

ROLE TITLE:	Independent Chair of the Diocesan Safeguarding Panel
REMUNERATION:	£500 per day (anticipated maximum of 10-15 days)
RESPONSIBLE TO:	Bishop of Oxford
KEY RELATIONSHIPS:	Diocesan Safeguarding Officer (DSO), the Bishop of Oxford, the Lead Safeguarding Bishop, and the Diocesan Secretary
LOCATION:	Combination of remote working and some site visits to Church House Oxford, Langford Locks, Kidlington, Oxford, OX5 1GF
ROLE TERM:	Three-year fixed term with potential for renewal

.....

The Diocese of Oxford is the Church of England in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, and Oxfordshire. We are a living, growing network of more than a thousand congregations, chaplaincies, and schools, working for the common good in every place in one of the great crossroads of the world. More than 2.4 million people live in the diocese, and this number is set to rise by up to half a million over the next decade.

Our Church House and Area Office teams work to support the mission and ministry of our parishes, providing expert advice and support. Together, we are called to become more Christ-like: contemplative, compassionate, and courageous for the sake of God's world. You can find out more about how the diocese is structured and the work of our staff teams at oxford.anglican.org/on-the-money and oxford.anglican.org/annual-review.

Background

Our Christian vision, ethos, and principles underpin all that we do and the work of every member of staff.

As we have worked together towards our Common Vision to become a more Christ-like Church for the sake of God's world, our commitment to a positive safeguarding culture so that all worshipping communities and church-based activities within the Diocese are safe spaces has remained one of the key priorities. Whether explicit or implicit, our Christian values guide decision-making, and we have committed to safeguarding being everyone's responsibility.

Safeguarding in the Diocese of Oxford

The Diocesan Safeguarding Team supports parishes and senior clergy to safeguard children and adults who may be at risk of abuse and neglect, and those in abusive relationships. We are committed to the development of safeguarding practice across the Diocese to ensure that the service is operating effectively and in line with recognised best practice.

The team (comprising a Diocesan Safeguarding Officer, four Area Safeguarding Advisers, a Training and Policy Adviser, and two Administrators) is committed to ensuring that the Diocese is a welcoming place for all where safeguarding is at the heart of all activities. We do this by partnering with clergy and volunteer Parish Safeguarding Officers, providing learning and development, and influencing policy development and good practice locally, regionally, and nationally.

More information can be found on the Diocese of Oxford website: [Safeguarding - Diocese of Oxford](#). This includes the outcome of the independent audit undertaken in June 2024: [INEQE Safeguarding Group Independent Audit - Diocese of Oxford](#).

ROLE PURPOSE

- To ensure that the Diocesan Safeguarding Panel (DSP) has an independent voice and separate identity, and that it is able to fulfil its core role of providing objective and independent scrutiny.
- To promote the Diocese of Oxford's ability to deliver good safeguarding practice and provide safe environments for children and vulnerable adults throughout the Diocese.

PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES

1.	Provide overall direction and coordination to ensure effective functioning of the Panel.	75%
2.	Ensure strategic direction, quality assurance, and that the needs and voices of stakeholders are represented.	20%
3.	To undertake wider agreed tasks that support the work of the Diocesan Safeguarding Panel (DSP) and also maintain their own professional development.	5%

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Provide overall direction and coordination to ensure effective functioning of the Panel.

- To ensure that the Panel works constructively and effectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults in the Diocese of Oxford, in line with the terms of reference.
- To provide effective leadership to the Diocesan Safeguarding Panel (DSP) meetings by agreeing the agenda in liaison with the Director of People, the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer (DSO), the Diocesan Secretary, and the Diocesan Lead Safeguarding Bishop.
- Agree minutes, chair DSP meetings, and monitor the follow-up actions. These meetings take place three times a year.
- To chair, where appropriate, any additional panel meetings convened as a response to specific circumstances.
- To respond to correspondence sent to the Chair (with support, where appropriate, from the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer).
- To attend national or regional meetings of Diocesan Safeguarding Panel Chairs, if required. To present learning from the Diocese of Oxford at such meetings, if asked.

- To contribute to the continuous development of an effective Safeguarding Panel and its sub-committees, ensuring there is sufficient capacity and diversity of skill set and experience of members, to be involved in recruitment and succession planning, including representation from statutory services, adult and children's safeguarding bodies, victim and survivors' organisations/forums, and organisations providing independent safeguarding expertise.
- To respect the confidentiality of sensitive information provided by the constituent agencies of the DSP, ensuring that such confidential and sensitive information is preserved at all times.
- To provide ongoing guidance and support to the Diocesan Safeguarding Team, with specific reference to their wellbeing and resourcing levels

