

**Independent Safeguarding Audit of
Carlisle Diocesan Board of Finance and
Carlisle Cathedral**

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Introduction

1 Introduction

1.1 The independent safeguarding audit programme for the Church of England (CofE) was commissioned by the Archbishops' Council and is overseen by the CofE's National Safeguarding Team (NST). Led by the INEQE Safeguarding Group and working to a consistent framework, the audits test the sufficiency of safeguarding arrangements within Diocese Boards of Finance (DBFs) and Cathedrals. They have a particular focus on the CofE's new National Safeguarding Standards that provide the structure for this report.¹

1.2 Audit findings have taken account of the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) audits, Past Cases Review 2 (PCR2) outcomes, other relevant material as well as evidence from surveys, focus groups, direct correspondence and interviews. For Carlisle DBF and Carlisle Cathedral, this involved the following:

- Over 580 documents being collated and analysed prior to the Audit's fieldwork.
- A range of interviews being held with Church Officers (staff and volunteers), external partners, victims, survivors and other stakeholders.
- 576 anonymous survey responses being received, which gathered input from key communities connected to the Church. These were submitted by victims and survivors, children and young people as well as those worshipping or working within the DBF, the Cathedral and parishes.
- Eight focus groups.
- A confidential contact form being made available via a dedicated webpage.
- In total, the Audit undertook 41 separate engagement sessions reaching 83 people.

¹ https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2023-10/national-safeguarding-standards-and-quality-assurance-framework_sep23.pdf



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- 1.3 The Audit report is separated into Part One, Carlisle DBF and Part Two, Carlisle Cathedral. This has been done to ensure that each audited body is able to focus on their own strengths and areas for identified improvement.
- 1.4 The report has been reviewed for factual accuracy by both the DBF and the Cathedral.

Part One - Carlisle Diocesan Board of Finance

2 Context

- 2.1 The Diocese of Carlisle is a predominantly rural area, with boundaries that stretch across Cumbria. It covers approximately 2,570 square miles and encompasses the unitary local authority areas of Cumberland and Westmorland & Furness. Within the Diocese, there are three archdeaconries, 11 rural deaneries, 104 Benefices, 235 parishes and 352 places of worship.
- 2.2 Cumbria itself boasts some of the most extensively protected landscapes in England, including the Lake District and parts of the Yorkshire Dales National Park. It hosts Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site, three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and attracts 37 million tourists each year.
- 2.3 Cumbria's economy is complex, with over 27,000 businesses providing around 270,000 jobs. World-class engineering, manufacturing, and energy companies give Cumbria the highest concentration of advanced manufacturing employment in England. The rural, land-based economy is also vital for food supply, but a shrinking workforce and reduced access to labour could hinder growth. Unemployment and deprivation are concentrated in certain areas of Cumbria, with health and social problems placing a strain on local services.
- 2.4 The total population within the Diocese is estimated to be around half a million people. The latest Statistics for Mission (2022) showed a worshipping community of 12,800, with the average weekly attendance across all ages being recorded as 8,900.
- 2.5 Ministering in Cumbria presents unique challenges due to its geographic footprint, large rural landscape and isolated communities. Transportation and technology difficulties can exacerbate these challenges, with limited main roads and unreliable broadband



connectivity featuring in some areas. The Diocese prioritises face-to-face interaction to overcome these obstacles.

3 Progress

- 3.1 Overall, the SCIE safeguarding audit and PCR2 made 25 considerations / recommendations for the DBF in Carlisle. These covered a range of issues, including capacity, case management, safer recruitment, and supporting and engaging with victims and survivors. The Audit has been reassured that initial actions were met, with several being subsumed into subsequent plans or superseded by national developments (such as the definition of vulnerable adults and the adoption of the National Safeguarding Case Management System).
- 3.2 The SCIE audit was published in March 2017 and resulted in 18 considerations, all of which were accepted. A dedicated action plan was developed in response, which was overseen by the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel (DSAP) and the Bishop's Leadership Team (BLT). The Audit heard that the current Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor / Officer (DSA/O) inherited this action plan with completed actions and reviewed its progress prior to engaging in the current Audit.
- 3.3 The PCR2 was published in November 2021, resulting in 51 recommendations. An action plan was similarly developed which focused on the themed recommendations set out by PCR2. The Audit heard of the activity undertaken in response to PCR2 and was reassured of the progress made.
- 3.4 Most actions were noted as being met, with some ongoing, and others (as identified by the DSA/O) requiring revisiting. This approach by the DSA/O reflects good practice. Continuing workstreams include the support and recognition of Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSOs), embedding safeguarding at a parish level, restructuring of the safeguarding section of the Diocesan website, formalising the Victim and Survivor Strategy

and embedding the recently introduced feedback mechanisms.

