



Diocese of Leicester
Diocesan Safeguarding Oversight Group
Annual Report to Bishop's Council 2023

Presented to the Bishop's Council: 29 January 2024

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1. Purpose and Summary

This annual report covers the activity of the Diocesan Safeguarding Oversight Group, its sub-groups, and the Safeguarding Team in the 2023 calendar year. Its purpose is to provide an opportunity for Bishop's Council to understand better the safeguarding work that is undertaken, to be assured that the Independent Chair and external members of DSOG are satisfied that safeguarding provision in the Diocese is adequate, to have the opportunity to raise any concerns and to prompt the Council to discuss matters raised in the report and consider any necessary action. The report is also intended for publication on the diocesan website.

The report covers the context in which safeguarding takes place at national, diocesan and local level. In 2023 this context has been heavily overshadowed by the Archbishops' Council's decision to disband the Independent Safeguarding Board. The report covers major developments in safeguarding, which have this year included the publication of the National Safeguarding Standards as well as the new Audit Framework. It also provides information about the work of DSOG and its sub-groups during the year, the Independent Chair's perspective, the work of the Safeguarding Team, engagement with victims and survivors, safeguarding in Leicester Cathedral, training, safeguarding in church settings and the impact of the Parish Dashboards.

2. Independent Chair's Introduction

I would like to start by thanking Diocesan and Cathedral staff for being so welcoming and helpful since I took on the role of Independent Chair early in 2023. This has been an extremely challenging year for safeguarding in the Church of England, notably with regard to the disbandment of the Independent Safeguarding Board (ISB), which has undoubtedly undermined public and survivors' confidence in the Church's commitment to responding well to the victims and survivors of church related abuse. The Archbishop of York stated there is a '*crisis of safeguarding*' and this is '*a watershed moment*'. It should be recognised that this has impacted on the morale of officers and volunteers engaged in safeguarding at a diocesan level who are striving to offer a high-quality service, as in the Diocese of Leicester.

Not only do we need independent oversight and scrutiny of safeguarding, we need independent help in deciding how best to do it. I can't tell you how sorry I am that it has taken this long for us to see it with clarity.

Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York, July 2023.

Professor Alexis Jay has been appointed to lead the Future Safeguarding Programme to *'develop proposals for a fully independent structure to provide scrutiny of safeguarding in the Church of England.'* She and her team have been consulting with a wide range of stakeholders and plan to submit their recommendations by the end of January 2024.

Despite the national picture, there is a clear commitment to safeguarding in the Diocese of Leicester and a highly competent Safeguarding Team. This was evidenced in the Past Cases Review 2 report and feedback from staff across the Diocese has been consistently positive regarding the accessibility and quality of safeguarding advice and support provided by the team.

2.1. National Context

The National Safeguarding Team (NST) is leading on major developments. The Independent Chairs have raised concerns with the National Director, Alex Kubeyinje, regarding the capacity of the diocesan safeguarding teams to respond, given their limited resources and the financial constraints faced by many Dioceses. The need for greater prioritisation has been stressed and it is understood this work is currently underway.

Key national development include:

- **National Safeguarding Standards and Quality Assurance Framework,** Benchmarking to understand the quality and the impact of safeguarding activity at a local and national level.
- **Independent Safeguarding Audits:** Auditors (INEQE) have been appointed to commence audits from 2024. Dioceses and Cathedrals will be audited together. Leicester is unlikely to be audited until 2026.
- **Redress Scheme:** To provide financial compensation, therapeutic intervention and other forms of redress for survivors of church related abuse to help them 'rebuild their lives'. £150m funding was announced in June 2023.
- **Template for assessment of diocesan safeguarding resources:** Currently being piloted.

Nationally this is a time of turmoil and change, but it is crucial that at a diocesan level the commitment to, and quality of, safeguarding practice is maintained.

2.2. DSOG

Over recent months the membership of DSOG has been strengthened and now includes external members representing Probation, an organisation working with victims and survivors, Police, a representative for adults & childrens' social care for the Local Authorities and a representative of Parish Safeguarding Co-Ordinators. The role of DSOG and its three Sub-Groups, Executive, Training and Quality and Improvement, have been reviewed with the aim of clarifying the lines of accountability.

DSOG has a 2023/2024 Business Plan, based on the recommendations of the national and local Past Cases Review 2 (PCR2) reports and the findings of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA). The Business Plan informs the workplans of the three Sub-Groups.

From the large number of recommendations, it has been crucial to agree the key priorities for the Diocese of Leicester and these have been identified as follows:

- Developing a care strategy with, and for, the victims and survivors of church abuse.
- Ensuring the quality of risk assessments and church safeguarding agreements.
- Seeking the views of children and young people about how to keep them safe in church settings, listening and responding to these.
- Establishing a protocol to support compliance with training requirements.
- Implementation of the national electronic case system.

