



Diocese of Leicester Report of Past Case Review 2

Independent Reviewers

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3rd Independent Reviewer

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1.0 Introduction – overview and governance

- In May 2007, The House of Bishops decided on the need for a review of past cases of child abuse. This followed several high-profile court cases involving clergy and church officers who had been charged with committing sexual offences against children. This became known as Past Case Review (PCR1). PCR1 took place during 2008 - 2009, by all dioceses including files held at Lambeth and Bishopsthorpe Palaces. It undertook scrutiny of the files of clergy and church officers to identify any person who presented an ongoing risk to children which had not been acted on appropriately and proportionately. The process for conducting the PCR was based on a House of Bishops Protocol.
- The protocol for this was for the then Diocese Child Protection Officer to draw up a list of known cases, known as the Known Case List (KCL) of child safeguarding concerns relating to clergy and church officers to submit to the Independent Reviewer who would then advise the Diocese Child Protection Management Group on whether further action was required. This was by way of reviewing all files of licensed clergy; all readers and lay ministry employee files of those who have access to children via the church and those clergy with permission to officiate.
- There were shortcomings in the protocol, nothing like this had happened before. As a result of these findings and in consultation with the National Safeguarding Steering Group the new National Safeguarding Adviser commissioned an independent assessment of the adequacy of the PCR. The assessment was conducted by an Independent Scrutiny Team (known as IST) led by Sir Roger Singleton who in April 2018 reported to the National Safeguarding Steering Group.
- The NSSG accepted the nine recommendations of the report agreeing that the PCR1 should be repeated in seven dioceses and that the review should be brought up to date in all other diocese extending the parameters to include vulnerable adults.

1.1 Areas of the Review within the Diocese

The Diocese of Leicester is based in Leicester in the Ecclesiastical province of Canterbury and includes the county of Leicestershire. The Diocese is divided into two Archdeaonries: Leicester and Loughborough with, 254 parishes, 108 benefices, and 314 church settings and two religious communities. The Bishop of Leicester is the Rt Reverend Martyn Snow. It has just been announced that the new Suffragan Bishop of Loughborough is Reverend Malayil Lukose Varghese Muthalaly. Richard Worsfold is the Archdeacon of Leicester; Claire Wood is the Archdeacon of Loughborough.

Within the geographical area of the Diocese, there is Leicester Cathedral. Leicester Cathedral is included in the Diocese of Leicester PCR2.

1.2 Governance and Oversight of the PCR2

It was evident that the Diocese of Leicester had given significant thought and preparation for the PCR2 well ahead of the independent Review Phase. The Diocese and Cathedral Safeguarding Adviser, Rachael Spiers, and Andy Brockbank the Director of Operations and Governance took the Lead for the PCR2 process, taking responsibility for coordinating all aspects of the review process as identified in the PCR2 Protocol and Practice Guidance (PCR2 PPG) operational coordination.

In compliance with Phase 1.1 of the PCR2 PPG, a PCR Reference Group was commissioned by the Diocese on 06/02/2020. The Independent Chair David Cooper has a professional background in senior management with an extensive background in local authority, Health, and Voluntary sectors.

The membership of the PCR Reference Group consisted of

Lesley Booth – Service Manager, Leicester City Council (external member)

Shabnum Osman – Clinical Lead Quetzal Project (supporting women who have suffered child sexual abuse) (external member)

Mark Cuddihy – Detective Inspector, Leicestershire Police (external member)

Claire Wood – Archdeacon of Loughborough (internal member)

Rachael Spiers – Lead Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (internal member)

Jo Griffin – Head of Communications (internal member)

David Monteith – Dean of Leicester Cathedral (internal member)

The membership met the membership criteria of the PCR2 Practice Guidance. Andy Brockbank acted as secretary to the Reference Group.

The PCR2 Reference Group first met on 12th February 2020 where it formally approved the project implementation plan; since this first meeting the group has met on seven further occasions. Through these meetings, all members of the group including the independent chair have been kept up to date with the progress of the review. Mid-way through the review the lead independent reviewer, Elaine Rabbitt attended a meeting giving a face-to-face update of the status of the review and findings to date.

The Diocese was compliant with Phase 1.2 of PCR2 PPG, with the Bishop of Leicester sending a letter out to every incumbent providing detail of, and seeking their support for, the PCR2 process. The letter, in accordance with Appendix A of the PCR2 PPG, was sent out on 17th February 2020 via email and included details of the support arrangements for incumbents and the pastoral care arrangements for anyone affected by the review. A copy of the letter is attached in Appendix A.

The DSA was the Single Point of Contact for the Independent Reviewers (IRs) throughout the Review. As such, she ensured that

- The IRs were provided with IT equipment, passwords, and guidance on the Diocese network
- The IRs were provided with clear Terms of Reference before the review commenced.
- The IRs were provided with relevant reference material e.g., PCR2 Protocol and Guidance, details of the website where references may be located.
- The Administrators responsible for each business area e.g., Clergy blue files had completed an electronic database of files held.
- The IRs were provided with suitable accommodation
- Informed of the restrictions set out by the Diocese for COVID19.

1.3 Commissioning arrangements for the Independent Review

Three independent reviewers were formally approved to complete the PCR2 review for both the Diocese and the Cathedral of Leicester. All three IRs were independent of the Diocese of Leicester and the Church of England.

Independent Reviewers

Elaine Rabbitt and another reviewer were selected from the national safeguarding team approved list of reviewers, Katherine Lockwood for her expertise in safeguarding.

