

**Diocese of Leicester**

**Diocesan Safeguarding Oversight Group (DSOG)**

**Terms of Reference**

**1. Purpose**

- To provide independent advice, expertise and challenge on safeguarding policies, procedures and practices to the diocesan bishop and other senior clergy and officials.
- To ensure the diocese has safeguarding policies, working practices and training arrangements in place which are consistent with statutory requirements and the House of Bishops' policy and practice guidance.

**2. Specific Responsibilities**

- Advise and make recommendations to the diocesan bishop and senior leadership team on the development and effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements.
- Have regard to the rigor of the Church's arrangements to respond to allegations against church officers, including liaison with statutory agencies, the assessment and management of risk and support for victims/survivors of abuse.
- Seek to ensure the views of victims and survivors of abuse by church officers inform the development of safeguarding arrangements in the diocese.
- Seek to ensure the views of children and young people about how to keep them safe whilst engaged in church related activities and make the diocese a safer place inform the development of safeguarding arrangements in the diocese.
- Seek to ensure that effective arrangements, including information sharing, are in place with statutory partners.
- Monitor requirements relating to safer recruitment policies and procedures, including DBS disclosures, and training, and advise on any improvements required.
- Advise on arrangements to support and monitor the implementation of good safeguarding practice in parishes, in accordance with national and diocesan policy and practice guidance.
- Consider learning and themes from quality assurance processes e.g. diocesan self-assessments, lessons learnt reviews (local and national), independent audits and file audits, to make recommendations to improve safeguarding arrangements.

- Receive anonymised management information relating to case work, including risk assessments and safeguarding agreements, to maintain oversight of safeguarding work.
- To monitor implementation of safeguarding training strategy, ensuring this meets national Church requirements.
- Seek to ensure safeguarding arrangements are in place between the diocese and the Cathedral, Theological Training Institutions, retreat houses and any religious communities.
- To advise the bishop on any circumstances where the diocese proposes to depart from the House of Bishops' safeguarding guidance, (both policy and practice guidance).
- To advise the National Safeguarding Team if DSOG considers that a safeguarding matter is not being dealt with correctly in the diocese or other church body.
- To advise the bishop of the adequacy of resourcing for the diocesan safeguarding team to ensure that the team can function effectively and fulfil its responsibilities.
- To contribute to the development of the diocesan safeguarding strategy and its annual review.
- To draw up an annual work programme for DSOG, based on the safeguarding strategy and review progress annually.
- Report annually to the bishop and the identified diocesan body/ies, e.g, Bishop's Council, on developments, key themes, areas of strength and areas for development.

### **3. Meetings**

DSOG meets four times a year.

### **4. Membership**

DSOG should aim for a balanced membership, with representation from the diocese's senior leadership team, other church officers, other Church bodies (Cathedral), the parishes and the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor, and from statutory and voluntary and community sector (VCS) partners.

External members should have extensive, recent, safeguarding expertise and experience. There should be at least three external representatives from statutory agencies, including the Local Authority, Police, Probation, NHS, Education, or from a relevant voluntary and community sector organisation.

Representation should be sought to ensure the views of victims and survivors are integral to the work of DSOG (Responding well). Similarly, mechanisms should be established to

ensure that children and young are engaged in the work of DSOG to support the aim of making the diocese a safer place. (Diocesan Youth Officer/Bishop's Council)

The appointment of panel members is the responsibility of the diocesan bishop, in consultation with DSOG Chair and the DSA.

All appointments to DSOG should follow the House of Bishops' safer recruitment practice guidance. Initial appointments should be for a term of 3 years, with an additional term of appointment for a further 3 years, following a review of commitment and contribution.

All members should have an induction which includes purpose and function of the group, their role and responsibilities and an introduction to safeguarding in the diocese and the Church of England, as required.

## **5. Governance arrangements: DSOG Sub-Groups:**

DSOG has three sub-groups (See Terms of Reference).

- **Executive Sub-Group:**

- Chaired by Archdeacon (Bishop's Safeguarding Lead).
- Membership: Director of Operations and Governance, Bishop's Chaplain, DSA.
- Meets quarterly, prior to DSOG meetings.

- **Quality & Improvement Sub-Group:**

- Chaired by external member of DSOG.
- Membership: Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor (DSA), Representative of statutory agency (police), Director of Operations and Governance, Archdeacon.
- Meets three times a year.

- **Training Sub-Group:**

- Chaired by Diocesan Director of Operations and Governance.
- Membership: Diocesan Training Officer, DSA, Cathedral Safeguarding Co-ordinator.
- Meets twice a year.

The work of the sub-groups is informed by the Diocesan Safeguarding Strategy and action plans. The groups report to quarterly DSOG meetings, identifying any key issues, challenges and themes.

**Agreed by DSOG 15 March 2023**

**Amended: 10 August 2023.**

**Review: March 2024**