be perceived as another layer of 'managerialism'
- the need for suicide prevention training given that clergy who are accused of safeguarding offences may be high risk.

All these concerns are connected with current or recent painful safeguarding cases, and the fact that senior clergy are actively looking for learning is very positive.

The auditors had concerns about the time taken by the Diocese to increase the resource given to safeguarding, namely to appoint a full-time DSA and a full-time Training Officer, and whether this reflected a lack of prioritisation for safeguarding. It seems instead to have had more to do with having had a highly competent part-time DSA for 13 years and, perhaps, some delay in grasping the full implications of the practice guidance and training framework being developed by the National Safeguarding Team.

The auditors were less confident about the spread of a safeguarding culture across the Diocese and across institutions in the Diocese. It was clear from the Parish Focus Group that some churches have been very aware of safeguarding for several

years but the sample was very small. Some of the casework seen, and examples given by senior clergy, suggest that safeguarding concerns have developed in congregations in places where people have not thought the unthinkable and/or were reluctant to challenge the clergy, despite having policies in place.

The auditors saw the beginnings of joined-up thinking across departments at Diocesan Office, such as the contribution of the Family Friendly Church Award (see 2.12) to a safe culture, and it would be worth considering how to extend this, perhaps via the Board of Education and church schools.

(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 if a review of the reporting of safeguarding to Bishop's Council would be helpful.

Consider whether regular meetings between the delegated lead for safeguarding and the DSA will be of benefit to both and to the quality of safeguarding in the Diocese.

Consider how to assess the spread and strength of a safeguarding culture across the Diocese (see also the role of the Diocesan Safeguarding Panel at 2.3 and quality assurance at 2.10).

2.2 DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING ADVISER/S

2.2.1 Roles and responsibilities

Until December 2016, the Diocese employed one Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) on a part-time basis. He had been employed for some 13 years and had a 0.6 contract although apparently worked extra hours as needed. The Diocese recognised that when the previous DSA retired additional input would be needed to meet the developing requirements of the role.

A full-time DSA started in January 2017. A planned overlap between DSAs did not take place because the Diocese was unsuccessful in the first round of recruitment, but the outgoing DSA worked hard to leave matters in good order for his successor.

A second, new, post of Training Officer/Assistant DSA (abbreviated in this report to TO) started in May 2017. This is also a full-time post. At present, the post-holder is not taking casework but it is the intention that she will, in time. Getting to grips with the training needs of the Diocese is currently a full-time job (see 2.6 below).

The auditors saw the beginnings of a feeling of a team, albeit in very early days.

2.2.2 Qualifications and experience

The DSA has a long career in local authority children's social work behind him, as an employee and as in a freelance capacity. He has significant management experience

of frontline social work, safeguarding functions and quality assurance.

The DSA also provided a voluntary DSA service to the Bishop of Willesden between 2008 and 2012.

The TO has come from several years' experience at an adult care hospice, where she was responsible for the organisation and delivery of training, including safeguarding training.

2.2.3 Employment arrangements

Both posts are employed by the Diocese. Both have a job description and a person specification.

2.2.4 Management arrangements

The DSA was line managed by the Director of Mission and Ministry until the retirement of the previous DSA. The current DSA is line managed by the Director of Human Resources (HR), a move planned well before his arrival due to the perceived synergy and overlap between HR and safeguarding.

The auditors discussed with the Diocesan Secretary the potential impact of taking the DSA's accountability from the Board of Mission and whether it might gradually reduce the impact of safeguarding among the clergy. The strength of the clergy representation on the Diocesan Safeguarding Panel (DSP), as well as the overall culture in the Diocese, should make sure this does not happen.

The Director of HR described attending the previous DSA's meetings with his line manager so that she could build her knowledge of safeguarding before managing the role. She does not take an active part in safeguarding casework activity and this is appropriate. She does sit on the DSP.

The Director of HR is not a standing member of Bishop's Staff although she is on the Senior Management Group. The Diocesan Secretary was considering a regular, perhaps termly, slot for the DSA instead of ad hoc attendance focused on a major issue, and it may make sense for the Director of HR to accompany him.

The Director of HR supports the professional development of the DSA.

2.2.5 Supervision arrangements

Supervision for the DSA is very new. The previous DSA, according to the diocesan self-audit for 2015 (the most recent available) chose not to have supervision on the basis that he did not do casework (see 2.5).

The current DSA has met twice with his professional supervisor. She is a qualified social worker and a former DSA herself. Supervision will be monthly once established. There is, as yet, no formal contract or agreement but the DSA and supervisor are working towards one.

The Director of HR expressed a clear expectation that the supervisor will feed into the DSA's annual appraisal although the detail of how is still to be worked out.

There is currently no mechanism for noting decisions made during supervision on the relevant case files. This will need to be addressed as an element of commissioning a case management system (see 2.5).

2.2.6 Any potential conflicts of interests to DSA's independence

The auditors saw no potential conflicts of interest for either the DSA or the TO.

Adequacy of resources

Notwithstanding the recent increase in safeguarding capacity, the auditors question whether it is sufficient, and found that some of the senior clergy have the same concern. It was pointed out that some dioceses have roughly the same population as the largest area bishopric (one million) yet have a greater resource than the entire Diocese of Oxford.

The Director of HR is planning a dedicated administration role to support safeguarding and this is a sensible move. Previous dedicated administrative support was incorporated within the generic HR administrative service when the DSA role first moved from Mission and Ministry to HR. Experience has shown that a dedicated resource is required.

The budget allocated to safeguarding is only now being set up as a separate budget stream, having previously been rolled up in the Mission and Ministry budget.