- 3.5 Whilst the DBF has not experienced a formal Lessons Learnt Review (LLR), learning has been accrued through engagement with a nationally led core group meeting. In addition, the DBF has added a 'lessons learned' section at every Safeguarding Case Management Group meeting to facilitate reflective practice. The Audit sees this as good practice.

4 Culture, Leadership and Capacity

Culture

- 4.1 A strong sense of safety and a positive safeguarding culture are evident across the Diocese and its parishes. Those working in the DBF overwhelmingly feel safe and supported, describing their working environments with words like "supportive," "respectful," and "collaborative." This positive sentiment is echoed in the parishes, where staff and volunteers feel welcomed and supported.
- 4.2 Most staff believe a safeguarding culture is embedded throughout the Diocese, and they've seen real improvements in the local safeguarding arrangements. There's a strong belief that concerns can be raised without fear of reprisal, contributing to a sense of trust and confidence.
- 4.3 Whilst these findings are encouraging, there is room for improvement in engaging the wider community. Feedback from parishioners was generally positive but participation levels in the Audit's survey were lower than those of staff. Whilst to a degree, this may reflect the fact that some parishes have smaller congregations, the Audit takes the view that communication could be strengthened to build stronger connections with the community to ensure everyone feels empowered to contribute to a safe and welcoming environment.
- 4.4 Overall, the feedback suggests a culture that is receptive to change and improvement but also highlights the need for ongoing efforts to consolidate and strengthen practice and engagement, with an emphasis on reaching into parishes.
- 4.5 The DBF reinforces its commitment to a respectful, safe, and healthy environment through comprehensive wellbeing and safeguarding initiatives. These include staff wellbeing

surveys, with action points developed in partnership with Thrive², online resources and support structures and unconscious bias training. Safeguarding is also actively promoted through a collaborative engagement with Carlisle Cathedral during the delivery of the Safeguarding Season³ and the LOUDfence⁴ installation. The 2023 Safeguarding Season campaign featured a message from the Bishop of Penrith and was marked by a special service and recommitment to their safeguarding pledge.

- 4.6 External collaboration is also a strength. The Audit saw and heard evidence of strong partnerships with statutory safeguarding agencies, most notably the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) teams, whose managers participate in the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel (DSAP).

Leadership

- 4.7 The Diocesan Bishop of Carlisle holds ultimate accountability for safeguarding, a responsibility that the current Acting Diocesan Bishop unequivocally accepts.
- 4.8 The Audit found substantial evidence of the Acting Diocesan Bishop's commitment, enthusiasm, and positive impact. Those consulted consistently praised his work, frequently highlighting his "*significant effort in promoting and upholding rigorous safeguarding policies and protocols*". Furthermore, the Audit observed a 'safeguarding first' philosophy in his decision-making, including difficult decisions made despite external pressure.
- 4.9 The Audit noted that the day-to-day oversight of safeguarding was previously delegated by the former Diocesan Bishop to his suffragan. The Audit does not support this approach.

² <https://thrive-worldwide.org/>

³ The Safeguarding Season supports survivors and promotes learning from their experiences.

⁴ The LOUDfence installation in the Cathedral grounds, encourages people to tie ribbons and leave messages on the fence in support of survivors. <https://loudfence.com/>

Whilst assigning specific safeguarding functions to Suffragan Bishops, Archdeacons, and others can be helpful, such allocations must be focused, well-structured and not blur lines of accountability.