2. Ensure strategic direction, quality assurance, and that the needs and voices of stakeholders are represented.

- To work with the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer and the Bishop's senior staff to ensure the group has a strategic overview of safeguarding practice across the diocese in line with the House of Bishops' policy and practice guidance, together with appropriate quality assurance and risk management processes.
- To ensure that the Panel's advisory and scrutiny functions are carried out effectively.
- To meet with the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer and the Lead Bishop for Safeguarding on at least a quarterly basis to review the Diocese's handling of safeguarding cases and the work of the Diocesan Area Safeguarding Advisers on these. Review safeguarding progress in general to ensure sustainable working relationships are maintained
- To build relationships and networks at a strategic level with statutory and other external partners, ensuring that they are kept abreast of diocesan safeguarding initiatives, and to share good practices and initiatives from external organisations with diocesan forums
- To advise, where necessary, the Diocesan Bishop on specific concerns/issues. Where appropriate, to raise and report any concerns/issues as part of whistleblowing arrangements.
- To ensure that key issues and national developments are brought to the attention of and considered by DSP and any sub-committees that are formed.
- To ensure, with others, that the voices of children, young people, and vulnerable adults are well represented in the work of DSP.
- To ensure the group considers the needs of victims/survivors and those affected by abuse, together with relevant advice.
- To ensure that the voices and needs of victims/survivors and those affected by abuse are sought, heard, considered, and acted upon.
- To ensure that the recommendations and actions arising from independent safeguarding audits are implemented in full and to ensure that adequate safeguarding resources are in place.
- To produce, with other members of DSP and the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer, an annual report on safeguarding in the Diocese of Oxford, which will be submitted to the Bishop of Oxford and presented at Diocesan Synod.

- To manage complaints about safeguarding procedures and lead on formal complaints against Diocesan Safeguarding staff.

3. To undertake wider agreed tasks that support the work of the Diocesan Safeguarding Panel and also maintain their own professional development.

- To carry out any other related duties commensurate with the role and level of responsibility of this post, for which the post holder has the necessary experience and/or training, as agreed by the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer and the Lead Safeguarding Bishop.
- Take a proactive approach to continuous professional and personal development by embracing training and other development opportunities.
- Comply and fully cooperate with ODBF policies, including:
 - Health and safety
 - Dignity and respect in ministry and at work
 - Equality, diversity, and inclusion
 - GDPR
 - Safeguarding

DIMENSIONS

The Diocesan Safeguarding Panel is directly accountable to Bishop's Council, which acts as the Board of Directors of Oxford Diocesan Board of Finance and the standing committee of the Diocesan Synod.

The Independent Chair of the Diocesan Safeguarding Panel plays a key leadership role within the Diocese of Oxford, overseeing a multi-agency panel that contributes to the strategic management and continuous improvement of safeguarding practice across the diocese. The role has no direct budgetary responsibility but has significant influence over safeguarding priorities and resourcing through strategic advice and oversight. The Chair works closely with the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer, senior diocesan staff, and the Lead Safeguarding Bishop, helping to shape safeguarding culture and ensuring accountability. The impact of the role is wide-ranging, supporting the safety and welfare of children and vulnerable adults, influencing diocesan safeguarding standards, and contributing to national learning. The DSP, which meets at least quarterly, includes members with specialist knowledge from statutory, voluntary, and church-based backgrounds, and the Chair ensures it functions effectively and inclusively.

PLANNING & ORGANISATION

The Independent Chair of the Diocesan Safeguarding Panel is responsible for the effective planning and organisation of all DSP activity, ensuring that meetings are scheduled, agendas are appropriately set, and actions are tracked and followed up in a timely manner. This includes preparing for and chairing meetings, coordinating any additional meetings in response to specific safeguarding concerns, and ensuring that national developments and key issues are brought to the Panel's attention. The role involves contributing to strategic planning by working with senior diocesan staff to maintain oversight of safeguarding performance and risk management. The Chair also plays a central role in the annual reporting cycle, supporting the preparation of the safeguarding report to the Diocesan Synod. The postholder must be proactive and well-organised, balancing long-term strategic planning with the need to respond quickly and effectively to urgent issues or developments.

DECISIONS

The Independent Chair of the Diocesan Safeguarding Panel is responsible for making and facilitating a range of decisions that directly impact the effectiveness and strategic direction of safeguarding within the Diocese. This includes collaboratively setting meeting agendas, prioritising issues for discussion, and guiding Panel decisions. The Chair also exercises judgment in deciding when additional Panel meetings are required, what information should be escalated to the Diocesan Bishop, and how to respond to correspondence or issues raised under whistleblowing arrangements. The role requires balancing diverse perspectives, maintaining confidentiality, and ensuring decisions reflect best practice, national guidance, and the interests of children, vulnerable adults, and survivors.

CONTACT WITH OTHERS

Internal:

- Diocesan Safeguarding Officer: Regular collaboration on agenda planning and strategic development.
- Diocesan Bishop and Lead Bishop for Safeguarding: Engagement on high-level safeguarding matters, case reviews, and policy guidance.
- Safeguarding Panel Members: Coordination of meetings, decision-making, and follow-up actions.
- Senior Diocesan Staff (e.g., Diocesan Secretary, Archdeacons): Joint work on organisational safeguarding priorities and governance.
- Victim/Survivor Representatives or Advocates: Inclusion of survivor voices in Panel discussions and planning.
- Diocesan Synod: Presentation of the annual safeguarding report and related communications.