- Elaine Rabbitt is a retired police officer, accredited investigator of serious crime/sexual offences, safeguarding including adults and children, domestic abuse, and sexual exploitation. Ten years contracted to the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency investigating fraud and allegations of child and adult safeguarding. Elaine has undertaken the PCR2 in four other Diocese.
- Katherine Lockwood qualified as a Social Worker in 2004. A Senior Social Work practitioner since 2012. Katherine has 17 years of experience, predominately Child Protection but also experience of working with vulnerable adults. Currently employed by Leicester City Council Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Unit as an Independent Child Protection Chair.
- A third reviewer was an independent social worker with a background in child and adolescent mental health and specialist safeguarding practitioner. They acted as an independent reviewer from 26th October 2020 to 25th May 2021 and as such were not an independent reviewer at the time of the writing of this report.

2.0 Scope of the Review

2.1 The required scope of the review

The Diocese was required to review

- all blue clergy files and the equivalent personal files of diocesan staff and other lay ministers
- the files of other church officers which were not reviewed as part of the original PCR and where the individuals are required to have substantial contact with children and adults at risk of abuse, including domestic violence
- files relating to every living clergy person and living church officer, diocesan staff whether the clergy, church officer, member of a team engaged in ministry, paid or voluntary work, or those whose church role requires them to have contact with children and /or adults at risk of abuse. This included: Current Clergy, Permission to Officiate (PTO), those applying for PTO, Retired Clergy, Licensed to Officiate, Licensed Lay Ministers, Ordinands, those applying to be Ordinands, other diocesan staff

The Diocese was required to identify

- written records that may contain allegations of abuse or neglect relating to children or vulnerable adults, including incidents of domestic or spiritual abuse

The Diocese was required to ensure

- all allegations of abuse of children, especially those recorded since the PCR, had been dealt with appropriately and proportionately to the level of risk identified
- that recorded incidents or allegations of abuse of an adult have been handled properly, demonstrating the principles of adult safeguarding
- that the support needs of known survivors have been considered
- that all safeguarding allegations have been referred to the DSA
- those cases meeting the thresholds have been referred to the statutory agencies
- that all safeguarding allegations have been referred to the DSA and are being/have been responded to in line with current safeguarding practice guidance House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policy Promoting a safer Church 2017
- Volunteer records that are held by the parish are subject to the safer recruitment process.

Diocese of Leicester was defined as a Category A – Those dioceses who do not need to carry out a repeat of the original PCR and who have done further work since January 2007.

Examples are:

In 2016 the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS) now known as Thirtyone:eight undertook a review of all deceased clergy files and other clergy and church officer files not included in the original PCR. In 2017, Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) undertook an independent audit of the safeguarding provision in the Diocese. In 2019, SCIE undertook a similar audit in the Cathedral safeguarding files. The SCIE reports with recommendations are available for viewing on the Diocese of Leicester website. The

Diocese of Leicester and Leicester Cathedral accepted all the recommendations which have been actioned or are currently a work in progress.

Before the appointment of the current Lead DSA Rachael Spiers, the Diocese engaged a consultant qualified social worker who worked remotely as the Bishops Child Protection adviser and latterly the Bishops Safeguarding Adviser. Since her appointment, Rachael has familiarised herself with all the safeguarding files and has an excellent working knowledge of all. Rachael has developed the Known Case List.

The Diocese and Reference Group decided that the PCR2 would review all files in scope including, deceased and did not seek any exemptions.

Cathedral files were included in PCR2.

2.2 Categories of files that were in scope and reviewed.

Total number of Diocesan and Cathedral Files Reviewed 1,870

Safeguarding files for church officers	322
Clergy Blue Files	197
Permission to Officiate	140
Miscellaneous	34
Deceased	95
Ordinands at College	21
Those waiting selection	17
Those not recommended	45
Those released	3
Archived/Inactive	126
Miscellaneous archived Ordinands/Deacons	11
Clergy Disciplinary Measure complaints	9
Lay Ministry	403
Staff (Inclusive of Board of Finance, St. Martins House, Board of Education, Bishops Lodge,) 276	
Cathedral	
Staff	73
Volunteers	70
Lay Chaplains	28

The Reference Group decided to not review approximately 50 deceased clergy files that had been reviewed in 2016. These files were files that had been reviewed in 2016 with no concerns identified or no further correspondence added subsequently.

3.0 Information Management

3.1 Filing and administration system

A comprehensive filing system exists in the Diocese. Hard copy files are filed in alphabetical order and stored in secure cabinets in two main buildings within the Diocese. The clergy blue files: current and retired, Permission to Officiate (PTO), ordinand, curate, and deceased, along with files subject of Clergy Disciplinary Measures are managed by the Bishops Chaplain at Bishops Lodge, Offices of the Bishop of Leicester. All other files paper and electronic are physically located at St. Martins House, the Diocesan offices where they are administered by identified personnel.

The DSA Rachael Spiers is responsible for the * Known Cases List (KCL) open and closed files. DBS blemish files, and other Safeguarding files. The files are stored in secure cabinets within the Safeguarding Team offices. The DSA does not hold an electronic safeguarding management database, however, holds an electronic 'word document' database of all safeguarding files (open and closed). The DSA provided the independent reviewer with a Known Case List.

*The Lead DSA met the criteria set out in the PCR2 PPG for entering a person onto the KCL. In addition to these criteria, the Diocese considers the KCL as a fluid document assessing each individual's circumstances as to the risk they pose today and their proportionality of including them. If a person is deemed not to pose a risk, they will be removed likewise if a person is deemed to be a risk they will be added.

The Lead DSA and Lead IR found the assessment of placing an individual's name on the KCL an extremely difficult task, it was evident when speaking with other DSAs and IRs that the criteria ranged from diocese to diocese.

The paper safeguarding files are well organised with allotted areas for each subject matter.

The Lay Ministry Administration Lead is responsible for Readers files and all Lay Ministry, these are held electronically.

Ordinand files are the responsibility of the Diocesan Director of Ordinands.