The Diocesan Secretary showed an understandable preference for seeing how safeguarding works with two full-time employees (plus administrative support and some bought-in training) before committing to expansion. The TO role is a fixed-term contract, initially for three years, and there seemed to be tacit agreement to the probable need to extend it.

Further into this report, the auditors suggest areas that might benefit from extra resource or a time-limited project approach to bring practice across the Diocese up to the expected level, for example, regarding risk assessments and safeguarding agreements (see 2.5). It is not unusual for diocesan staff to comment that they don't know what they don't know, but, due to the size of the Diocese and the historic paucity of resource, this does feel a greater risk here than elsewhere.

The office space given to safeguarding, in a modern, open plan diocesan office, is more than adequate. The auditors were struck by the fact that two of the four bishops are also based there and are highly visible and present due to glass walls and shared café space.

(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**
>
> *Keep the resources given to safeguarding under review and consider a project-based approach to catch up with expected practice in some areas.*

2.3 DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING PANEL

2.3.1 Chair

The Independent Chair of the DSP is a barrister by training. He is CEO of a Scottish Community Justice Authority, an Independent Chair for Significant Case Reviews in Scotland and for Serious Case Reviews in a local authority in southern England, and a member of an adoption panel.

The Chair holds a paid position. He has Terms of Reference to describe his role rather than a job description and was appointed about 18 months ago.

The Chair is not a member of the Church of England and the auditors saw no potential conflicts of interest.

2.3.2 Composition of panel

The membership of the DSP is large but the panel struggles to recruit members from the statutory sector.

Unusually, the DSP has a survivor representative. She is an academic who has published on the subject of surviving ecclesiastical abuse.

The Bishop of Reading, as the Bishop's delegated lead for safeguarding, sits on the panel and so does one of the four archdeacons.

The Diocesan Secretary is currently a member, as is the Director of HR. In addition, diocesan advisers for social responsibility, youth and children are members, plus an employee from the Board of Education.

There are several parish representatives although the evidence of the last three meetings is that they are gradually 'self-selecting' and fewer attend regularly. Some parish representatives have relevant safeguarding knowledge or experience, e.g. an academic social psychologist, a retired senior police officer and a former probation officer. It might make sense if they attend in their current or previous professional capacity rather than as a parish representative, not least because it makes it simpler to see from the minutes the make-up of professional knowledge and experience at the meeting.

The Oxfordshire Local Designated Officer (LADO) sits on the panel and sends a deputy if unable to attend. Police and probation also have places.

The diocesan Guild of Bell Ringers has a representative. A lay chaplain to a care home for those with medical conditions and/or disabilities is a member.

Despite the lengthy list of members, social work seems to be represented only by the

DSA and the LADO/assistant LADO, when attending, although the practice of assigning a parish rather than a professional capacity to members means that this may not be the case.

2.3.3 Clarity of purpose and function

The DSP is operating to a draft revision of the Terms of Reference, from May 2017. The functions of the panel are listed as:

- To provide strategic scrutiny of safeguarding policies and practice within the Diocese, including oversight of high-profile cases, resource availability and pressure points
- To ensure that policies and practice guidance resources are reviewed and updated on a continuing basis
- To maintain an overview of the arrangements for obtaining Criminal Record checks from the Disclosure and Barring Service
- To monitor and evaluate safeguarding activity in the Diocese and deliver an annual report of safeguarding activity
- To monitor and evaluate progress of action plans arising from Audit, Serious Care Reviews and other areas
- To hold the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser accountable for progress with safeguarding priorities within the Diocese
- To maintain a horizon-scanning approach to safeguarding, keeping abreast of changes and developments locally and nationally and ensuring that these are progressed appropriately
- To establish a quality assurance and case review process through a sub-committee to ensure that there is a culture of continuing professional improvement established within the Diocese.

The functions as listed are useful in terms of maintaining a continuous improvement approach. However, there is scope to make the strategic and scrutiny role of the DSP clearer, to avoid any confusion about the DSP holding a management function. For example, the eighth bullet point could be misunderstood to suggest that the DSP holds a management function vis-a-vis the DSA.

The auditors met with the Chair and a group of five other members. The panel in its current form is still quite new, having previously been split into children's and adults' panels.

There was general agreement that the panel is currently large, and probably too large, and insufficiently strategic in outlook. The Terms of Reference started with two meetings a year and the panel has already moved to three. It may well want to meet quarterly in the future, should it adopt the more strategic function likely to be required by the final Promoting a Safer Church.

The most recent meeting lists at the end 15 action points, 14 of which were assigned to the DSA. The actions covered a wide spectrum and included research and report writing. Given that the DSA was only a month into post and was preparing for this audit as well, this seemed quite unrealistic.

Members of the panel discussed the possibility of moving to three sub-panels based

on county boundaries with a smaller central group in order to respond to the membership challenges of such a large diocese as well as the issue of 'reach'. They agreed that statutory agencies would be more likely to get involved in a panel that reflected their area.

The panel's function regarding how it might know whether it is making a difference is at an early stage. As one member said, the outputs are reportable but the outcomes still largely unknown. More locally based sub-panels should be in a better position to pick up 'soft' data about outcomes, such as indications of changing attitudes or new initiatives.

The panel does have a Case Review Sub Group at present and this might also become part of quality assurance through Lessons Learned reviews, and the monitoring of subsequent action plans. At the time of the audit, a member of clergy had very recently killed himself and panel members were rightly concerned to review how something that (in the circumstances) was a recognised risk had happened. It was clear to the auditors that this tragic event was at the front of several people's minds and was prompting a search for a response.

The auditors felt that recent minutes of meetings showed that the panel has yet to find its focus but is moving towards it. One early meeting included several presentations which, although all relevant, had produced something of a training session and that had been discussed with the intention of avoiding a reoccurrence.