External

- Statutory Safeguarding Partners (e.g., police, local authorities, health services): Indirect contact via Panel members; occasional direct engagement on specific issues.
- Regional and National Safeguarding Networks: Participation in meetings of Diocesan Safeguarding Panel Chairs and sharing of diocesan learning.
- Church of England National Safeguarding Structures: Engagement as needed regarding policy updates, national developments, or shared learning.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS - KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications	Academic and/or professional qualification in social or healthcare, education, or legal discipline, probation, or equivalent experience in a related field (i.e., policing, public protection).	Additional professional qualification working across the following areas: - Child protection - Vulnerable adults

Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recent and extensive professional safeguarding knowledge and expertise in a relevant statutory, voluntary, or legal/judicial setting. Sufficient senior experience working within the public or voluntary sector. Experience of chairing complex, cross-sector professional meetings. Experience of operational context of safeguarding in statutory and/or voluntary sector. Demonstrable commitment to the welfare of children and vulnerable adults through previous or current professional or voluntary activities. 	<p>Demonstrable experience of working across the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Child protection - Vulnerable adults - Public protection
Knowledge	<p>Demonstrable knowledge and understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current safeguarding best practice in relevant sectors, including faith and voluntary sectors. Legislation and statutory and other guidance. Research and other developments that inform and promote good safeguarding practice. 	
Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective negotiation and conflict resolution between agencies and individuals. Strong organisational awareness to support the effective operation of the DSP, promoting its role and function within diocesan governance. Strong analytical approach to problem solving. Ability to attend to detail. Solution-focused approach to resolving complex situations or practice issues. Effective and clear communicator, with excellent written and verbal skills. Skilled listener and facilitator - able to manage and work with complex information across a range of topics. Responsive and sensitive to those who need to share or disclose confidential and sensitive information, such as survivors/ victims of abuse. 	Effective presentation skills.
Behaviours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mature and professional approach to all aspects of the role. Ability to work independently and on own initiative while contributing constructively to a wider team. Credible and respected profile, able to develop and maintain strong relationships with a variety of roles in various settings. Warm, open, and approachable working style. To be respectful and accepting of the Christian objectives and ethos of the Diocese of Oxford. To act in such a way that, at all times, safeguards the health and well-being of children and vulnerable adults. 	

Personal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level of personal integrity and discretion. • Able to handle and manage confidential and sensitive information. • To be willing and able to undertake travel as required. • To understand and be committed to the Diocese of Oxford's policies on equality and diversity and treat everyone with dignity and respect. 	

GENERAL INFORMATION

Objective	To provide consultancy services in the role of Chair of the Diocesan Safeguarding Panel for the Diocese of Oxford.
Fees and Payment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day Rate: An all-inclusive rate of £500 per day and £250 per half day has been agreed between the parties. This includes all preparation, attendance at meetings, and follow-up as needed for the work agreed in advance and completed within agreed times (unless otherwise agreed by both parties). • Travel time is not separately reimbursed. • It is anticipated that a maximum of 10 -15 days per annum will be required to fulfil the Diocesan requirements. • Should it be necessary to work for more than 15 days, prior authorisation must be obtained from the Director of People. • VAT is not applicable as the Contractor is not VAT registered • Invoice period: as submitted by the Contractor • Invoice addressed to Oxford Diocesan Board of Finance, Director of People, Church House, Langford Locks, Kidlington, OX5 1GF • Invoice approval process: To be signed off by whom the Contractor reports to, and the budget holder, if this is a separate person. • Invoice contents: to include a breakdown of work completed • Payment terms: 30 days • Method of Payment: BACS to the nominated Contractor's Bank Account within 30 days on submission of invoices by the Contractor to the Company
Expenses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day-to-day expenses are incorporated into the agreed fee. • Travel expenses are in addition to the agreed fee and are to be agreed in advance with Charnelle Stylianides, Director of People, and are to be expensed in line with the Company's expenses mileage allowances guidance, namely:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Train fares must be second-class fares and claimed by reference to the actual fares. ○ Mileage expenses will be paid within the Diocesan borders for travel required to different sites across the Diocese at a rate of 45p per mile. ○ Travelling time will not be separately reimbursed.
Term	This is initially an appointment for three years with the prospect of renewal by negotiation.
Place of work	<p>This role consists of a combination of remote working and some site visits to Church House Oxford, Langford Locks, Kidlington, Oxford, OX5 1GF.</p> <p>The Contractor will carry out work from their own business address and attend meetings at specific locations, as agreed with the organisation.</p> <p>In addition, consultation via email and telephone or otherwise will be required, as needed throughout the assignment.</p>
Resources and facilities	The Contractor will provide their own computer equipment, office space, and stationery. ODBF may provide hot-desking to the Contractor, if needed, in line with the requirements of the consultancy services provided.
Notice of termination	<p>This agreement shall automatically terminate upon the three-year expiry date.</p> <p>Either party shall be entitled to terminate this agreement at any time by giving not less than 1 [one] month's written notice to the other party.</p>

Review Date:

Signed:

Dated: