

DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING ADVISER REPORT

OXFORD DIOCESAN SYNOD

Introduction

1. This report covers safeguarding activity in parishes in the Diocese, supported by staff at Church House, for the calendar year 2019 and work planned for 2020. It does not deal with safeguarding activity in church schools.

External environment and impact on safeguarding work in the Diocese

2. Recent additions to National Safeguarding Policy and Practice Guidance, which have been added to the diocesan website, include the 'Code of Safer Working Practice (2019)' and 'Safer Environment and Activities (2019)'. A model parish safeguarding checklist and Safeguarding Action Plan Template has been made available to assist parishes in reviewing actions arising from their annual safeguarding reports.

3. The Diocese submitted an annual safeguarding self-assessment to the National Safeguarding Team in September 2019. This highlighted the continuing demand on local workloads (reported later in this report) but also identified key strengths, including: clear governance arrangements; a proactive Independent Chair of the Diocesan Safeguarding Panel; improved communication between the Diocesan Safeguarding Team and Parish Safeguarding Officers.

4. The above findings were echoed in feedback from a 'SWOT analysis' completed at 6 area Parish Safeguarding Officer meetings during 2019. These flagged the following strengths: good access to on-line and in-house training; increased peer support and enhanced working in partnership between parishes and the diocese; availability of a new Parish Safeguarding Handbook; clarity of guidance and improved response times. Areas for further work included: a need for a revised induction pack for new Parish Safeguarding Officers; more local meetings and development of a 'safeguarding blog' to improve sharing of general advice and experience, as well as examples of best practice.

Safeguarding Training

5. Face-to-face safeguarding training was delivered to 2881 participants within the Diocese of Oxford in 2019. 3510 participants completed eLearning safeguarding training through the Church of England Safeguarding Training Portal. Volunteer Safeguarding Trainers have continued to support the Safeguarding Team in the delivery of training. Considerable progress was made in ensuring that almost all Clergy and Licence Holders have up-to-date training.

Training Modules / Courses	Total Training Sessions Delivered	Total 2019 Participant Completion
C0 (eLearning) Basic Awareness		2471
C1 (eLearning) Foundation		1039
C1 Foundation	74	1397
C1 + C2 Foundation + Leadership	2	25
C2 + S1 Leadership plus Safer Recruitment	49	C2 + S1 – 426 C2 – 570 S1 - 27
C3 Clergy & Lay Minister	16	321
C3 + S1 Clergy & Lay Minister plus Safer Recruitment	5	115
Diocesan Training Total	146	6391

**Training modules have been completed by participants through attending a face-to-face training session, unless otherwise stated.*

Clergy & Licence Holders with up to date training – 2019 (C3 and C3 + S1)	
Licensed diocesan clergy:	586
Licensed diocesan clergy with up to date safeguarding training:	564
Clergy with Permission to Officiate:	515
Clergy with Permission to Officiate with up to date safeguarding training:	501
Lay officers who hold the bishop's licence:	279
Lay officers who hold the bishop's licence with up to date safeguarding training:	224
Clergy granted exemption(s) or reduction(s) from training 'For reasons of disability or infirmity.'	3

6. The 5-year Diocesan Training & Development Strategy, agreed in 2018, will take note of revisions to the 'National Safeguarding Training and Development Practice Guidance' in 2019. The latter has led to the re-naming and updating of content in the Core Training Modules (Basic Awareness, Foundation and Leadership). Information was requested from parishes in 2019 to estimate the demand for safeguarding training across the Diocese in 2020. 230 parishes responded. A programme for training delivery between January - December 2020 is in place and currently being rolled-out. Training venues for the 88 core modules being delivered in 2020 are evenly split between CHO and non-CHO premises. Approximately 425 Clergy will be required to complete 'Leadership' safeguarding training in 2020 and 1155 Clergy will also be required to complete 'Raising Awareness of Domestic Violence & Abuse'. A revised 'Safer Recruitment' module is in development nationally and will be available later in 2020. It will include an on-line option which is expected to reduce the number of face-to-face courses needed going forward.

Parish Dashboard Data

7. There has been an increased response from parishes in relation to information requests in 2019. However, work remains to be done to improve reporting. The diocese is currently inviting 29 Parish Safeguarding Officers – one from each Deanery – to take part in a free-trial of a web-based Safeguarding Dashboard that is already in use in 17 other dioceses. This provides a clear snapshot of safeguarding compliance and, if adopted, will enable the diocesan safeguarding team to target help and support to parishes more effectively. The Dashboard includes regularly updated copies of policies, guidance and templates which will assist Parish Safeguarding Officers to make best use of their precious time and resources.