Within Leicester Cathedral staff files are managed by the Executive Assistant, volunteer files are the responsibility of the Volunteer Co-ordinator

Each administrator provided an electronic spreadsheet to the IRs. This reassured the IRs that the Diocese was open and transparent in ensuring all files relating to clergy, church officers, and staff with responsibility to children and adults were reviewed.

Recommendation

- Safeguarding Team to adopt an electronic Safeguarding Management System. (The Diocese will be adopting the National system when launched)
- The responsible person for the management of Ordinands to liaise with the DSA with regards to any safeguarding disclosures within their written record of their 'Life's +Journey'.

3.2 Management of filing and administration system

The Bishop's Office Staff is responsible for the storage and management of the files held at Bishops Lodge; an electronic management system is used for the tracking of files.

The administration of Disclosure and Barring (DBS) checks for all necessary personnel has been contracted to Thirtyone:eight with DBS renewal every five years, (with the new practice guidance coming into force 04th January 2022 this process will change to every three years, the diocese has commenced putting the new guidance into place) this is effective and well managed.

In March 2016 the Diocese employed a dedicated Safeguarding Trainer. The Safeguarding Trainer with the assistance of the Safeguarding Team Administrator manages all aspects of safeguarding training including

- Provision of training – (before COVID-19 Lockdown this was face to face, during Lockdown this has been online with virtual for PTO and leadership).
- Providing advice and guidance for training requirements. Issuing certificates (a copy of which is held on clergy blue files)
- Issuing certificates (a copy of which is held on clergy blue files)

3.3 The file administration policy

The Diocese has adopted the 'Personal Files relating to Clergy Policy for the Bishops and their staff' as approved by the House of Bishops in May 2018. This policy has been updated and came into operation in August 2021. The Diocese has adopted the new guidance.

The files are maintained to a good standard this is evidenced with

- A template is placed at the front of each file indicating; date, name, reason, and comments, for any person having access to the file.
- A yellow notice is placed at the front of a file indicating a safeguarding file exists stating '*Further information relating to this clergy person and safeguarding matters is held in a separate file by the DSA. It is vital that this information is referred to when writing any CCSL or Episcopal reference and also that it is passed on to any receiving diocese, along with this blue file.*'
- The files are segmented with designated areas for each subject matter.

- Only the necessary correspondence is retained.
- Certificates such as safeguarding training and PTO are evident in all files.

The electronic files held for Lay Ministry are less well organised however, it is accepted that there is currently no guidance to the management of Lay Ministry files. The IRs found there is no format for what is retained in a file, although DBS was not required for all it was not clear within the file whether the person did or did not require a DBS. References are not always evident within the file.

Recommendation

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Lay Ministry files to have a visible indication as to whether DBS is required for the role or not. (This needs guidance at a national level) |
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4.0 **Methodology**

4.1 Pre-review preparation by the Diocese

It was evident that the diocese had put considerable time and effort into the pre-review preparation for the PCR2. The Lead DSA had taken the lead in coordinating the pre-review preparations owning a work plan based on the PCR2 PPG.

- Appointed a reference group
- Each business area provided an electronic list of files.
- Files were located from every area within the diocese.
- Regular meetings took place with the Bishops Leadership Team.
- Interviews were conducted by the DSA and the Director of Operations and Governance with the Independent Reviewers
- The Lead DSA kept in regular contact with the appointed IRs.
- The Lead DSA went met with the Area Deans before the launch of the PCR2.
- The Lead DSA met with Deans, interregnums to assist with the completion of the Parish Returns. Guidance was also uploaded onto the Diocesan website
- Letters were sent to partner agencies informing them of the PCR2
- The Lead DSA met with the Survivor Engagement Lead. * (See footnote)
- Publicity at the launch of PCR2 followed up at Christmas 2020 and again in the summer
- A letter to all establishments where a Chaplain has been appointed informing them of the PCR2 and requesting them to send a return to the DSA of any safeguarding concerns
- Appointed an independent reviewer to locate information in Registry files that should have been on clergy files.

*It is to be acknowledged the support that Shabnum Osman gave to the Lead DSA throughout the PCR2 process. Aside from the support and advice that Shabnum provided to the Lead DSA, Shabnum assisted in putting a framework together to ensure best practices in dealing with any victims that came forward as a result of the publicity surrounding the PCR2.

As a result, of the Bishop's letter to all incumbents, the diocese received a 100% return. The Lead DSA collated the responses recording them on a spreadsheet. These returns were shared with the IRs.

The incumbents completing the returns were required to sign, date, and return the declaration stated in Appendix A letter from the Bishop of Leicester which stated.

I confirm that as of today, all known instances of concern of which I and the Parish Safeguarding Representative are aware which relate to any abusive behaviour of clergy or church officer towards children or adults, both historically and currently, have been reported to the Diocesan safeguarding Adviser. We have completed table 1a and attached it to this return.

It should be noted that due to the robust approach to Safeguarding Training all Incumbents completing the return had received current and valid safeguarding training.

As detailed in Phase 3 of the PCR2 PPG, Bishop's and Archdeacons Parish Correspondence files were not determined to be in scope for the PCR2 in Leicester Diocese, and as such the IRs did not review these files however, pertinent information was provided where matters were identified. The IRs received assurance from the Bishops Chaplain, the DSA and the Archdeacons that all information relating to safeguarding was forwarded to the DSA.

Recommendation

- The Diocese/National Church to adopt an information-sharing agreement with establishments appointing chaplains to inform the licensing diocese of any child or adult safeguarding complaints

4.2 Briefing guidance provided to independent reviewers

The IRs were given clear Terms of Reference and contractual details before the commencement of the review.

The Lead DSA ensured that the IRs had access to all relevant policies and practice guidance.

Elaine Rabbitt and another reviewer had attended the National IR meeting providing an opportunity for the IRs to discuss relevant issues and meet with the project lead.