As highlighted in the last report to the Bishop's Council, there is a need to review the capacity of the Safeguarding Team. The roll out of the NST's template for assessing safeguarding resources is anticipated which hopefully will assist in this task. Alongside this, there is also a need for greater clarification, both nationally and locally, about what constitutes a safeguarding matter or, for example, is a HR matter, as recommended in the national PCR2 report.

DSOG has taken time to discuss Learning Lesson Reviews, e.g. Reverend Michael Hall, Diocese of Oxford, and identified learning for the Diocese. In order to keep the wider Diocese informed about the work of DSOG, a 'bulletin' will now be circulated after each quarterly meeting, outlining the key areas of focus and discussion. These will be available on Diomail.

Adrienne Plunkett
Independent Chair DSOG

3. Reports from Sub-groups

3.1. Executive Sub-Group

The Executive Sub-Group is a group comprising key officers which meets quarterly to discuss current business and strategy. The Group is chaired by the Archdeacon of Loughborough, who is the Bishop's safeguarding lead, and its members include the DSA, Bishop's Chaplain, Director of Operations and Governance and the Safeguarding Administrator. Minutes are provided to DSOG along with a summary of important matters discussed.

The Executive Sub-Group has reviewed its Terms of Reference and developed a workplan based on relevant actions from the Safeguarding Strategy Business Plan, which is reviewed at each meeting. The Sub-Group has also engaged with national developments such as the National Safeguarding Standards and Practice Guidance consultations, as well as maintaining a watching brief in respect of high-profile matters such as the disbanding of the Independent Safeguarding Board and the subsequent Future of Safeguarding project. This year the Sub-Group members took time to watch

the BBC docudrama 'The Sixth Commandment' and then to discuss issues raised by this series, identifying potential learning points for the Diocese.

3.2. Quality and Improvement Sub-Group

Having started the year as the Quality Assurance and Review Group, this sub-group of DSOG has gone through a number of changes during the course of 2023, including a change of name. Dan Cumpsty, Detective Sergeant, MOSOVO, Leicestershire Police, agreed to take on the role of Chair of the QISG after Adrienne Plunkett questioned whether the DSOG Independent Chair can appropriately chair a sub-group of DSOG while also chairing DSOG, where the sub-groups report. Adrienne Plunkett continues as a member of the sub-group while Ruth Lake, Director, Adult Social Care and Safeguarding for Leicester City Council, has joined as an additional external member. The engagement of representatives from external agencies provides independent scrutiny and challenge.

The Terms of Reference have been reviewed and a workplan developed which aligns with DSOG's business plan. The change of name reflects the wish to identify areas for improvement.

The Sub-Group is in the process of developing a programme of internal audits of safeguarding work. This year, as in previous years, QISG has reviewed a sample of safeguarding agreements and risk assessments, but for the first time using an audit tool to interrogate these. The findings were positive: good multi-agency working, particularly with the police, thorough risk assessments and church safety agreements were robust. This is important in assuring the quality of safeguarding work in the Diocese and work continues on identifying other areas for audit.

At its recent meeting in November QISG gave consideration to the recently published National Safeguarding Standards and to the National Audit Framework under which the Diocese's safeguarding provision will be audited by INEQE in 2026. An additional DSOG meeting is planned in January 2024 to look at the Standards in more detail.

QISG is also in the process of developing an intelligence pack to provide quantitative and qualitative information about safeguarding in the Diocese, on six-monthly and annual basis.

From 2024 QISG will move to meeting three times a year rather than the current two.

3.3. Training Sub-Group

The Training Sub-Group meets three times a year to oversee safeguarding training provision in the Diocese and to support the Safeguarding Training Officer, Louise Warner. The Group is chaired by the Director of Operations and Governance and members include: DSA, Safeguarding Training Officer, Safeguarding Administrator, Cathedral representative, Church setting representative. As with the other sub-groups minutes of meetings are provided to DSOG with key issues being highlighted. Kath Rowberry left the group this year after 5 years of service as Cathedral Representative and we are grateful to her for her significant contribution to this work. Linda Green has been welcomed in her place. We look forward to Charmaine Odum joining the group as Church setting representative in 2024.

This year the Sub-Group has reviewed its Terms of Reference and developed a work plan which picks up on tasks identified in the Safeguarding Strategy as well as other significant pieces of work. Work continues on developing and implementing a process for monitoring training and identifying any areas of concern about compliance. This is linked to a national church project to link up a number of databases. Currently there is a focus on ensuring that Safeguarding Coordinators are up to date with a full set of required training, and also on promoting the so far underused Safer Recruitment training. The Sub-Group receives an update from the Training Officer at each meeting, identifying priority areas, and assists with the planning of the annual Safeguarding Coordinators' Conference.

4. Engagement with victims and survivors

It was agreed at the June meeting of DSOG that, in terms of the key areas of work identified as outstanding from completion of the "Responding Well to Victims and Survivors of Abuse" baseline survey, the priority for the Diocese was developing a Survivor Strategy and considering how this could be co-produced with victims and survivors.

The National Church document, "Developing a survivor strategy" (Feb 2023) states, "The development of a strategy is not just about the drafting of a document. The conversations that the drafting process triggers are key. Another important aspect of developing a Survivors Strategy is ensuring that the views and voices of survivors themselves are captured, and that they play an active role in the development of the strategy. Each local Survivors Strategy should be co-produced with victims and survivors."

Shabnum Popat, Clinical Lead for Quetzal and DSOG member, and Rachael Spiers, DSA, met to consider what co-production might look like and to draw up a possible diocesan process for co-production/engaging with victims and survivors to create the strategy. As part of this, advice was sought from Ioannis Athanasiou, National Survivor Engagement Lead, and Maria Atanasoaei, NST Policy and Development Lead (Survivors Policy), and links made with other DSA colleagues.

It was agreed at September DSOG to establish a small focus group of up to 8-10 victims & survivors of church related abuse, with the purpose of assisting in developing a survivor strategy for Leicester Diocese and cathedral to ensure care and support is offered to victims & survivors of abuse; advising on plans for seeking feedback from victims and survivors about their contact with the Diocese, to improve the support offered and contributing to future opportunities for survivor involvement in practice development in the Diocese.

It is planned that:

- Expressions of interest will be invited via DSA contact with survivors and information in Diomail and on diocesan website.

- The group will be facilitated in a trauma-informed, person centred way. It will be time limited and closed. It will have clear terms of reference, so expectations and the level of commitment will be clear.
- Choices will be offered in terms of how people are involved in the focus group, e.g. participation in online meetings at the beginning & end of the work of the group, receiving drafts for comment by email, contributing to planning of future work by responding to questions to elicit views and ideas.
- An honorarium will be offered to group members for their work and contribution.
- The final survivor strategy will be available on the diocesan website.

Initial advertising of this opportunity has started and church settings will also be asked to share a flyer with their congregations. It is not clear how many people will feel able to be part of this initiative, but we believe it is an important start and are excited by this opportunity to shape safeguarding in a different way. We hope an initial group will run for 4 months, starting at the end of February.

5. Work with church settings

In our 2022 annual report to Bishop's Council, we noted the Diocesan Safeguarding Team's (DST) work to re-establish previous levels of contact with church settings post Covid and to support the vital work of the Safeguarding Coordinators. A new initiative has been the introduction of bimonthly drop-in sessions for Safeguarding Coordinators through the year. These have been a mixture of online and face-to-face sessions, offered at different times of day, to ensure everyone has an opportunity to attend.

The format of these has been a brief focus on a safeguarding related topic, including the IICSA final report, the new safeguarding leadership module, how to encourage PCC members to complete their safeguarding training and 'cuckooing'. Updates from the team and new resources are included, alongside information about how to make best use of Safeguarding Dashboards. The opportunity to share good practice, e.g. engaging with/reporting to PCCs, ask questions and network with other Safeguarding Coordinators is clearly valued. The sessions have been well attended and the feedback very positive. We are planning dates to offer these again in 2024.

In June, Bishop Saju welcomed Safeguarding Coordinators to our annual service of celebration and thanksgiving for their work in safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. This service was hosted by the Cathedral in St Nicholas Church. It was also an important opportunity for the team, Archdeacons, diocesan staff and Adrienne Plunkett, our new DSOG Independent Chair, to meet and talk to Safeguarding Coordinators engaged in this vital ministry.

58 coordinators and clergy attended the annual Safeguarding Coordinators' online conference in November. Our guest speaker Becca Faal, Director Styles and Faal Safeguarding, spoke about empowering children to talk about abuse and wellbeing and what we can do to enable children to feel safe in churches. Matt Long, Youth

Engagement & Intergenerational Communities Enabler, spoke about listening to the voice of children & young people in our Diocese and opportunities to undertake listening exercises in our various settings. Adrienne Plunkett, Independent Chair, spoke about the role of DSOG, current priorities and the importance of the work of the Safeguarding Coordinators. There was an opportunity for Coordinators to hear about Dashboard updates and to ask questions.

The feedback from Coordinators about the Conference was very appreciative, including: “what an excellent conference...very useful... really interesting...thought provoking...a positive morning...that was absolutely brilliant - I sit through a lot of this type of training and this stands out as particularly good and informative”.

The theme of this conference was designed to link to previous work in the Diocese sharing key findings from the October 2022 final report of the Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA). This highlighted the importance of listening to children and detailed the enormous barriers to children telling adults about their experiences of sexual abuse and how of the few that did manage to speak about their abuse at the time, they mainly reported receiving a unsympathetic response. Church settings have extensive contact with children and young people each week and could be well placed to offer a safe space for reporting abuse. If we listen well to children generally in church settings, it is much more likely they will talk about difficult experiences when they occur. We are keen to follow up with Matt Long how we might work together in engaging children and young people in the Diocese with safeguarding and it is planned that he will attend the DSOG meeting in June 2024 to progress this.

The relationships from this increased contact with Safeguarding Coordinators will be very important in the coming year as we start to engage with church settings about the new National Safeguarding Standards and Quality Assurance Framework, designed to ensure we are meeting our safeguarding responsibilities.

DSOG has been keen to hear the views of Safeguarding Co-ordinators. Julie Croysdale writes about her experience of joining DSOG as a Safeguarding Coordinator representative this year:

From a Parish Safeguarding Coordinator perspective, it is a privilege to attend DSOG to gain a fuller understanding of the importance of this group in providing assurance and advice to the Bishop and his team of clergy. It is impressive to see the efforts taken to ensure it is a collaborative multiagency group with everyone encouraged to have a voice. Certainly, looking forward from a PSC view, it is with confidence, that, the group will strive to ensure robust scrutiny of any impact the changes made in Shaped by God Together will only have a positive impact on safeguarding within our churches.

6. Safeguarding in Leicester Cathedral

Leicester Cathedral has now reopened its doors both for worship and events and to the general public. In terms of regular worship, they have said 'farewell' to St Nicholas Church, St Mary de Castro and the Grand Hall at St Martins House but 'Together With' services around the Diocese continue. Both the Cathedral's office and its general operational bases remain at SMH, not least because the new Heritage & Learning Centre, complete with offices, storage, a classroom and toilets, will not be open until next summer.

Operational procedures have therefore been scrutinised and adjusted as necessary. All areas of activity have been required to complete safeguarding and health and safety risk assessments, thus necessitating the checking out of procedures. For some there has been little change, but for others there is an ongoing process of re-learning how to operate in a building they have not been used to for nearly two years, recognising also that systems continue to evolve and adapt.

Choir Chaperones play a key role in safeguarding, and it is good to note that the Choir has taken on two new volunteer Chaperones. Currently they are also advertising a paid lead Chaperone post for weekdays, so hope to make an appointment soon which will strengthen capacity and provide leadership.

While there has been a faithful group of other volunteers maintaining a Cathedral presence at St Martins House, many more have returned for reopening, and others have been safely recruited and trained. It is anticipated that visitor flow will increase.

The Chaplaincy is a key presence on the 'shop floor'. Two new Chaplains have been recruited and all Chaplains have been trained for an enhanced role as key point of contact in ministering to people experiencing homelessness or with other vulnerabilities. They are also equipped to signpost people to relevant specialist agencies within the City. Information concerning these is readily available in the Cathedral building.

Staff and volunteers have been issued with a Cathedral pocket guide to Safeguarding, which includes highlighting the appropriate reporting procedures. This has also been issued to the regular congregation and recently on Safeguarding Sunday other materials were made available to take away. There was good take up.

Under the Cathedrals Measure, Leicester Cathedral has now become a registered Charity, with the Chapter as its Trustee body. The Chapter has several sub-Committees, of which the Cathedral Safeguarding Group has formally become one. Its membership continues to comprise key leads, but Chapter is looking also to appoint an extra independent person to the Committee. The Committee's RAG rated Action Plan continues to be live and ongoing and the Parish Dashboard system remains a point of referral also. The Committee will next meet in January, when the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures will be reviewed.

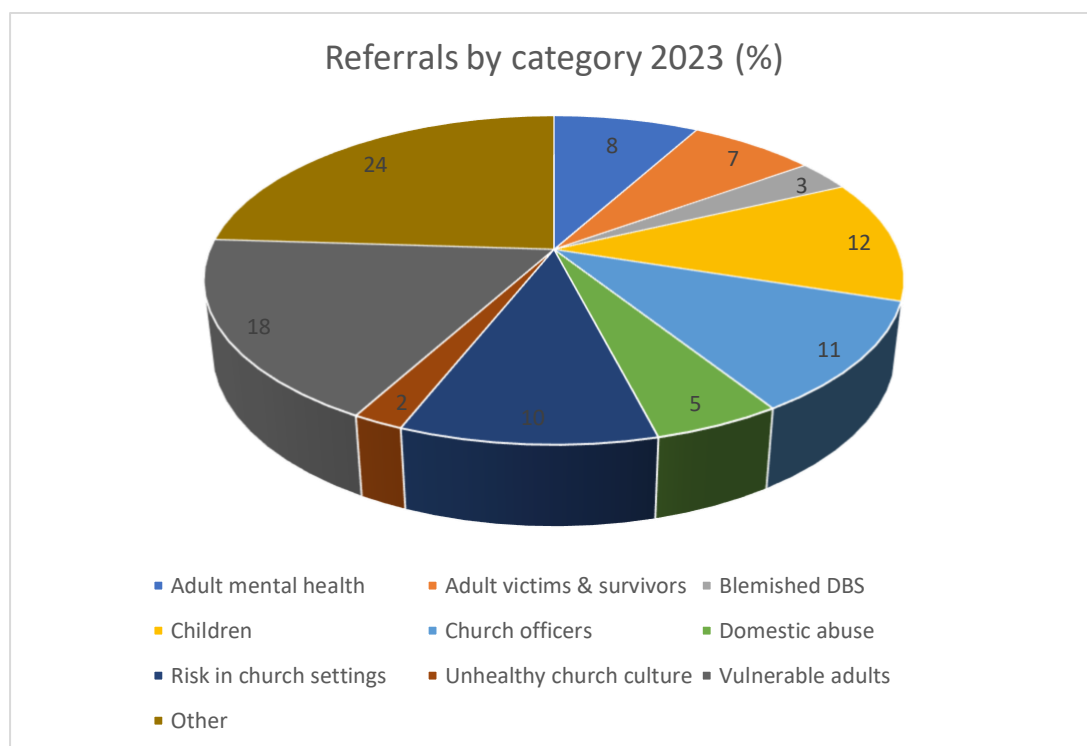
The Cathedral is very grateful to both the Safeguarding Co-ordinators for long and dedicated service. While Linda Green remains in office, Kathleen Rowberry has now retired from that position and Amanda Fitchett has been safely recruited in her place.