The introduction of an annual safeguarding business/development plan, with intended outcomes and measures, would seem to be a means to help the DSP focus on core functions and would help it to be accountable.

The first annual plan will need to include the implementation of recommendations from the recent Serious Case Review (see 2.5).

The DSP's relationship with the Bishop and senior clergy is via the attendance of the area bishop who holds the delegated lead and an archdeacon.

The Chair quoted the lead Bishop for Safeguarding as saying, when offering him the appointment, that, 'You'll be a good person to hold us to account'. This does offer clarity, in a nutshell, about the purpose of the DSP. The previous DSA compiled an annual report on safeguarding which he presented to Bishop's Council and it may make sense for the Independent Chair to take the lead in future, accompanied by the DSA. The holding to account would seem to be mutual.

The DSP has not had administrative support and historically the DSA has taken the minutes. Given the central role of the DSA, this does not seem appropriate. There was a suggestion that the TO could take over but it would seem to be more appropriately done by an administration worker. No consideration has been made on this as it is understood that the Diocese has this development in hand.

(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

The Diocese to review the Terms of Reference in line with roles and responsibilities in new practice guidance, so as to reinforce the strategic, scrutiny, and QA function of the DSP.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Panel to consider how best to function in line with new Terms of Reference, and whether that is best done by one panel or three geographically-based panels and a central panel.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Panel to consider a process to focus and track activity e.g. by drawing up an annual plan.

2.4 GUIDANCE, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The diocesan safeguarding policy was published in 2012 and is acknowledged to be dated. It will be replaced by the final Promoting a Safer Church, but meanwhile the DSA is reviewing and updating existing local policies and guidance.

The Diocesan Synod formally adopted the current set of policies and guidance on 18 March 2017. The previous DSA had prepared a paper for Synod that set out How Safeguarding Operates in the Diocese.

The Diocesan Synod expects to formally adopt Promoting a Safer Church in due course.

The then Bishop of Oxford wrote a foreword in 2012 that now feels less than helpful, as it states that the guidance cannot be imposed on parishes and invites parishes to consult the DSA if the guidance does not suit their needs. It might be better, given the status of national practice guidance today, to remove this section on the website version now.

Individual policies, relating to safeguarding in parishes, have been updated since 2012 and are available on the diocesan website. The auditors noticed, however, that one member of the Parish Focus Group brought a bound copy of the 2012 handbook, and wondered whether updated guidance is being accessed by all PSOs.

(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 replacing the foreword of the 2012 policy and guidance with a message from the current Bishop.

2.5 CASEWORK

2.5.1 Quality of response to allegations

The auditors reviewed a total of 20 cases, of which five had been dealt with solely by the current DSA. Several more had continued since the previous DSA was in post. Of the 20, six involved a member of the clergy, four centred on an adult who was or might be vulnerable, three were historic sexual abuse allegations and three involved youth workers.

The previous DSA had a style of working that presumably made the role possible, given the size of the Diocese and his part-time hours. Case records show a high level of delegation to parishes, with the expectation that the DSA's contribution was advice rather than active engagement. In one case, of a convicted offender, the parish and not the DSA liaised with the probation service. In another, scrutiny by the Case Review Group led to a change of approach by the ex DSA and complaints from church wardens about the previous line taken.

The current DSA wants (and is expected) to be directly involved in more casework, and is working out what can be managed within the working week. Casework had a feel of being very much in transition from one style to another. All the casework seen that was the responsibility of the current DSA was of a high standard.

One obvious previous gap in casework was support to victims of clerical abuse, particularly in cases that take a very long time to reach a conclusion. This is also addressed in 2.12.

It was hard to audit the level of liaison with statutory agencies as so much was done at parish level. However, the auditors saw no delays in the referral of relevant cases to police and/or LADO.

Case recording largely depended on email exchanges and on reports written by the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO), often at the conclusion. Frequently, however, the conclusion of a case was not recorded as the parish did not feed back, or, because the parish and not the DSA made a referral to Children's Social Care, so any feedback/acknowledgement went to the parish.

Core groups are being introduced across the Diocese by the current DSA, and the chairing and note-taking are at an early stage.

Overall, the conduct of casework is changing rapidly as the current DSA brings it up to the standards required today.

2.5.2 Quality of risk assessment and safeguarding contracts

The auditors saw one risk assessment, that was similar to a Type A Risk

Assessment[1], and no Type B Assessments[2], but were made aware of the commissioning of a Type B. Given the number of clergy and church officers (albeit, oddly, all youth workers) represented in the casework sample, it is surprising that there were not more Type B Assessments.

The Diocese has, until recently, provided a template to parishes for the compilation of safeguarding agreements and the DSA has advised at arm's length. Several examples were shared with the auditors. The DSA has not signed agreements and it was not always clear from the case record whether the agreement had been signed or not, unless the parish sent a copy to the Diocese. The auditors' view is that signature by the DSA is a sign that the Diocese is supporting the parish in managing a safeguarding situation and should lessen any surprise when a person who poses a risk moves to another parish or denomination and finds that they are re-referred.

The auditors were concerned by one (quite old) safeguarding agreement that appeared to pay more regard to the livelihood of a perpetrator than to the potential feelings of his victim(s).

The auditors were provided with a spreadsheet listing 33 safeguarding agreements, six of which have lapsed due to the subject leaving the church. At the end of 2016, 19 were overdue for annual review and another seven have since become due for review.

There was reference on some case records to the ex DSA reminding parishes of the need to review a safeguarding agreement, but not always with a recorded result. It seems likely that some agreements simply roll on from year to year without any re-assessment. The Diocese might consider three actions that would probably require temporary extra staffing: an 'amnesty' for any agreements held at parish level and unknown to the Diocese, a risk assessment to inform all current agreements, and a review of all agreements to ensure they are fit for purpose.

(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.)

2.5.3 Recording systems

Recording is entirely electronic, on computers provided by the Diocese. There is, however, no case management system and the Diocese is in the process of making a decision about which system to purchase.

The Serious Case Review (see below) draws attention to the need for a case

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[1] Type A Risk Assessments are undertaken by the DSA/ Assistant DSA of those who may pose risk to children or adults and are members of the Church of England Christian community or seeking to become a member.
[2] A Type B Risk Assessment is commissioned by the Diocese or responsible body and referred to an independent agency or professional person qualified and experienced in safeguarding risk assessments. A Type B Assessment will only be undertaken in relation to a church officer, whether ordained or lay, and on completion of a statutory investigation.

management system and the auditors endorse this recommendation.

Case records all had a Record of Referral that was useful, although usually failed to give the role of the referrer (it often became obvious further into the record).

Beyond the Record of Referral, the case record was dependent on the storage of emails and attachments in all but the most recent cases. As a result, much of the story and detail of a case (such as phone calls or meetings that were not minuted) can be lost, leaving potential vulnerability for the Diocese in the future. Also, cases tend to peter out rather than reach a conclusion so outcomes are hard to track.

The current DSA has introduced a case log/running record, for newly referred cases, which is clear and is a huge step forward.

2.5.4 Serious Case Review

The Diocese asked to be included in a Serious Case Review (SCR) published on 1 January 2017 by West Berkshire LSCB. The SCR focused on abuse committed at a secondary school over a period of several years. One of the two convicted perpetrators of abuse was a youth counsellor at the school and also a local clergyman.

The Diocese of Oxford undertook two individual management reviews (IMRs), one for the parish and one for the Diocese, which contributed to the final Overview Report. The IMR writer was a social work qualified DSA from another diocese.

2.5.5 Recommendations for the Diocese

- Ensure the proper recording of all safeguarding concerns regarding clergy through effective implementation of the existing policies – on the recording of safeguarding issues and the model policy on recording safeguarding encounters (May 2015).
- Ensure that all incoming Clergy's Blue (staff) Files are read by the Bishop's Chaplain in order to identify any safeguarding issues.
- Consider how employment contracts for church staff involved in direct work with children / young people can be strengthened regarding reinforcing the church policy that abusing the role to engage in sexual and personal relationships with young people they are working with is against church policy.
- Consider implementing the Keep it Safe framework (in youth work environments).
- Explore how the ministerial annual review process can be strengthened with respect to good safeguarding practice and behaviours.
- Strengthen further the Diocese's whistleblowing policy by including reference to how the policy applies to bishops and the Designated Safeguarding Adviser (DSA).
- The Diocese to ensure that any concerns raised about a church youth worker must be retained on their personnel file and included in any reference requests.

- It is recommended that the Diocese explore ways in which all safeguarding issues identified within the Diocese can go onto an electronic database, which would allow a further opportunity for links to be made and important information not to be lost.

- With respect to concerns about a member of the church that fall below the threshold for whistleblowing – consider i) identifying someone within the church (e.g. Diocese Safeguarding Adviser or Diocesan Secretary) whose role will be to provide independent advice on whether to formally report / record this information and ii) incorporate this into the Diocese's whistleblowing policy, iii) consider how the model policy on recording pastoral encounters should be strengthened and applied with respect to clergy, in order to ensure that accurate records of all concerns are recorded on clergy's Blue (staff) Files.

Some actions have already been taken in response to above: incoming Blue Files are checked (although the process for noting the check is still inconsistent) and the whistleblowing policy is on the diocesan website.

Several of the recommendations were also picked up by the auditors and/or raised in conversations. The auditors understood that the DSP will monitor the implementation of the recommendations, although the minutes of the discussion at DSP do not spell this out.

The following considerations for the Diocese is likely to involve a review of the resources to do this work, as suggested in 2.2.

Considerations for the Diocese

What measures need to be taken so that all safeguarding concerns or allegations against church officers are dealt with by the DSA, in line with House of Bishops' policy and guidance?

Consider what steps need to be taken to be confident that core groups and both Type A and Type B Risk Assessments are undertaken in accordance with House of Bishops' guidance.

Consider how to urgently locate all existing safeguarding agreements that exist in the Diocese, review them and risk assess the subjects.

Introduce a system able to track safeguarding agreements and risk assessments in the future, providing data on those needing reviews.

Consider whether the DSA should sign all safeguarding agreements in the Diocese in the future, to demonstrate the Diocese is supporting the parish in managing a safeguarding situation.

2.6 TRAINING

The provision of training based on the National Framework to all who should receive it is a challenge for the Diocese. The Training Officer is very new in post and still at the stage of induction. The auditors discussed with her the production of a strategy that starts by setting out how many people need which level of training, how many can be trained at each session and how many sessions will be needed. It should then become clear whether the current resources are sufficient and it would support planning to meet the identified gaps.

The 2015 self-audit indicated that fewer than half the licensed clergy had been trained in the previous three years, only seven of 502 clergy with Permission to Officiate (PTO) and 120 of 190 lay readers. Safeguarding training at parish level was not monitored except via a voluntary annual return.

In 2016, the goal was, rightly in the auditors' view, to train all of the clergy. Very few stipendiary clergy seem to have slipped through the net. Some self-supporting ministers (SSMs) had experienced difficulties securing time off from their paid work commitments to attend weekday training, however 67 per cent of SSM clergy have received training and the Diocese is offering training sessions at different times to increase options for attendance.

To date, the DSA together with a contracted trainer and a small group of volunteers have provided training. It was clear from the Parish Focus Group that some of the large, more urban church congregations have well-organised training provision run by suitably qualified professionals who are also members of the congregation. But it has been very much up to a parish to recognise that they need training and then to

ask for a volunteer to deliver it using a pack provided by the Diocese.

The TO intends to set up team meetings of voluntary trainers and to look at ways to monitor the training delivered. It may be that a more experienced TO from another diocese could help her to set up systems.

The auditors did not see evidence of clergy involvement in training and, for the senior clergy, this would perhaps be too much to ask given the breadth of their responsibilities.

The auditors did find evidence of real confusion about training in the focus group. There is a need for communication about what the core modules in the National Framework are and who is expected to take them.

The auditors were provided with evaluation sheets from some recent training sessions. One was for licensed lay ministers (readers). Overall, most participants tended to tick 'Agree' against a list of statements, in effect giving a rating of 4/5. Comments from several people about confusion over the starting time suggested that the administration could be tighter. Another session was for stipendiary clergy. Their feedback was generally fairly positive although did reach both ends of the spectrum, as did comments about the content and material. Several comments about the day over-running suggest that timing needs to be tighter. A third session was for SSMs and produced only four evaluations, suggesting that the comment above (about the resistance to training due to needing to take time off work) has a basis in fact. Overall, the SSMs who attended were very positive about their experience.

Given that parishes have taken responsibility for their own training, it is likely that systems will be needed to track who has been trained and when their refresher training is due. This links back to the need for a good electronic retrieval system and administrative support identified in 2.2.

The auditors' view is that, when training starts to reach people who have not previously accessed it, there is usually a rise in the number of referrals and requests for advice to the DSA. This links back to the need to keep resources under review (2.2).

(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.)

Considerations for the Diocese

Production of a training strategy that provides a workable plan for the TO to deliver, or to oversee the delivery of, the National Framework Training programme.

Where systems to support training are not in place, look to other dioceses that have them for help.

2.7 SAFE RECRUITMENT OF CLERGY, LAY OFFICERS AND VOLUNTEERS

The auditors looked at seven clergy Blue Files for evidence of Safer Recruitment. One was a university chaplain so recruited directly by the institution, which presumably holds his application, references, etc.

Overall, the evidence of Safer Recruitment on the other six files was patchy. Three had been recruited from other dioceses and their Current Clergy Status Letters (from their previous bishops) were all on file. One of these showed no other references whereas two did. Two of the Blue Files showed no evidence of a current DBS.

The auditors found that, although all the material in a Blue File was securely attached, it was often poorly ordered and not all relevant. This made it difficult to find evidence and to work out the story of where a person had worked.

The auditors also checked the Blue Files where they had reviewed a safeguarding case record that involved the member of clergy, for evidence that a concern exists or has existed. Safeguarding concerns were evident but, in a case that is still to reach a conclusion, much of the material was in separate, loose-leaf envelope files.

The Safer Recruitment of lay officers was checked through the recruitment process for the DSA, the TO and the Independent Chair. Files for all do have references and DBS checks recorded, albeit the auditors initially did not locate these for the Independent Chair.

The SCR (see 2.5) recommends clearer guidelines in employment contracts for those working with young people to reinforce the churches position about the abuse of role to engage in personal or sexual relationships. See also 2.15 concerning the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

(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 how it might be made easier to find information on the Blue Files.

Consider how to make sure that evidence of Safer Recruitment reaches the same standard and accessibility on every Blue File and lay HR file. A recruitment checklist, on the file, might help.

2.8 DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE (DBS)

The processing of DBS checks for parishes has been contracted out for several years, although there will be a change of provider later this year. Members of the focus group raised no issues about the mechanics of obtaining a DBS, although were very critical of the 'portable' DBS, saying that it did not work.

Parishes are responsible for processing DBS disclosure applications for all parish-based appointments. A folder of guidance notes is available on the diocesan website safeguarding pages.

The Diocese processes DBS disclosure applications for beneficed and licensed clergy, and diocesan paid staff. Area Offices monitor DBS renewal timescales for clergy and provide reminders when updates are required. All the Area Offices maintain spreadsheets to track DBS requests and updating but how individual records are updated is slightly different (see 2.7).

The auditors saw a log kept by the current DSA of DBS applications where either the applicant disclosed past offences or the DBS check was found to include past offences. The decision made and action taken was recorded. Records of positive disclosures in 2015 and 2016 were also provided. Some of the offences seemed quite serious but the log did not detail the reasons for determining that there was 'No obstacle' to employment or volunteering and did not cross-reference to the risk assessments. The auditors understand that both the previous and current DSAs have a process for risk assessment but this was not shared during the audit.

In one case, it was noted that the person should not handle cash but no indication of how that would be enforced, although this would be a matter for the employing parish to determine.

The Diocese should ensure that the current practice for risk assessment for 'blemished' DBS checks and Confidential Declarations is clearly described in procedural guidance.

The auditors were not made aware of any referrals to DBS or (previously) ISA over the last four years and were unable to form a view as to whether there should have been.

Considerations for the Diocese

Consider the need to make explicit procedural guidance for the risk assessment process undertaken when self-disclosures are made before a DBS check, or when the DBS check shows offence(s).

2.9 COMPLAINTS AND WHISTLEBLOWING

The Safeguarding section of the diocesan website includes a link for 'Complaints and whistleblowing'. The page does not distinguish between complaints and whistleblowing, and says that the information given 'is suggested to cover both these areas'.

The recommendations of the SCR (see 2.5) include the revision of the complaints and whistleblowing policies and should be taken alongside the comments below.