Parish Monitoring	2018	2019
Number of Safeguarding Policy's received / reviewed by DSA	197	243
PSO Office Holder Declaration Form submitted to Diocesan Safeguarding Team	404	456
APCS preferred DBS provider?	475	613 (includes 60 Benefices = 243 accounts) (21 parishes use other providers. 2 have no account)

Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) checks	2018	2019
Total no. DBS checks processed (Parish & Diocese)	2331	2476
Total no. blemished DBS checks	13	19
Total no. in which further safeguarding action was required	3	19

Casework

8. Casework demands have continued to rise locally, akin to the experiences of other dioceses, denominations and faith-based communities. In 2019 the number of enquiries about safeguarding related matters and requests for advice increased. The overall number of reported concerns (including cases) reduced slightly.

Safeguarding Enquiries / Referrals	2018	2019
Enquiries (DBS/Training/Information)	2,080	2,235
Referrals (All Safeguarding Concerns)	309	306

9. Cases involving ‘vulnerable adults’ continued to increase whilst a small reduction occurred in cases relating to children. Timely access to authorised listeners for survivors and other sources of support has improved but the need for specialist advice and services is likely to increase and needs to be planned / budgeted for in order to respond appropriately in specific cases (particularly those involving sexual abuse). The provision of pastoral support for complainants and ‘link-workers’ for respondents and their families is regularly reviewed within the context of Core Groups, which now take place on a more frequent basis than has hitherto been the case. The Charity Commission was informed of 1 serious safeguarding incident in 2019. Independent Reviews in relation to 2 historical cases are due to report in early 2020. The Diocese will consider any ‘lessons to be learned’ and seek to engage parishes in developing a response to the key themes that emerge.

Cases - risks to children from others	2018	2019
Total number	39	34
Number relating to postholders / employees / official volunteers	18	4
Number referred to statutory authorities by the Church	7	7
Number referred to DBS barring service	2	1
Cases - risks to adults from others	2018	2019
Total number	91	139
Number of concerns relating to postholders / employees / volunteers	30	37
Number referred to statutory authorities by the Church	11	27
Number referred to DBS barring service	1	1

10. The Safeguarding Team has continued to work closely with Parishes and statutory agencies to manage the risks posed by known offenders. The number of annual reviews of agreements has increased.

Safeguarding Agreements	2018	2019
Total number	24	26
New agreements during year	2	2
Number of agreements reviewed at any stage during year	2	15

Past Cases Review 2

11. The Diocese of Oxford will be keeping resourcing for the Safeguarding Team under review whilst participating in the Church of England’s Past Cases Review 2 (PCR2) during 2020. The Bishop of Oxford approved the setting up of a PCR2 Reference Group in December 2019 to develop a timetable for undertaking the review and manage any issues emerging from it. Phase 1 of the review commenced in January 2020, with the Bishop of Dorchester writing to the Incumbents of all 622 parishes in the Diocese setting out how they need to engage with the review and providing a deadline for submitting a ‘parish past-cases review record’ to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser by 02nd March 2020. Subsequent phases of the review will require an updated ‘Known Cases List’ to be compiled by the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser for discussion with the Independent Reviewers, who have been appointed, prior to them

embarking upon a file review of all clergy blue files and diocesan based files relating to other Church Officers who fall within the scoping criteria of PCR2. Given the number of files involved it is agreed that this exercise will need to be undertaken sequentially in Dorchester; Buckinghamshire; Berkshire; and Oxford prior to the review deadline of 31st December 2020.

12. A record will be made of every file that is reviewed and an insert, signed by the Independent Reviewer, will be placed in each one indicating they are satisfied with the action taken in relation to any safeguarding concern. The Independent Chair of the PCR2 Reference Group will be kept informed of any cases that require further action and Independent Reviewer's will certify once this has been undertaken to their satisfaction. To close the PCR2 the Independent Reviewer will submit a written report, including an anonymised copy of the Known Cases List (KCL), and any recommendations the Independent Reviewer considers it appropriate to make. The Independent Chair of the Diocesan Safeguarding Panel will then endorse the report and submit it to the Bishop of Oxford. The Bishop of Oxford will forward the report, with a letter confirming the specific objectives for PCR2 have been fully met, to the National PCR2 Project Management Board. An overview report will then be prepared by the PCR2 Project Management Board for the National Safeguarding Steering Group and IICSA.

Survivor Voice on Diocesan Safeguarding Panel

13. In January 2020 Peter Hay, Independent Chair and senior members of the Diocese recorded their gratitude to Josephine Stein, who stepped down from the Safeguarding Panel after many years of helpful encouragement and constructive challenge. Josie will be greatly missed. If anyone is interested, or knows of someone who may be interested, in ensuring that a survivor voice continues to be represented on the Diocesan Safeguarding Panel please contact the Independent Chair.

Stuart Nimmo

18.02.20