The Cathedral remains totally committed to the alignment with both the Church of England and the Diocese regarding policy and practice and is most grateful for the SLA we hold with the Diocese to provide us with the professional support of the DSA and team.

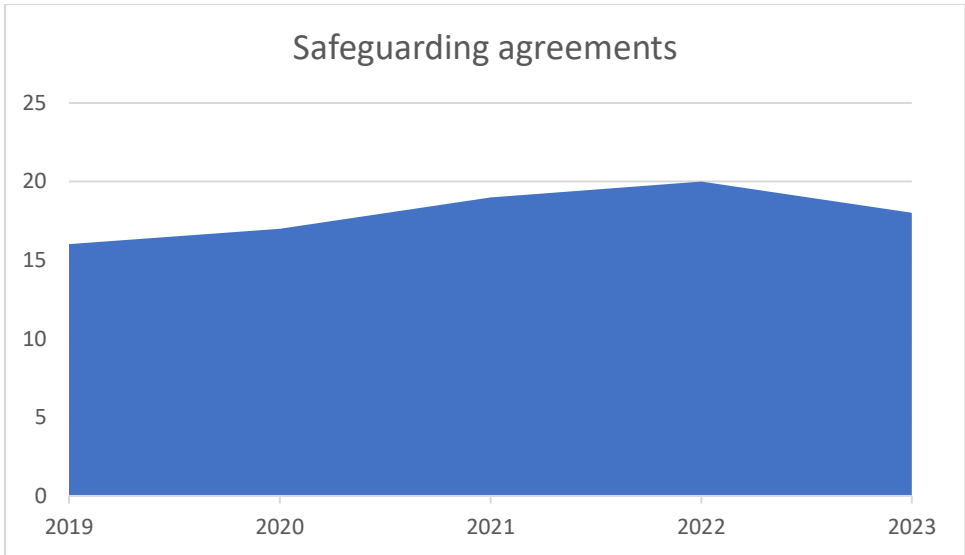
Alison Adams, Canon Pastor.

7. Diocesan Safeguarding Team

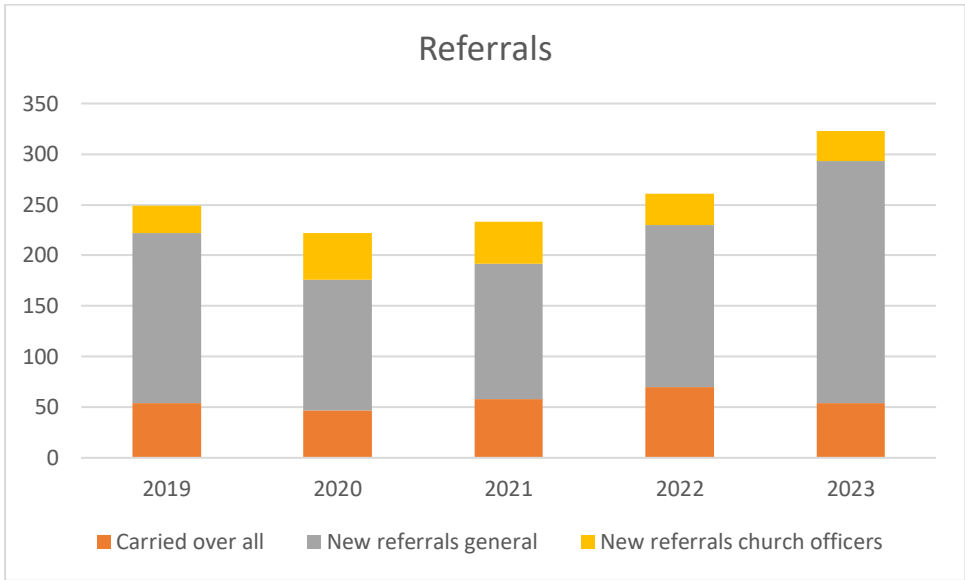
Responding to referrals and providing advice to church settings about concerns encountered is a central part of the work of the DSA and Assistant Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. New referrals can include requests for advice involving a short number of contacts, as well as matters requiring referral to the police, Children or Adults Social Care and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and complex work over many months. It is important to note that referrals to the team are overwhelmingly focused on adults, with only 12% directly about children. There continues to be a huge variety in the work referred to the team and collaborating with the Archdeacons and other diocesan colleagues is often central to responding well.