Recommendation D1: In line with the current CofE framework, the Diocesan Bishop should retain ultimate responsibility and accountability for all safeguarding matters. Whilst delegation of specific support tasks is permissible and can enhance effectiveness, the Diocesan Bishop must maintain clear oversight and leadership, ensuring their direct involvement is evident in all safeguarding practices. Delegated responsibilities must be clearly defined, documented, and regularly reviewed.

- 4.10 The DBF has introduced a robust, Safer Recruitment compliant process for leadership appointments, including careful use of psychometric testing and role-specific assessments. Senior clergy candidates must submit a safeguarding statement, undergo an interview with the DSA, and demonstrate their understanding of safeguarding and their approach to creating a safe environment. This is good practice.
- 4.11 The Acting Diocesan Bishop is supported by an active and experienced Diocesan Secretary, and by the Acting Bishop's Chaplain whose permanent responsibilities include governance support and HR oversight. Her appointment as Chaplain is on an interim basis, pending review when a new Bishop of Carlisle is appointed. Each of these senior staff has a good understanding of safeguarding and the pathways for help and support.
- 4.12 That said, the current, interim amalgamation of HR, Governance, and Bishop's Chaplain functions creates potential conflicts of interest. Whilst supporting the administration and coordination of governance related activities may complement the Chaplain's role, holding a senior HR position presents a clear conflict of interest. Therefore, the Audit makes the following recommendation.

Recommendation D2: On the appointment of the new Bishop of Carlisle, the Clergy HR and Bishop's Chaplain roles should be separated. Whilst the Bishop's Chaplain may provide administrative support for governance meetings and related activities, they should not hold a senior clergy HR oversight position. This separation is essential to avoid conflicts of interest and ensure impartial HR practices.

Archdeacons

- 4.13 Archdeacons play an important role in supporting and promoting safeguarding activity. However, there has been some inconsistency in how this role has been applied, and, until recently, a degree of disconnect. Discussions with the current Archdeacons revealed that a more collaborative approach is now being developed, and there is a clear desire to build upon the much-improved visitations safeguarding framework (developed in consultation with the DSA/O that guides and supports their work).
- 4.14 The new framework document introduced in October 2024 prompts and records checks for key safeguarding approaches in parishes. These include the presence of a Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO), up-to-date Safer Church posters and safeguarding policies, and the management of historical records (using the Safeguarding Records Retention toolkit). They also review the accuracy of online safeguarding information (parish websites and 'A Church Near You'), the currency of training, safer recruitment practices, and use of the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard. If consistently and uniformly applied, this will represent good practice.
- 4.15 To further strengthen this approach, the Audit makes the following recommendation.

Recommendation D3: Before any formal or informal visit to a Church body within their Archdeaconry, Archdeacons should consult with the DSA/O for an update on current safeguarding trends, themes, and any relevant local issues. Following the visit, they should debrief with the DSA/O, providing a record of the visit, issues discussed, and agreed actions.

4.16 Whilst all three Archdeacons have safeguarding responsibilities, one has been nominated as the Lead for Safeguarding. To ensure this role improves the consistency and structure of the Archdeacons' approach to safeguarding, the Audit makes the following recommendation.

Recommendation D4: The Lead Safeguarding Archdeacon should coordinate and chair quarterly safeguarding meetings with the other Archdeacons. These meetings could include presentations from relevant experts to help upskill and brief the Archdeacon team, ensuring a consistent approach to safeguarding across all Archdeaconries.

These meetings should be recorded in minutes, with an agenda agreed with the DSA/O covering (but not limited to) areas such as:

- a) Safeguarding trends and themes: Sharing updates on any emerging trends or developing patterns related to safeguarding issues, including information from the safeguarding team about areas of concern or matters they wish to be reinforced.
- b) Challenging cases: Reviewing complex or difficult safeguarding cases encountered locally and nationally, and identifying lessons learned that can improve and ensure a consistent response to safeguarding matters in a local context.
- c) Training and development: Focusing on training needs, including evaluating training delivery and identifying areas for professional development.
- d) Feedback and communication: Gathering feedback for the safeguarding team, including suggestions on how to improve and consolidate communication and collaboration across the parishes.

