The Diocesan Safeguarding Oversight Group (DSOG) has oversight of, and scrutinises, safeguarding strategy and arrangements in the Diocese of Leicester. Meeting quarterly, it brings together officers from the diocese with representatives from external agencies, including children & adult services, police, probation and Quetzal, a local charity for survivors of childhood abuse. DSOG is independently chaired by Adrienne Plunkett, a social worker with a background in Children’s Services, as a practitioner and senior manager.

At the meeting on **11 December 2024**, DSOG heard from members of the team who work across **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)** in the diocese.
*Jessie Tang, Intercultural Ministry Director*, gave an update on the progress of racial justice across the Church and the work of the diocesan Racial Justice Unit (RJU), formed two years ago. The Unit is currently working on implementation of the Diocesan Racial Equity Strategy, formally adopted by Bishop’s Council in 2021. Jessie stressed that this Strategy is not solely the responsibility of Directors and the RJU, but all departments have their part to play.

*Sophie Holder, newly appointed Director of Racial Equity*, opened a discussion about how safeguarding fits into this work and where it overlaps. Further work is planned, including the development of a complaints procedure for racial abuse and the establishment of a group, involving the DST and senior diocesan leaders, to look at policy, procedures and working practice at the interface of safeguarding and racial equity.
*Bishop Saju Muthalaly* explained that safeguarding should be part of the diocesan culture, stressing that “*if we make everything safeguarding then we are in danger of making nothing safeguarding.”*

DSOG had discussions concerning the following matters:

**Safeguarding Practice Reviews:** The impact of the recently published Makin (John Smyth) and Scolding (Mike Pilavachi) reviews was considered, notably the distress and anger of victims and survivors and the challenges for those engaged in promoting safeguarding across the dioceses. It is important lessons are learnt and recommended actions for the diocese will be presented to the next DSOG meeting in March 2025.

**Safeguarding Intelligence Pack**: The DSA presented the first full year of qualitative and quantitative data, covering referrals, risk assessments and training, as well as the collated data from Parish Dashboards. DSOG can interrogate the data and identify any areas for follow-up, e.g. clergy/those with PTO who are non-compliant with the national and diocesan safeguarding training requirements.

**Safer Recruitment:** The findings of an audit of the process for blemished DBSs, undertaken by the Quality and Improvement Sub-Group, provided assurance that communication is good, and assessments and decision-making are robust.

**Draft Survivor Care Strategy:** Produced with survivors by Rachael Spiers, DSA, and Shabnum Popat, Quetzal, the Strategy is a significant development. It is in line with the Church’s Responding Well guidance and outlines how the Diocese and Cathedral will respond to victims and survivors of church related abuse in a trauma-informed way.

**DSOG Annual Report:** An updated draft will be provided to DSOG by 10 January 2025 prior to presentation to the Bishop’s Advisory Forum on 27 January.