2.9.1 Complaints

The information on the website assumes that a complaint will be about an incumbent

or a Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) and asks the complainant to contact the area bishop or archdeacon, although does not provide contact details. There is a link to further details about the complaints procedure, which takes one to a page about complaints regarding one's incumbent. This gives the basic details for informal and formal complaints processes, the latter being the Clergy Disciplinary Measure (CDM).

The website allows for a complaint about safeguarding to be directed to the DSA. It does not differentiate at this point between a complaint and an allegation and does not set out what the DSA might do in response. Neither does it allow for a complaint about the DSA.

The Diocese has a two-stage complaints process for anyone wishing to complain about an employee but, at the time of the audit, this was accessed via the Support Services pages of the website only. The auditors thought it unlikely that a member of the public would find the procedure.

The auditors reviewed two complaints, neither of which was written up as a complaint. One was about the handling of a disclosure by an incumbent (several years ago and before the current web pages were written). The auditors thought that the lack of a process left the complainant inevitably dissatisfied. The other was a recent complaint by church officers about the advice received in a case. Due to the lack of case records, it was unclear whether either complaint was resolved, but the auditors were told that, in the latter case, the complainants have had a letter detailing a review of the case but have not taken up the offer of a meeting to discuss it further.

2.9.2 Whistleblowing

A link from the web page leads to a sample whistleblowing policy for parishes. The policy, which refers to projects rather than parishes, feels as if it has been taken from elsewhere without any modification. It is very brief and does not inform a potential whistleblower about what they might expect to happen. It refers to the charity Public Concern At Work but provides no link and gives the wrong address. The auditors view is that the policy is unlikely to invite anyone to report a concern, especially if they are a volunteer.

The web page has links to the whistleblowing policies for the Diocesan Board of Education and the Diocesan Board of Finance, should the concern be about one of their employees. The policies are identical and much clearer than the parish template, including current information about Public Concern At Work. The policies do require the whistleblower to contact the HR Team without giving any contact details. This is likely to deter anyone who does not work directly for the Diocese, and possibly some who do.

Overall, the auditors thought that both complaints and whistleblowing would benefit from review, with the starting point of a parishioner who is concerned that something is wrong but does not know what to do and who to talk to. This seems particularly important given that the potential for the financial abuse of the elderly came up several times in conversations.

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

Review the complaints and whistleblowing policies, with the aim of making them easy to find via the website and wording them so that people feel supported in using them.

2.10 QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES

The DSP is aware that its role in terms of quality assurance (QA) needs to be developed (see 2.3), and is beginning to think about how this will best be achieved.

The Diocese completed a self-audit using the S. 11 format (as set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015) before the audit. The intention is to form part of the audit of faith communities undertaken by some or all of the nine Local Safeguarding Children Boards in the Diocese. This will be a means to bench mark against other denominations and to receive feedback, albeit only about the safeguarding of children.

To date, data about safeguarding in the parishes has been collected annually and on a voluntary basis. The rate of returns was poor, perhaps because the parishes saw little, if any, benefit to themselves. The archdeacons have however incorporated this data collection into their own annual enquiries which has improved the return rate (see 2.11 below).

The auditors raised with the Parish Focus Group the possibility of a parish self-audit using the 'traffic light system', whereby a parish rates itself as red, amber or green on a range of safeguarding activities.

The Diocese has accepted all the recommendations from the SCR (see 2.5) and the DSP is charged with monitoring their adoption.

The QA processes that develop might look beyond the activity of the Safeguarding Team when considering how well a safe culture is embedded.

Considerations for the Diocese

Consider how to implement quality assurance in terms of the impact of safeguarding activity across the Diocese, including within parishes.

2.11 HOW DIOCESE PROVIDES SUPPORT & MONITORING OF SAFEGUARDING IN PARISHES

2.11.1 Archdeacon's responsibilities

The auditors talked with one of the four archdeacons. He is quite new to the Diocese and has very recently taken over as the archdeacon representative on the DSP. He showed an impressive grasp of safeguarding, gained largely in Liverpool, and a detailed grasp of major cases in his geographical area.

The archdeacon described formal interactions with the parishes twice yearly. Firstly, the inspection conducted by the archdeacon or area dean that covers a range of areas such as the church building, Health and Safety, and the mission of the parish, but is also an opportunity to 'join the dots' about safeguarding. He felt that the format he has inherited could be better, being based too much on a 'tick box' approach, and that he might travel with resources to offer, such as posters and leaflets. Secondly, every May the Archdeacons Visitations take place, usually several in each episcopal area, to ensure that all new churchwardens are sworn in.

The archdeacons also undertake annual Enquiries of the parishes. The archdeacons and the DSA have agreed to incorporate the annual safeguarding reporting by parishes, most recently undertaken using a Survey Monkey questionnaire, into the archdeacons' Articles of Enquiry to streamline parish reporting and enhance the strength of scrutiny and governance of safeguarding alongside other aspects of church life.

The DSA attended the archdeacons' meeting in May this year. He agreed to use the data generated by the survey to pinpoint and then support parishes that provide poor responses.

The archdeacon showed data generated by Survey Monkey using pie charts and percentages. Detailed data about each parish is not yet collected and the DSA will need this if he is to focus his effort where it is most needed.

The archdeacon was aware of the progress of eight current safeguarding cases in his area (two children's safeguarding and six adults). These were the most serious cases and/or those involving clergy.

2.11.2 Support given to Parish Safeguarding Officers

The limited DSA resource has meant that PSOs have had little support outside of case-related issues. The auditors met PSOs who had inherited a working system, had professional safeguarding experience and who were confident about their role. However, it seems safe to assume that they may be in a minority.

Even the confident PSOs in the Parish Focus Group agreed that access to training for volunteers needs to be improved.