- e) Annual review of visits / visitations and articles of enquiry: Updating and ensuring continuous improvement of the safeguarding template for formal and informal visits.
- f) Good practice: Capturing what has worked well and ensuring that those involved receive recognition and encouragement for the good work they have done.

Ministerial Development Reviews (MDRs)

4.17 Ministerial Development Reviews (MDRs), conducted by the Bishops and Archdeacons, are a valuable and valued development opportunity for clergy. A significant backlog had occurred and whilst the Bishops cycle caught up in the last year, recent vacancies and absences within the Archdiocese has meant that the Archdeacons backlog has remained, causing frustration amongst many clergy engaged by the Audit. Furthermore, many were unsure about whether the MDR process was a performance review or a developmental opportunity and how, in either case, it might apply to safeguarding.

4.18 Whilst these are issues for the Bishop of Carlisle and nationally the CofE, from the Audit's perspective, it is an opportunity as part of a wider process to ensure that safeguarding and developmental aspirations are appropriately considered, recorded, and supported. For example, an opportunity during an MDR to reflect on any safeguarding issues encountered by the clergy member in past and present roles and those areas in which the individual would wish to develop safeguarding insights and expertise to equip them for future roles.

4.19 With all Archdeacons now in place and with the additional support from a retired Archdeacon, the process of addressing the backlog is ongoing. It is important that this work remains a priority and that clarity of purpose (from a safeguarding perspective) is addressed. The Audit therefore makes the following recommendation.

Recommendation D5: The Bishop of Carlisle should ensure that MDRs effectively support the development of clergy, including their safeguarding knowledge and practice by:

- a) Clarifying the purpose and scope of MDRs, emphasising how safeguarding considerations are integrated into the process.
- b) Communicating the agreed purpose, process and application of the MDR process within and across the dioceses to all clergy.
- c) Including a dedicated section within the MDR on safeguarding, where clergy reflect on:
 - i. Safeguarding issues encountered in their past and present roles.
 - ii. Areas where they wish to develop their safeguarding knowledge and expertise.
 - iii. How they plan to apply safeguarding best practice in their current and future roles.
- d) Prioritising the completion of outstanding MDRs, ensuring that all clergy receive timely feedback and support. This may involve continuing the use of additional resources to ensure that all MDRs are up-to-date by the of 2025.

Governance DBF

4.20 The DBF operates a range of appropriate governance and oversight meetings. These reflect the current expectations of the CofE and the other relevant requirements, such as those issued by the Charity Commission.

4.21 It was clear that the relationship between the Bishop's Council (BC), Bishop's Leadership Team (BLT), and DBF was appropriately focused and complementary. This could be further enhanced by adopting a planned, thematic approach to key safeguarding issues, ensuring complementary scrutiny, executive leadership, and governance focus.

4.22 The themes, level of focus, and activity should be agreed upon as part of an annual meeting between the respective Chairs and / or their key representatives. This will help to ensure there is no duplication of effort and absolute clarity about who is responsible for

leading on particular areas. Such a meeting would include the Chairs of the BC, DBF, BLT, DSAP, and the Archdeacons' Quarterly Safeguarding Meeting (if that recommendation is agreed).

Recommendation D6: To enhance collaboration and ensure a cohesive approach to safeguarding, an annual meeting should be established between the Chairs (or their designated representatives) of the following groups:

- Bishop's Council (BC)
- Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF)
- Bishop's Leadership Team (BLT)
- Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel (DSAP)
- Archdeacons' Quarterly Safeguarding Meeting (if established)

This meeting should focus on:

- a) **Agreeing on key safeguarding themes:** Identifying priority areas for the upcoming year, ensuring alignment with specific oversight responsibilities, national guidance and local needs.
- b) **Defining roles and responsibilities:** Clarifying leadership and accountability for each theme, avoiding duplication of effort and ensuring clear lines of responsibility.
- c) **Planning collaborative activities:** Developing a coordinated plan for addressing the chosen themes, outlining specific actions, timelines, and resources.
- d) **Considering overall skills, inclusion, and diversity representation.** To ensure that within and between the bodies they reflect the communities they serve and possess the necessary skills and perspectives to address a wide range of issues, leading to better informed decision-making and improved outcomes.
- e) **Identified areas for improvement.** Monitoring collective progress.