We currently have 18 church safety agreements in place to formally manage those potentially posing a risk in church settings. Many of these agreements are supported by close working with colleagues from Police and Probation. In November a small sample of the risk assessments and church safety plans were audited by external partners from DSOG. The findings were positive about the arrangements and further audits will be undertaken in 2024.



The team received 269 referrals this year. This is an increase of 35% on referrals in 2022. The arrangements for casework vary across diocesan teams, some DSAs undertake direct casework alongside their line management responsibilities and strategic work, as in Leicester, whilst in other Dioceses casework is delegated entirely to a number of Assistant DSAs/ caseworkers. It is difficult to comment on the resourcing of the Diocesan Safeguarding Team at the present time, in the context of a major review about the future of safeguarding in the church. Once the direction of arrangements is clearer, it will be important to engage with the NST resourcing tool described in the independent Chair’s introduction to this report.



The team is committed to maintaining high standards of work, but there is no doubt that the necessary prioritising of casework in such a small team, can result in delays to important strategic work. This needs to be understood, particularly when planning for major pieces of work in 2024: joining the national safeguarding case management system, starting work on embedding the National Safeguarding Standards framework and preparation for our independent audit in 2026, alongside the agreed strategic priorities and team functions.

Feedback from DSA's Professional Supervisor

One of the major difficulties the team faces is a lack of resources, against a backdrop of an ever-increasing demand on those resources. The safeguarding team's work covers such a wide and varying spectrum, often there is also significant complexities to cases. There is great care and consideration taken by the team around what the most reasonable and proportionate response and decision is. The safeguarding team want to consistently provide high quality support.

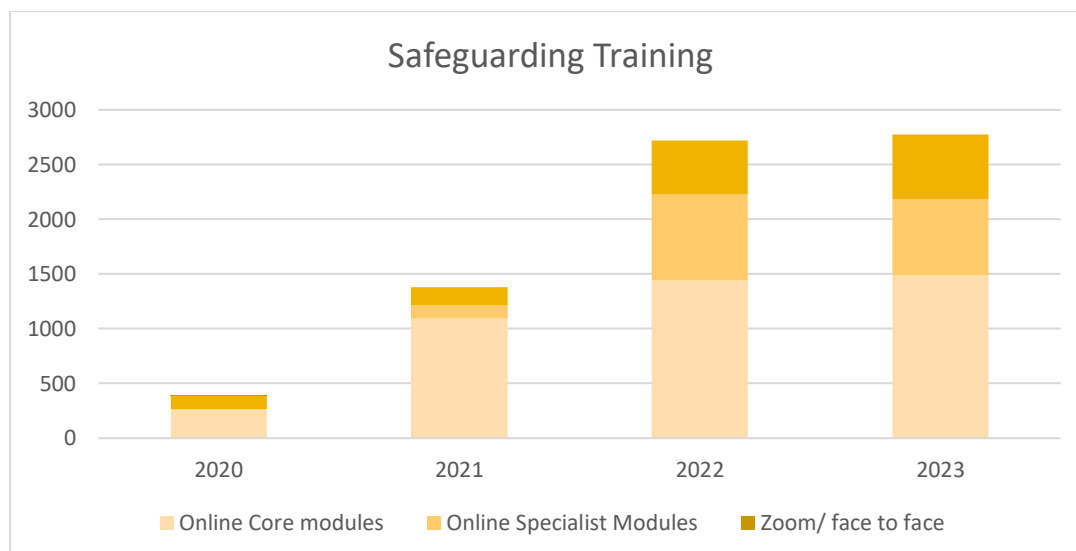
A further strength within the team is the different perspectives and professional experiences of the team members, this supports a balance within the work undertaken and also adds a layer of reflection and the opportunity to consider other viewpoints and possibilities.

Elisha Ward. November 2023

7.1. Training:

Louise Warner continues as the full time Safeguarding Training Officer and this year has worked on shifting the focus on safeguarding away from ticking boxes to understanding why safeguarding matters, seeing it as integral to our faith, about God's Love in Action and being about people. Bishop Martyn created a video that is used in training which has been well received and is available for local use, link below. (https://drive.google.com/file/d/16vRARlQ3-_rxxYCdCRXr2cc78nFth3iJ/view?usp=sharing)

We have managed to maintain the increased numbers completing training as a result of more people being required to complete this and also because of work on compliance, including by Safeguarding Coordinators. There is still some reluctance to complete training. This is across all lay officer roles, but particularly reported amongst those on PCCs. This is due to a variety of reasons, including sometimes a lack of understanding about why they need to do this training, but also concerns about managing the different requirements of the courses.