4.3 Recording methods used by IRs

The Diocese created proforma templates for completion by the IRs.

The Independent Reviewer File Certificate, which was completed by hand, signed, and dated by the IRs for every file they reviewed. A copy is attached (See Appendices).

The front of the File Review Certificate identified the name of the subject, the role, whether any safeguarding concerns had been identified or whether a safeguarding file was held.

The rear of the File Certificate was a checklist for the file review of the clergy blue files:

- Are there other files or records which need to be examined in addition to this one?
- Have there been other concerns raised from relevant information requests (and so far, not documented), from diocesan colleagues as a result of the Bishop's letter
- Have there been any concerns raised in other files or from any other source
Evidence that a Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure had been obtained (Check Diocese spreadsheet)
- Any relevant criminal offences (include offences dealt with by way of caution). Any allegations of inappropriate conduct or criminal offences against children and/or vulnerable adults including domestic abuse? (if so, give details and a note of action taken. Include allegations that were unsubstantiated or for which criminal proceedings were dropped or were unsuccessful. This case will need to be added to the KCL and consideration given to whether further action is required)
- Any indication that extra supervision, training, or other arrangements were made because of issues relating to children or vulnerable adults including domestic abuse?
- Any periods of suspension for reasons which might have to do with children or vulnerable adults including domestic abuse?
- Does this subject need to be added to the KCL
- Does further action need to be taken? If so, please complete the Appendix D form: Independent Reviewers Record of Cases of Concern.

It is accepted by the IRs that the use of this Check List was not mandated within the PCR2 PPG. It is the understanding of the IRs that this Check List was produced for use in PCR1. The IRs felt that the use of the Check List was beneficial as it enabled the IRs to meet the objectives of the PCR2 in identifying safeguarding risk and provide commentary on the administration processes relating to safeguarding in the Diocese. The decision by the PCR2 Reference Group to use the check List is considered good practice. The inclusion of the File Certificate in each file was compliant with Phase 3 guidance within the PCR2 PPG. The Reference Group and the IRs would have liked this Check List to have been mandatory and standardised throughout every diocese giving consistency of information placed on the clergy blue files and those of church officers.

The IRs added the position held, date of review, IRs name, whether the file had been previously reviewed, whether any safeguarding concerns were identified and, any further comments against the subject's name on the electronic spreadsheet, allowing the diocese to have an auditable record of the review.

A second File Review Certificate was placed in every safeguarding file, Lay Ministry file, staff file reviewed. This file Certificate identified the subject, the reviewer, whether any further concerns had been identified, whether the personal file had been read alongside the safeguarding file.

The IRs concluded that the use of the File Certificates demonstrated the Lead DSA, PCR Reference Group, and the Diocese commitment to a thorough, transparent review process which the Lead DSA could take appropriate learning.

The IRs used Appendix D of the PCR2 PPG – Independent Reviewers Record of Cases of Concern.

Concerning the Diocesan file review, 17 cases (including 2 deceased files) were subject to Appendix D forms. These were mainly historic files. None of the issues identified posed any immediate safeguarding risk. The overriding theme of the Appendix D referrals related to past procedures that have changed/been updated since the appointment of the Lead DSA along with National policy and guidelines. On review of the safeguarding files, it was evident to the IRs that the Lead DSA had undertaken a review of the files in question and addressed any areas where previous procedures had left the case lacking in current good practice.

4.4 Other cross-system checks and references

The IRs referred to Crockfords (Directory of Clergy).

The IRs checked DBS details ensuring the Safer Recruitment policy was adhered to.

The IRs paid particular attention to character references and Clergy Current Status Letters (CCSL).

The IRs questioned the retention of paperwork relating to the Canon C4 process which is not retained on file. (Various safeguarding matters can be a cause of a breakdown in marriage which is often disclosed within C4 papers. From experience the IRs have found that these disclosures are not always referred to the DSA for further exploration and risk assessment) As a result of the file review, IRs reviewed only two C4 case papers.

Recommendations

- The IRs would recommend that before the destruction of any paperwork relating to the Canon C4 process the paperwork is reviewed by the DSA or a policy developed whereby the officer responsible for C4 investigation liaises with the DSA to ensure there are no allegations of a safeguarding nature that require a risk assessment or further exploration.
- Blue files to contain a chronology of workplaces such as an updated printout of Crockfords) to assist the reader to see where clergy have been at the front of the clergy blue file with any concerns flagged.

- Diocese to which the clergy is first engaged to create a working log in the blue file that can be updated from diocese to diocese this could also include details of any other matters of note.

4.5 How the IRs quality assured and standardised the methodology?

The use of Pro-forma templates as detailed in Section 4.3 ensured consistency of the approach by IRs.

The Lead DSA maintained contact with the IRs at every stage of the review.

The IRs coming from different backgrounds with different perspectives would discuss cases, share information, and good practice; this ensured that the methodology was applied consistently.

Elaine Rabbitt, Lead Independent Reviewer maintained contact with Bev Bickley from the National Safeguarding Team, with the Lead DSA attending virtual meetings led by Bev Bickley where the PCR2 process was discussed.

5.0 Safeguarding Children

5.1 It is evident the safeguarding response by the Diocese has developed and been refined over time and more so with the recommendations of the SCIE review. This reflects both the changes in the DSA personnel, and their professional experience and commitment made by the wider Church of England through its range of safeguarding policies. In the Diocese of Leicester, this is borne out by the appointment of the Lead DSA in 2015 as a permanent fulltime post, based within the Diocesan Offices and, the appointment of an Assistant DSA in February 2018. The Lead DSA, comes from a social work background the Assistant from a police background thus giving the multi-disciplinary approach to their role. Both have an excellent working knowledge of the policies, legislation, and processes that are key to their role. The Diocese has recognised the need for the Safeguarding offices to be separate giving the DSA's confidentiality, security, and people freedom to have confidential access to the DSAs leading to a culture of confidence for people within the diocese wishing to contact the Lead DSA and Assistant DSA e.g., a conversation such as "Not sure if this is a problem but....."