- f) **Charity Commission reporting:** Ensuring that each group has considered any issue that may engage Charity Commission requirements. This will ensure compliance, transparency, and accountability.
- g) **Risk Registers:** Ensuring regular reviews and alignment of Risk Registers to help differentiate risk at each level, ensuring a complementary approach focused on aspects of risks linked to safeguarding issues.

4.23 Whilst the Audit welcomes the fact that the DSA/O is now invited to the section of the Bishop's Leadership Team (BLT) meetings that cover pastoral care, it considers this insufficient. This arrangement may not provide the BLT with the necessary reassurance that a safeguarding lens is being applied to issues with direct or indirect links to safeguarding. Indeed, the Audit believes that the lack of routine and ex-officio safeguarding representation on all governing and oversight bodies is a significant disadvantage.

4.24 To ensure that safeguarding considerations, including those that may not be immediately obvious to a non-safeguarding professional, are consistently and comprehensively addressed at all levels of governance, the following recommendation is made.

Recommendation D7: The DSA/O⁵ should be granted ex-officio membership of the BLT which would enable attendance and involvement in BC and the DBF. This will ensure that:

- a) A safeguarding perspective is routinely incorporated into all discussions and decision-making.
- b) That such bodies receive consistent and timely advice on direct and indirect safeguarding matters.
- c) Potential risks and concerns are identified and addressed proactively.
- d) A culture of safeguarding is embedded throughout the Diocese.

⁵ This position would be occupied by the Director of Safeguarding if that recommendation is agreed.

Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel (DSAP)

- 4.25 The DSAP is exceptionally well-led and plays a significant role in providing safeguarding-focused challenge and reassurance in both the DBF and parishes and via its engagement with the Cathedral representative. It has developed good internal and external statutory representation and continues to push for improvements in this regard. The Chair is active, engaged with the leadership and DSA/O and is committed to reviewing and refreshing the Terms of Reference for the group annually. The Audit found the DSAP to be a considerable asset to the governance framework and the development and assurance of operational safeguarding policy and practice.
- 4.26 It has taken steps to strengthen safeguarding practice, such as developing a risk register, challenging and highlighting concerns regarding the capacity of the DSA/O, evaluating safeguarding training, and considering the implementation of sub-groups and a more structured approach to engagement with parishes. The Audit recognises this good practice and welcomes this approach.
- 4.27 The DSAP acknowledged the need to strengthen the representation and engagement of survivors and victims, both within the DSAP itself and through a more structured approach to outreach and listening engagements. The Audit welcomes this reflection and commitment. To assist the focus and pace of DSAP development, the Audit makes the following recommendations.

Recommendation D8: The DSAP should:

- a) Further broaden and diversify its membership, e.g., incorporating a Chair from a local domestic abuse charity or similar organisation into the DSAP lay membership.
- b) Implement a three-year themed cycle for DSAP meetings that focuses on deep dives into the application of National Safeguarding Standards in a local context.
- c) Ensure that archdeacons and other senior leaders are actively engaged in cascading their experience and learning into the DSAP process. This will help to triangulate and constructively challenge feedback / briefings from others including the DST.
- d) Actively explore how it could improve Victim / Survivor engagement. For example, involving its members in outreach, seeking opportunities to go and listen at existing victims and survivor forums, inviting victim and survivors and / or their advocates to deep dive session of DSAP that focus on listening to and learning from victims and survivors.
- e) Consider a role in establishing a multi-faith victim and survivors' group to facilitate listening and feedback, in collaboration with other churches and community organisations.
- f) When considering the adoption of operationally or task specific sub-groups, the DSAP should utilise its membership to facilitate (the equivalent of) multi-disciplinary / agency audits. For example, using membership from a LADO, police officer and clergy person to deep dive and audit safer recruitment policy and practice.
- g) The DSAP should aggregate all recommendations from this Audit, along with any outstanding recommendations from other scrutiny / audit / LLR activity into a themed and prioritised Action Tracker. This should be subject to periodic reviews and updates (at least twice a year).

4.28 The DSAP currently operates in an advisory capacity, relying on influence rather than delivering scrutiny based on its authority. This is a national issue and recommendations have been made in the Audit's annual report.