The previous DSA circulated a safeguarding newsletter four times a year, and everyone in the focus group read it. The auditors found it very dry and even dull but the focus group members accepted the style and layout. Even so, it might benefit

from photographs, colour and a more readable presentation, and presumably the diocesan Communications Team might help.

One PSO talked about making links with a peer in a nearby parish and organising joint training, and getting informal, local support.

The support of PSOs is at a very early stage and the Diocese might consider a range of ideas to improve it. Events such as a conference or a reception for PSOs are likely to be better attended if PSOs don't have to travel too far.

Considerations for the Diocese

Consider how to improve the support of PSOs and how to help them feel valued and confident.

2.12 RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

2.12.1 Responding to victims/survivors

The Diocese has Authorised Listeners and publicises them via posters and pamphlets on the safeguarding page of the website. The service was used three times in 2016.

The Diocese has funded counselling for survivors on a case-by-case basis.

In one case involving clerical abuse of victims under 18, the auditors were concerned by the apparent lack of support provided by the DSA although support was offered in other ways. The Diocese may wish to review how appropriate levels of support to victims is provided.

The auditors were aware that one of the area bishops is held in high regard by some survivors of clerical abuse. He described how he became an advocate for survivors, despite his belief that bishops should not be the 'first responders'. He sees a need for people who can take the time to build a relationship with adults who report past abuse and indicated that this is best done as a professional role.

The auditors found that the Diocese has links with or responsibilities to a number of survivors, as well as cases that have come to light more recently (such as one of the subjects of the SCR). The Diocese might consider how to improve the support provided to victims and survivors through consultation with stakeholders.

2.12.2 Proactive efforts to create a safe culture

The Diocesan Youth and Children's Workers collaborated to launch a Family Friendly Church Award in 2013. The principal aim of the awards is to take a fresh look at the welcome and community on offer to children, young people and families. The aim is to celebrate what is going well whilst challenging the congregation on what may need to be changed, challenged or added. To date, 15 congregations have achieved the award and others are on the journey.

Parishes are invited to complete a self-assessment and to commit to a cycle of

implementation, monitoring and review in order to gain the award. The assessment covers eight elements:

- We are carrying out an honest assessment of how welcoming our church is to children, young people and families. The Assessment Group has included the views of children, young people, families, congregation and PCC.
- We are committed to regularly reviewing and evaluating how welcoming we are. The actions and timeframe we are a currently working towards have been identified.
- We are laying out our vision and values for being a church that is fully welcoming to children, young people and families.
- Clear steps are in place to improve the welcome and ministry children, young people and families experience.
- We make opportunities and use appropriate methods to enable children, young people and their families to encounter God and grow spiritually.
- When we make decisions or put new things in place we ask ourselves if this is consistent with our vision and values for welcoming of children, young people and families.
- We affirm that developing and supporting work with (for example) mums and toddlers, uniformed organisations and local schools is a valuable part of our mission among children, young people and families.
- We regularly communicate that everyone in church plays a part in welcoming. We look at training and accountability for those directly working with young people.

The auditors were made aware, via the Social Responsibility Adviser, of a range of initiatives to support people who are vulnerable. These include:

- A Mental Health project in the deaneries of Cowley and Oxford. The Social Responsibility Adviser and some clergy will be attending Mental Health First Aid Training.
- A number of Continuing Ministerial Development (clergy training) events, such as, 'How a Mental Health Professional Can Support Your Pastoral Ministry', 'Neurodiversity and Opportunity: A Look at the Autistic Spectrum in Ministry and Parish' and "Working with People with Learning Disabilities in Parishes'.
- A recent forum attended by 80 people (predominantly lay) from across the Diocese – linked to the publication of 'Thinking of You: A Resource for the Spiritual Care of People with Dementia, a book by Reverend Joanna Collicutt, Adviser for Spiritual Care of Older People (SCOP). The level of interest was so high that further events are being developed.
- Linked to the above, St Mary's Church in Aldermaston holds a monthly worship service for people experiencing dementia.

The above initiatives, and other similar ones, promote the development of churches that are safe places for adults who may be vulnerable for a range of reasons.

> **Considerations for the Diocese**
>
> *Consider how to improve the support and care for victims and survivors of abuse within the church, especially when no statutory agencies are providing help.*
>
> *Explore the synergy between projects and training that promote churches as safe places, and safeguarding, with a view to mutual support.*

2.13 INFORMATION SHARING

The DSA reported that, with one case exception, information sharing with statutory agencies has been straightforward. In the case where information was not shared with the DSA, it was shared with the archdeacon.

The DSA has appointments to meet with all of the six Local Safeguarding Children Boards in Berkshire and is keen to build links with all nine boards in the Diocese.

The auditors saw case examples of liaison with other dioceses and attendance at a core group run by a neighbouring diocese.

Information sharing between senior clergy and the DSA is very good. There may be more of an issue regarding information sharing by parishes, and this will become more apparent as training reaches greater numbers of volunteers.

2.14 LINKS WITH NATIONAL SAFEGUARDING TEAM

The DSA finds the NST to be accessible and supportive. He has worked with the Provincial DSA on a handful of cases, and has attended core groups relating to cases held by the National DSA.

The DSA also found a national training day for DSAs in March to be helpful, not least because he was able to meet many of his peers.

2.15 ANYTHING ELSE?

The SCR (see 2.5) notes that the Position of Trust legislation (Sexual Offences Act 2003) does not cover the clergy or those employed to work with young people outside statutory agencies. This does seem to be a significant oversight affecting the church nationally. The impact is that a member of the clergy may have breached their Code of Conduct (and be subject to CDM) or a youth worker may have breached their contract (and be subject to HR procedures) but they will not have committed an offence under the 2013 Act.