The IRs were impressed by the knowledge that the Lead DSA has of the Known Case List and other safeguarding cases.

The Diocese website provides clear safeguarding guidance, policy, points of contact internally and externally for reporting concerns of abuse, support information for survivors/victims, and details of the PCR2 process.

The Diocese commitment to safeguarding and the PCR2 process is supported by a video message from the Bishop of Leicester.

The reporting pathways and guidance are reiterated in safeguarding training which is mandated for all clergy and relevant (role appropriate) staff every three years. The responsibility for ensuring attendance at mandated training sits with the individuals however non-compliance is monitored and actioned by the Safeguarding team and the bishop's office.

In the event of a disclosure being made to a clergy member by a member of the public, the clergy member will make a referral to the DSA for assessment and determination of the next steps. If the disclosure relates to a living person, the DSA will refer to the statutory agencies.

Leicester Cathedral website provides information on those with Safeguarding responsibilities. The Diocese Lead DSA is the main point of contact for all adult and child safeguarding referrals, provides advice, information, and support, and liaises with statutory and voluntary agencies.

Recommendations

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a process for alerting people when their safeguarding training is due for renewal prioritising safeguarding leadership/PTO training. |
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5.2 Quality of safeguarding children's work

The quality of work by both the Lead DSA and Assistant DSA is very good. The IRs thought that the quality of the work, the thoroughness, the process, and the recording were in part due to their previous roles within social care and police. The Lead DSA and Assistant DSA have a clear understanding of their roles recognising the uniqueness of their positions.

Making referrals/contact with the police is often difficult as currently there is no single point of contact in place.

Delays in police investigations and Clergy Discipline Measures cause delays in the DSAs work. The DSAs are robust in their efforts to keep processes on track, maintain contact with the police and keep survivors/victims updated.

The IRs found evidence of:

- Consistency in case management.
- Case notes are clear, concise, and respectful.
- Good decision-making with the rationale well documented.
- Good recording of the initial referral with a chronology of investigation details through to the conclusion.
- DSA's response to concerns is timely per Church of England guidelines.
- DSA's have a good working knowledge of the House of Bishops Guidance and policy Promoting a Safer Church, Safer Recruitment, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.

- There is evidence of good safeguards for protecting sensitive material within case notes.
- All files are stored in locked cabinets within the Safeguarding Team office with access limited to the DSAs and the admin support.
- Responses to concerns were found to be appropriate and proportionate.
- Links with survivors/victims are excellent with actions detailed in the case management records.
- Good multi-agency working.
- Detailed risk assessments

Examples of good practice within case notes

- Their responses to concerns show evidence of curiosity – e.g., querying why a person’s teaching career ended.
- IRs found evidence of associate mapping within safeguarding management groups linking clergy where there are themes of concern.
- All case records are concluded with a closing summary placed at the front of each safeguarding file.
- The IRs found evidence that the DSAs challenge cultural assumptions and sexist remarks.

Areas for consideration

- *Should the parent’s decision to contact the police be influenced by the Church? This point was picked up in a past case (Before 2000) and no further incidents were identified. However, the IRs felt it worthy of mention to remind those working within the church that both children and adults when victims/survivors are very much influenced by what people say and should be encouraged to report any incidents to the police.
- **The IRs found no evidence of children having been spoken to. There is good inclusion of parents however, there seems too much caution about asking children/speaking to children. (Consideration be given to the use of the Lundy method of participation – this helps duty bearers involve children meaningfully in decision-making). Possibly explore the role of a children’s worker.

**These areas were discussed with the Lead DSA who gave assurance that all matters are reported to the police (this was also evident in all safeguarding files since the appointment of a DSA in the Diocese).*

***Concerning talking to children, the Lead DSA stated that any allegations that came from children were always referred to the statutory agencies who would carry out any interviews*

in the proper format. The Diocese promotes through the parish notices, leaflets etc where children can seek help, report incidents.

The IRs identified that there are no recorded incidents of child sexual abuse disclosed in childhood, the recorded disclosures of child abuse are from adults who were abused as a child. What are the inhibitors?

Recommendations

- A standardised referral form to formalise the process not just locally but between diocese – this should be a national objective.
- Consideration be given to how the diocese can further promote the voice of the child. Who they can talk to, who can help, safe places? Possibly explore the role of a children’s worker. (The IRs are aware that the DSA will always refer following any disclosure by a child to the statutory agencies for the child to be spoken to) This refers to when the statutory agencies are not involved or have been and around support.
- Children are being given the tools to share any worries – worry box – clear guidance within churches for children.
- Clear bottom lines needed for clergy who have children residing with them – National objective. This is not unique to the Diocese of Leicester
- Single point of contact with the police.

5.3 Quality of case management of children’s work

The DSA is accountable to the Diocese Safeguarding Oversight Group, whose scrutiny provides that the DSAs role is being delivered in accordance with all processes and policy and with the appropriate rigour and professionalism. The Lead DSA also benefits from internal support through the Director of Operations and Governance and external independent supervision from an Independent Safeguarding Adviser and former DSA. This ensures independent scrutiny offering a different perspective on safeguarding cases. The DSA can discuss options and seek advice. The Diocese of Leicester also have a Quality Assurance Review Group.

The Assistant DSA is supervised by the Rachael Spiers Lead DSA.

5.4 Quality of support for survivors and victims

The IRs were assured that the Diocese of Leicester is committed to supporting survivors/victims and their wider families the DSAs keeping in regular contact, pastoral support is given and, the diocese providing provision for external support or counselling. The Diocese has provided funds when required.

This is supported by a comment found in case notes from the Director of Operations and Governance 'Our responsibility to the victim comes first.'

The IRs found good examples of victim support, counselling, good networking, and future safety planning.

Evidence of this support was also identified in the interviews carried out with the nine victims/survivors, partners, ex-partners who came forward to take part in the PCR2 process. All of whom commented that the support that they had received from the DSAs was good or excellent. (Issues that arose from these interviews is addressed in section 7.0 of this report)

5.5 How the Diocese manages those who pose a risk to children.

The IRs reviewed two areas of risk that came within the remit of the PCR2.

DBS blemishes.

Respondents who are either clergy or church officers

Where a risk is identified in either of the categories above the DSA will ensure a risk assessment is carried out in partnership with the relevant statutory agency.

If the risk is manageable, a written agreement is drawn up detailing specific conditions that the respondent must adhere to and signed by the subject and appropriate Diocese link officer and, the DSA. The Lead DSA and DSA has responsibility for the review of every agreement whether annually or more frequently appropriate to the level of risk. The day-to-day management is the responsibility of the named person in the church setting. Any breaches of the agreement are reported by this person to the DSA who will notify the relevant statutory agency. A copy of the risk assessment is kept on the safeguarding file. Risk assessments reviewed by the IRs were appropriate and proportionate to the level of risk.

Independent risk assessments are commissioned by the diocese.

The IRs found evidence of the DSAs not losing sight of previous serious offences when considering risk assessments despite no more recent concerns.

The IRs found a consistent process of managing risk and considering pastoral support to victims and respondents.

The IRs noted that sometimes there is an over-reliance on Police or Local Authority to make a judgment re risk according to their thresholds

Recommendation

- The Church to form their risk assessment even if the risk is not identified by other agencies.
- Tracking system for safety agreement renewal.

6.0 Safeguarding Adults

6.1 The Diocese response to safeguarding adults

The response of the Diocese to safeguarding adults' mirrors that of safeguarding children as described above. The DSAs have responsibility for all safeguarding irrespective of age.

Section 6 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline 2016 measures defines a vulnerable adult as:

“A person aged 18 years or over whose ability to protect himself or herself from violence, abuse neglect or exploitation is significantly impaired through physical or mental disability or illness, or age, emotional fragility or otherwise: and for that purpose, the reference to being impaired is to be temporarily or indefinitely impaired”.

The Care Act 2014 identifies that the statutory safeguarding duty applies to an adult with care and support needs who is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect and is unable to protect themselves as a consequence of their care and support needs.

The distinction is important to understand as it will only be within the latter definition that the statutory safeguarding duty applies for the Church to 'raise a safeguarding concern with the local authority.

The Church's approach to working with the broader definition of vulnerable adults is recognised, but in terms of its partners to be able to do so this may on occasion be limited by the absence of adult social care. In practice, there is evidence, certainly at the 'local' level that care, and support are offered to someone who is seen as vulnerable in the ordinary everyday sense of the word, notwithstanding any legal definition.

6.2 Quality of safeguarding adult investigations

The comments reflected in Section 5.2 are equally applicable to the approach to safeguarding adults in the Diocese of Leicester.

6.3 Quality of case management for adult investigations

The comments reflected in Section 5.3 are equally applicable to the approach to safeguarding adults in the Diocese of Leicester

6.4 Quality of support for survivors and victims

The comments reflected in Section 5.4 are equally applicable to the approach to safeguarding adults in the Diocese of Leicester

6.5 How the diocese manages those who pose a risk to adults

The comments reflected in Section 5.4 are equally applicable to the approach to safeguarding adults in the Diocese of Leicester.

7.0 Survivors

7.1 The Diocese survivor's strategy

The IRs were provided with the Diocese of Leicester Survivor Care Strategy for the PCR2 which is compliant with the PCR2 PPG as detailed in Section 6, “The involvement of victims, survivors and those with lived experience of abuse”.

The strategy provides clear information as to the aims of the diocese to promote the wellbeing of survivors/victims and to ensure their voices are heard

- The appointment of a named person to the PCR2 Reference group who can advocate survivor perspectives in the process
- An open invitation to victims or survivors of church-related abuse who want to make representations to the Independent Reviewer about the response they have received from the church to their abuse
- New information or disclosures regarding church-related abuse
- Contact with individuals that the Independent Reviewers may identify through their work, where they deem this necessary.

The strategy informs of how the diocese will promote the PCR2, how to report abuse and, how anyone wishing to can talk to the Independent Reviewers.

The strategy was promoted via the diocesan website and through information shared with congregations at the parish level (e.g., Diomail), through press releases at the start of the PCR2, and again halfway through.

The strategy detailed the role of the Advocate for Survivor/victim care.

The strategy provided clear information regarding helplines e.g., Thirtyone:eight, the national safeguarding team, or the NSPCC dedicated independent helpline number.

The Survivor Strategy, safeguarding information e.g., details of the DSAs, contact numbers, helplines numbers are easily accessible on the diocese website.

7.2 Ensuring that the survivor’s lived experience was incorporated into PCR2

It was evident to the IRs that the Diocese of Leicester was robust in promoting the objectives of the survivor strategy.

As a result of diocese robustness, nine persons came forward to speak with the Independent Reviewers. These were made of male and female victims of clergy abuse, related to a victim of abuse, a witness to the abuse and, the wife of a respondent.

The IRs would like to take this opportunity to thank all who took part in this very difficult exercise recognising the support by Rachael Spiers in making the arrangements, ensuring that all who took part were supported before and after and the environment in which the interviews took place was suitable and safe.

For this report all those who participated wish to remain anonymous however, some have stated that they would be willing to assist further with the PCR2 or with future initiatives within the diocese. They can be contacted via Rachael Spiers the Lead DSA.

The IRs set clear parameters for the nine persons interviewed, the focus of the interview was to look at their journey and experiences since the abuse, not the abuse itself.

Although the points raised by the nine are mainly historical, they identify that what happens at the time of the abuse, the reporting of the abuse, how the abuse is investigated and, how they are supported throughout the process affects their journey to recovery. The IRs acknowledge that although the abuse that these people had suffered was historical to them their families, witnesses, it felt like it happened yesterday thus highlighting how a concern is dealt with today impacts their future.

This report will not identify any specific case but the themes and comments that arose from the interviews with the IRs.

- The overriding point of the nine interviewed is the policies and the procedures of the Church of England fail the victim. *This is related to long-drawn-out CDM procedures that fail to recognise the trauma this causes to victims and respondents. Not recognising their vulnerabilities and barriers at the time of the abuse occurring.*
- The CDM process fails the victim in favour of the respondent. *This is related to the one-year rule of receiving the complaint and not recognising the difficulties a victim is faced with.*
- The church hides abuse, prevents the involvement of police for fear of scandal
- The church pays more importance to the respondent and forgiveness than believing and supporting the victim. *This is related to the respondent having been suspended returning to their role (possibly with a safeguarding agreement in place) the victim has lost their church family and not being able to return to the church.*
- The respondent gains every time, the victim loses a church family, is outcast, isolated, and vilified *(related to the previous point)*
- The policies and procedures do not keep people safe – people need to be alerted to abuse. *This is related to the congregation, children, Parochial Church Councils understanding what safeguarding is and not just paying lip service. Promoting safeguarding within their church/parish*
- Feeling of loneliness.
- The procedures are abusive in themselves.
- Even though the Church of England has a wider definition of a vulnerable adult the CDM process does not recognise this definition or take into account the vulnerability of the person at the time of the abuse or how a person can be influenced by someone in authority when their lowest point.
- God's will is a powerful tool. *This is related to spiritual abuse especially when a person is feeling vulnerable, alone, and is seeking support, advice.*
- The church fails to recognise the impact of abuse on a person e.g., poor mental health, self-harm, future abusive relationships, and how one abusive relationship can lead to another.

- “As a young person, I didn’t have the courage to reach out to friends, school. I needed someone to reach out to me.”
- Confusion with spiritual direction and what is support.
- “Another clergy suspected but didn’t do anything, there was a rumour, but nobody listens”.
- Bishops have the overriding decision so will protect their own.
- Bishops support of clergy is too distant to understand the victim's point
- “I came from a socially deprived family the church was family, I now know I was groomed”.
- Extended family members were groomed and were also impressed by the abuser. This limited the people available to ask for help - faith controls all aspects of life, so it was an extra challenge to raise a complaint.
- Announcements in the church of suspensions – can identify the victim. There is no anonymity.
- “What happened afterward was more traumatic than what happened”. *Again, this is related to the CDM process the constant waiting, you get over one hurdle then have to wait to get over another*
- “I feel I have a label on my head that says liar, that every priest is going to think I will accuse them of abuse because he got away with it”.
- I had a managerial job now I just manage to get through the day.
- How are those that witness abuse or know of the abuse third hand supported
- “The police prosecution failed not because of a lack of evidence but my health. The church failed because of who the perpetrator was as he was put on a pedestal and given an important role where did that leave me, I’d lost my family, everything”.
- Concerns that the parish safeguarding officer is not independent enough. If the respondent is within the Parish, they may know him/her how they remain independent and how are they then supported.
- Control that clergy have within small parishes
- Felt alone – supported family but no one was supporting me
- Children that are now adults are not offered support
- The misogynistic behaviour of clergy towards me; I was made to feel it was my fault because of how I looked. I was told I would be good for the parish with legs like that. I would draw in the parishioners.
- I never lost my faith in God I can pray anywhere I lost my faith in the church, the people who make up the church, and the archaic out-of-date ideals.

The good points

- All recognised the support that they had received from the DSA one describing it as ‘Spot on’.
- Safeguarding now has a higher profile and can see the motivation for change within the Diocese.
- It was recognised that the PCR2 wished for the voice of the survivor to be heard.
- “The abuse has not defined how I am”
- Diocese agreed to pay for counselling
- The church was respectful of the family’s privacy
- Still confident now that she could ask for help if she was struggling – the DSA is always there – feels constant.
- “Rachael understands and gives me loads of support”.
- There is a change of attitude within the church.

The Bishop of Leicester is fully supportive of the Survivor Strategy, the IRs are aware that the Bishop has met and will meet with survivors on a one-to-one basis.

7.3 Future for how the learning from the lived experiences of survivors will be harnessed

Within the Diocese of Leicester, the Survivor Care Strategy promotes ‘the purpose of speaking to the Independent Reviewers is to generate information about how victims and survivors have been responded to by the church, for survivors to comment on how helpful they found the responses and what could have been done differently to assist them more. These insights will be utilised to assist the diocese and the national Church Safeguarding Team to improve their responses to victims and survivors in the future.

As a result of the engagement that the IRs had they were assured that the Diocese of Leicester is championing their Survivor Care Strategy and taking and developing learning opportunities.

Recommendation

- To build on the PCR2 Survivor Strategy to embed it into the Diocese as the Diocese of Leicester Survivor Strategy.
- To explore ways in which the Diocese can improve the message to children

8.0 Statutory Agencies

8.1 The structure of how the Diocese contributes to multi-agency working

The IRs found clear evidence of engagement with statutory agencies – especially the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). As previously stated, the engagement with police is sometimes difficult with no Single Point of Contact however, when engaged there is

evidence of good working together. The DSAs are knowledgeable of their role with victims and respondents when police have primacy of an investigation. The DSAs case notes record the time and date of all contact and responses.

8.2 How effectively does the diocese work with external parties

As stated above the case notes evidenced timely, appropriate, and proportionate exchange of information. Good inter-agency working is evident within the membership of the Reference Group and Diocese Safeguarding Oversight Group who coming from the statutory and voluntary sectors give a wide range of support and suggestion of developing good practice. The membership also extends to local and national Safeguarding Advisory Groups, Safeguarding Panels, etc., giving the Diocese of Leicester an excellent framework to build on.

8.3 Describe the inhibitors to effective multi-agency working

The IRs did not identify any inhibitors other than those previously mentioned.

9.0 Risk Management

9.1 How effective is the Diocese at managing, recording, and prioritising risk issues within individual files.

The IRs found the identification of risk, prioritising, management, and recording consistent and robustly dealt with. Risk assessments were easily accessible within case notes.

IRs saw a reference to the Church of England approved and externally independent risk assessment processes and saw evidence of the resultant risk management plan.

Files accurately record details of all risk assessments.

9.2 How effective is the Diocese at identifying and prioritising risk

There is a culture across the Diocese of staff members and clergy seeking the advice of the DSAs regarding matters where they identify a potential risk. This is a positive culture and can be attributed to the robust mandated Safeguarding training and relationships that the DSAs have successfully built with colleagues.

In respect of blemished DBS, the diocese in conjunction with Thirtyone:eight have a robust process against which to access any risk resulting from a blemished DBS and where appropriate to manage the risk. Records are kept appropriately.

9.3 How effective is the Diocese at sharing risk with other agencies.

The DSAs comply with the Church of England policy and procedure together with statutory requirements on child protection and adult safeguarding. The DSAs as previously stated have developed a good working relationship with the local statutory agencies. Information and risk are shared consistently, appropriately, and proportionately.

Recommendation

- Where there is a safety agreement in place a form of tracking system for renewal, to eliminate delays in timely reviews.
- A copy of the safety agreement/risk assessment to be placed within the clergy blue file or church officer file
- To establish a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) with statutory agencies.

10.0 Overarching safeguarding process

10.1 Effectiveness of the transition of transfer between dioceses.

The IRs saw evidence of consistent completion and inclusion of the Confidential Declaration Form, current enhanced DBS where appropriate, and the Clergy Current Status Letter (CCSL) – Safe to Receive. The inclusion of a Crockfords printout is subject to a previous recommendation.

In the Diocese of Leicester, it is current practice for the bishop’s chaplain to review the clergy blue file of any transferring clergy to ensure there is no risk. This enables the Bishop to sign the CCSL with confidence.

The process for incoming blue files; the bishop's chaplain will review the file ensuring all necessary documentation is present, and any safeguarding issues are referred to the DSA.

The IRs noted that there is inconsistency in the CCSL process, vague information given by a Diocese can lead to ‘risky’ clergy being transferred across Diocese.

Recommendation

- Clergy blue files are to be reviewed by the DSA on the arrival of a new clergy into the Diocese.
- For the CCSL, DBS to be reviewed by the DSA before any formal interview or acceptance.

Although not in the scope of the review the IRs were conscious of the growing awareness the church has of the use of homophobic, misogynist, sexist, racist language. Consideration was given by the IRs that if the information was such that it raised a safeguarding matter then a referral would be made to the Lead DSA. What the IRs found, more so within correspondence held on historic clergy files, was the use of such negative language around the ordination of women and human sexuality. This is not endemic to the Diocese of Leicester correspondence within the clergy blue files go with the clergy when they transfer from diocese to diocese.

10.2 Knowledge, skills, and culture

The Diocese benefits from having an experienced Lead DSA who is highly qualified for her role and delivers to an excellent standard. In addition to the Lead DSA, the Diocese has followed the SCIE recommendation of the appointment of an Assistant DSA ensuring resilience. The DSAs are supported by an experienced administration assistant.

The Diocese has recognised the importance of safeguarding training enhancing the current post from part-time to full-time. There is a strong culture of safeguarding training across the diocese with strict adherence to mandated training.

There is evidence of a robust safeguarding culture across senior levels within the Diocese with the Bishop of Leicester supportive of, and fully engaged in their PCR2 responsibilities including writing in the Pastoral letter in pre-review preparation, presenting a video clip reiterating the Diocese and Church's commitment to safeguarding on the diocese website. The Diocese holds a Safeguarding Conference once a year that is open to all church officers with outside speakers addressing varying safeguarding topics. The Diocese did not allow COVID 19 to put pay to the conference for the last two years it has been online this year having an estimated 71 attendees.

Recommendations

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To introduce an electronic case management system. (The diocese is waiting for the introduction of the national case management system) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To introduce a system of tracking/information sharing of transient respondents. (those who have roles within the church community, however, travel from area to area).• Introduction of identity cards for clergy personnel. (Society promotes the use of identity cards for all companies visiting homes) |

Conclusion

Over recent years there has been considerable investment into safeguarding within the Diocese of Leicester, however, safeguarding is fluid with the ever-increasing demand on DSAs, training, clergy, parish staff, the introduction of new policies and procedures, with the areas of abuse being widened to take in homophobia, racism, etc., there is always room for further investment/resourcing. The IRs would therefore recommend that the resourcing of safeguarding is a constant agenda item along with regular reviews.

The impact that an audit of this level has on the diocese not just financially but on staffing is immense, it is evident that all staff from clergy to administrators have played their part in the PCR2 process.

The PCR2 of the Diocese of Leicester has met all objectives as set out in the PCR2 Protocol and Practice Guidance. The Diocese of Leicester has evidenced excellent working practices. There are recommendations at a local and national level that have been discussed with the Lead DSA, and the Reference Group. The IRs found the Safeguarding Team to be dedicated, professional and, committed to producing a high standard of work with the interests of the victims/survivors uppermost, this is supported throughout the diocese from a senior level down.