The Training Officer continues to offer face-to-face training for those unable to complete training online, bespoke solutions for those with lived experience, and to support people accessing the Church of England Safeguarding Training Portal.

Feedback shows that safeguarding training is making a difference, helping people shift their thinking and changing culture.

Because I have taken part in the Leadership Safeguarding Pathway, safeguarding has become a part of the whole of being me when I prepare for church, take part in church activities and observe other actions taking place within our church.

(Feedback from Safeguarding training participant)

The Training Officer has worked on developing the compliance processes. The Database Manager has worked on CMS reports to assist with compliance work, with further work needed to refine this (e.g. to minimise duplication for multiple role-holders). Admin staff have played a valuable role in updating CMS and ensuring that we have accurate safeguarding training records.

Workload and time pressure is raised as an issue in compliance with national training requirement, including by clergy. Ways are being considered to encourage people to spread safeguarding training to avoid it all falling due in the same year. Clergy and Safeguarding Coordinators have been sent a record to use to know when their training is due.

We have introduced the revised safeguarding leadership course based on the National Safeguarding Standards, which the Training Officer was involved in reviewing. The format remains similar, with a focus on developing healthy church cultures, recognising risk, prevention, with post session reflection questions and an action plan required. The workbook has been adapted to try and make it easier. Discussion on healthy church culture and Social Graces tends to be rich and thought-provoking. The case study has resulted in people considering how they communicate with their church about safeguarding and what they do to keep people safe.

The action plans need more follow up and response. Actions are often identified during the small group sessions. Where people complete the training with others from their context they can create a joint action plan.

Work in underway to draw together processes to prepare for the first inspection of safeguarding training during 2024. There will be reviews of paperwork and observations by Lisa Clarke, NST Learning and Development Manager.

You can see more details about safeguarding training here: [Training and Events - Diocese of Leicester \(anglican.org\)](https://www.anglican.org/training-and-events)

7.2. Safeguarding Dashboards

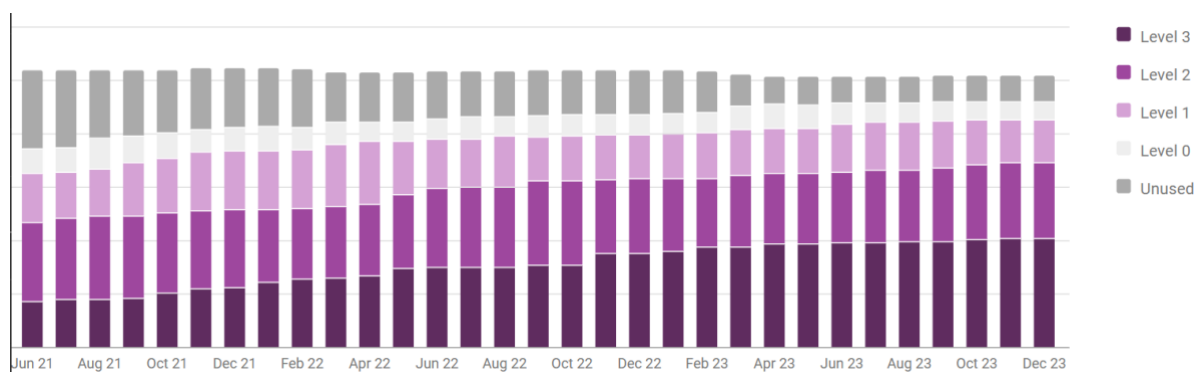
Pete Holloway, Assistant DSA (ADSA) takes the lead in promoting and supporting Safeguarding Coordinators in the use of the dashboard. The number of church settings which have been allocated safeguarding dashboards continues to increase. It is now 90% (230 out of 255, up from 83% last year) although 6% are not using them properly. The ADSA has been approaching individual Safeguarding Coordinators to encourage take up of the dashboards. This has highlighted a variety of issues affecting take up, including vacancies in Safeguarding Coordinator roles and also reluctance and fear of technology. Of the 25 church settings still not adopting their dashboards, eight are in Framland and ten in the Launde deaneries, both largely rural and both in Leicester Archdeaconry.

Dashboard Status

Numbers of Dashboards

Name	Unused	Level 0	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Total Live	Total All
The Archdeaconry of Leicester	20	11	22	40	41	103	134
The Archdeaconry of Loughborough	5	6	18	31	61	110	121
Total	25	17	40	71	102	213	255
	9.8%	6.7%	15.7%	27.8%	40.0%	83.5%	100%

The steady progress in those already using the dashboards continues. Since 2022 the number of church settings reaching Level 3 compliance levels has increased from 33% (88) to 40% (102). The diocesan wide average percentage level of compliance is up 3% to 56% which reflects the fact that, as more church settings reach Level 2 and Level 3, the more information they are required to enter in order to be compliant.



The dashboards are a form of self-audit as they are completed by Safeguarding Coordinators, and they can helpfully provide an action plan. The information provided is therefore valuable but should be treated as an indicator rather than as independently verified fact. Inevitably there may be variation across Coordinators as to how questions are interpreted. Nonetheless the information provided is very useful in identifying areas

for focus and support and also provides some assurance of safeguarding compliance in church settings.

More detailed information could be gained by adoption of an extra tool (the Safer Recruitment Hub) on offer, but it would double the cost from the existing annual fee of £2005 (+ VAT). This would allow a church setting to build its own role descriptions, applications forms and record the Safer Recruitment stages of each individual volunteer and their completion of the Safeguarding training modules and would be observable by the Diocese. However, there are cheaper alternatives with (less comprehensive) role description templates already available from the National Safeguarding Team – accessible via the Safeguarding Dashboard and the C of E website. At this time it is not clear that the take up would necessarily be worth the expense particularly with some bigger churches already using Church Suite, a system which provides these facilities and has many additional features. which they are unlikely to want to give up.

There have been no requests yet to create a unified Safeguarding Dashboard for a Minster Community. The Safeguarding Coordinators involved appear to be maintaining their existing parish Safeguarding Dashboards, but the facility is there to amalgamate them into a Benefice or Minster Community Dashboard if requested.

Dashboard data has been used in 2023 to inform decisions by the Training Sub-Group about targeting information about training and promoting compliance, e.g amongst the Safeguarding Coordinators. The data from the dashboards indicates that the areas of safeguarding in church settings with the lowest levels of compliance remain the safeguarding training of churchwardens and PCC members. The Dashboard data also highlights regular reporting on safeguarding to PCCs as well as social media and data retention policies as areas needed attention and training.

All new Safeguarding Coordinators are sent a dashboard invitation and a set of instructions for its use. The Dashboard is also demonstrated at the New to the Role Training delivered by the ADSA and Safeguarding Training Officer. New training dates have been set for the New Year.

Other new features are still being developed for the dashboards and there is currently a review to potentially reconfigure the dashboards to correlate with the new National Safeguarding Standards Framework.



So, it is possible the Dashboard front page layout will change to accommodate this.

Current display for Parish at Level 1.

Possible new

☰
⬆

Little Wallbottle
 Parish Safeguarding - Level 1

Dashboard Overview
 Green is good - Amber for action - Red means urgent
 Select any statement for more information

✓

Safeguarding Policy
The PCC has approved a safeguarding policy and reviewed an action.

✓

Safeguarding Procedures
The PCC has a procedure to deal promptly with allegations or concerns

!

Safeguarding Roles
2 actions need to be completed, 1 of which is urgent.

i

Safeguarding Training
One action needs to be completed

✓

Displayed Information
Each church building is displaying important safeguarding information.

✓

Reviews and Reports
Safeguarding is regularly reviewed and reported upon.

☰
⬅

Little Wallbottle
 Safeguarding Dashboard

Dashboard Overview - 56% progress
 Green is good - Amber for action - Red means urgent
 Select any dashboard light for more information.

74

Culture, Leadership and Capacity
74% progress with Standard 1

➤

82

Prevention
82% progress with Standard 2

➤

43

Recognising, Assessing and Managing Risk
43% progress with Standard 3

➤

27

Victims and Survivors
27% progress with Standard 4

➤

55

Learning, Supervision and Support
55% progress with Standard 5

➤

The overwhelming feedback received from Safeguarding Coordinators for the Dashboards has been positive. They are a valuable tool providing structure and guidance for the Safeguarding Coordinators, clergy and PCCs, and oversight for the Diocese.

8. Conclusion:

Throughout the report there are references to the national and local picture and it is apparent that there is a juxtaposition. Concern about the effectiveness/functioning of safeguarding at a national level, contrasting with a positive picture locally. It is important that the high quality of work undertaken within the Diocese is recognised and valued.

As identified, there are a significant number of national priorities, notably the introduction of the National Safeguarding Standards, alongside this DOSG has been keen to establish local priorities and in 2024 we aim to develop the victim and survivors' care strategy and engage with children and young people in order to learn more about their perspective on how to keep them safe and respond well to any concern raised.

We would like to thank the DSOG members who attend on behalf of external agencies, Children & Adult Services, an organisation working with survivors of abuse, Probation and the Police. Their independent involvement is crucial to the effectiveness of DSOG. Additionally, the perspective brought by the Safeguarding Coordinator is much valued.

We await the report and recommendations of the Future of Safeguarding at the end of January 2024, which could well have major implications for the arrangements for safeguarding at a Diocesan level, leading to a potentially unsettling time for the Diocesan Safeguarding Team and Safeguarding Coordinators. This will require very careful consideration and management to ensure standards are maintained.

As we enter 2024, therefore, we acknowledge that safeguarding in the Diocese is a work in progress. There is never room for complacency and there is still a need for learning and for much hard work. At the same time we recognise the good work undertaken in 2023 at a time of uncertainty and change.