3 Conclusion

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

The comments below are based on the feedback given verbally to the Diocese on day three of the audit.

What's working well?

In terms of safeguarding, the Diocese has a strong group of bishops with a range of perspectives and experiences. The delegated lead sits well with a bishop in such a large diocese.

There is a foundation of many years of very skilled DSA input, but the Diocese recognised the need to grow the team. Good appointments were made and the new DSA has the time and skills to take a more holistic approach and to get more involved in casework. The new DSA is actively developing his networks across the Diocese.

The line management of safeguarding has been carefully thought through and seems to be an indicator of a well-functioning diocesan office. The Director of HR has embraced her new brief with a lot of enthusiasm and determination to learn what she is now managing.

The Diocese feels like a learning organisation. It opted to take part in the recent SCR and look outwards to other dioceses in order to learn from them. Senior clergy are thinking about some difficult issues such as spiritual abuse, the fine line between strong leadership and bullying, survivor issues, and more. A SWOT analysis by the bishops is a further example.

The role of the archdeacons in monitoring safeguarding in the parishes is undergoing some useful development to extend the proactive engagement of all clergy in relation to safeguarding within the Diocese by reinforcing governance alongside offering additional support and training. Linking of the annual parish safeguarding questionnaire with the Articles of Enquiry process and the thinking about how to ask more useful questions is a promising development. The archdeacons are keen to work with the DSA on this.

The new archdeacon lead is passionate and well informed and highly systematic in his approach.

Training last year prioritised the clergy, which was the right decision, and it seems to have been well received and the percentage of clergy trained has reached a healthy level.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Panel has a dynamic new chair who recognises that the panel needs to find its function. The panel has passionate and committed members, and it is unusual and refreshing to find a member who is a survivor.

Authorised Listeners are actively promoted on the website in an engaging way and were used three times in 2016.

Areas for development

The Diocesan Safeguarding Panel needs to refine what it is trying to do and become more strategic, monitor an annual business plan and consider how it will develop the QA function. This might mean a smaller panel, or sub-panels, and will involve more effort to have active statutory members.

Training is a massive challenge and the Diocese has made a late start. A strategy for training is needed so that the task to be achieved is understood, as well as a plan of how to do it. Communication about training needs to improve so that people understand what the framework is, who needs to do what training and why.

The team has increased in size but may need to grow further. A better reach of training may result in more enquiries and referrals, and there is much to do to support parishes and to bring areas such as risk assessments and safeguarding agreements up to the required standard.

Communication about safeguarding could improve. The website could include photos of key people including the panel chair. The newsletter could be more engaging and greater use could be made of The Door (the diocesan magazine). A safeguarding 'branding' that is recognisable alongside the use of colour and photos would help get the message across.

The message from the previous Bishop in his foreword to the Safeguarding Handbook is unhelpful and could be revised or replaced by a strong message from the Bishop in support of safeguarding.

Engaging with PSOs is a particular challenge due to the size of the Diocese. The PSOs on the focus group were unable to think of what might support them, partly as two of the three felt little need of support. It would be worth exploring with a wider group whether they would value support as it can help the retention of good PSOs, although again there might be resourcing issues.

A casework management system is badly needed. The lack of case recording to date leaves the Diocese vulnerable in terms of people being able to understand the story especially when cases return after a gap.

Core groups are very new and would benefit from a set of local protocols about who attends and the agenda. The review of safeguarding agreements needs a robust tracking system and the DSA should sign them to show the backing of the Diocese. Type A Risk Assessments need to be introduced and Type B where required. Overall, casework needs to be brought up to the level expected nationally.

APPENDIX: REVIEW PROCESS

DATA COLLECTION

Information provided to auditors

- Past cases review report 2009.
- Safeguarding annual report 2015, 2016.
- Positive Disclosure Log 2015, 2016, 2017.
- Section 11 self-audit 2017.
- Safeguarding Panel Terms of Reference may 2017.
- Minutes of the Safeguarding Panel February 2016, October 16, February 2017
- Oxford self-assessment 2015.
- Job description DSA
- Job description Safeguarding Assistant/ Training Officer
- Safeguarding Handbook 2012
- Safeguarding Newsletter spring, summer, autumn 2016.
- Terms of Reference for Independent Chair of Safeguarding Panel
- List of Authorised Listeners June 2016
- Role description Authorised Listeners.
- Paper re operation of Authorised Listeners
- Evaluations of Safeguarding Courses February (x2) and April 2017.
- Safeguarding course information for modules C1, C2, C3/S1, C4, C5 refresher
- Parish Safeguarding training pack
- Papers to the Diocesan Synod March 2017
- The auditors also read the Serious Case Review published by West Berkshire LSCB on 1 February 2017.

Participation of members of the Diocese

The auditors had conversations with the following people:

- the Bishop of Oxford
- the Bishop of Reading
- the Bishop of Dorchester
- the Archdeacon of Buckingham
- the Independent Chair of the Diocesan Safeguarding Group and five members of the group
- the Diocesan Secretary
- the Director of HR
- the DSA
- the Training Officer/ Assistant DSA.

In addition, the auditors had a telephone conversation with the Bishop of Buckingham.

A Parish Focus Group included:

- three Parish Safeguarding Officers
- one incumbent.

The audit: what records / files were examined?

The auditors reviewed 20 records of casework; six involved a member of the clergy (current or retired) and three involved lay officers, four were about a vulnerable adult, and three were about historic sexual abuse.

The auditors reviewed seven Blue Files and three HR files to check for Safer Recruitment.

The auditors also checked two Blue Files of clergy involved in a safeguarding allegation for evidence of safeguarding on the Blue File.