Clergy Files - Blue Files

- 4.29 Clergy (Blue) Files are efficiently administered and secured within the current framework by the Bishop's Office. Indeed, the Audit has identified good practice with regards to the office's approach to ensuring content is easily identifiable, duplicate documents removed and access recorded.
- 4.30 The Audit takes the view that Incoming Blue Files should be subject to review by the DSA/O. This will provide verification of the Clergy Current Status Letter (CCSL) and should ensure that those who support new appointments are sighted on the clergy member's experience and aware of any areas of development needs or potential vulnerability.
- 4.31 The delay in the receipt of a blue file is a significant concern, and steps must be taken locally to address and record all the activity undertaken to highlight and address any late delivery. The Audit will raise this recurring theme with the NST.

Recommendation D9: To ensure comprehensive oversight and support for incoming clergy, all incoming Clergy (Blue) Files must be reviewed by the DSA/O as well as the person delegated on behalf of the Diocesan Bishop. This approach should:

- a) Verify the CCSL statement regarding the individual's safeguarding history and experience.
- b) Ensure those supporting the new appointment are aware of any areas for development or potential vulnerability.
- c) Provide an opportunity to identify and address any safeguarding concerns proactively.

DSA/DSO

- 4.32 The DSA/O plays a crucial role in ensuring effective safeguarding practice within and across the Diocese and is responsible for translating the Bishop's commitment to

safeguarding into practical actions and outcomes. They provide the services and commitment outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the DBF and Cathedral and support the Cathedral's safeguarding arrangements by providing expert advice, collaborating on casework, and via the provision of tailored training. The current post-holder has a credible background from their previous roles in statutory and related safeguarding agencies and is a clear asset to the DBF, the Cathedral and parishes.

- 4.33 The way in which the DSA/O been able to embed safeguarding, manage cases, assess and mitigate risk, as well as coordinating and delivering high quality training is commendable. Their ability at an operational and strategic level is not in doubt, but the current situation is not sustainable.
- 4.34 Whilst the Audit acknowledges and welcomes the challenges concerning capacity made by the DSAP, the recognition by senior leaders of a need to reinforce the DSA/O position, and the frustrations experienced in their attempts to recruit, the DSA/O has been without appropriate support for far too long.
- 4.35 In discussion, individuals highlighted the genuine inhibitors they encountered during recruitment processes. However, the Audit takes the view that there are lessons to be learnt and interim measures could have been applied to obtain suitably qualified support from an appropriate agency at a much earlier stage.
- 4.36 The DSA/O is line managed by the Diocesan Secretary / DBF CEO, with regular joint meetings held between the DSA/O, the Bishop, and the Diocesan Secretary. This is supplemented by professional supervision from the NST Regional Safeguarding Lead (RSL) on a six-weekly cycle. This is common practice across many of the Dioceses the Audit has engaged with. That said, it does not provide an optimal solution, given the time between professional supervision sessions and the fact that their local day-to-day line

management is from someone (no matter how well-intentioned) who has no safeguarding experience. This is a systemic issue and will be subject to further comment later in the report.

- 4.37 In essence, the DSA/O acts as the central figure in driving safeguarding efforts within the Diocese, working closely with senior leadership to ensure a safe environment for all.

DST

- 4.38 For a significant period, there was no dedicated Diocesan Safeguarding Team (DST). In reality, there was only a DSA/O supported by an administrative assistant. However, the DBF is now actively attempting to strengthen its safeguarding team. In 2024, an Assistant Diocesan Safeguarding Officer (ADSO) role was created to support the DSA/O. Although initial recruitment attempts were unsuccessful, the Audit has been assured that the position has now been successfully appointed and the agreed candidate will be commencing in January 2025.

- 4.39 The DSA/O utilises external trainers for safeguarding training provision. Other staff members within the Diocese Head Office (Church House) and Bishop's House contribute to safeguarding efforts by managing safer recruitment practices for clergy and lay employees, as well as overseeing the DBS process, which is handled by an external provider.

Capacity

- 4.40 Whilst the DSA/O is almost universally appreciated and acknowledged for their experience and helpfulness, their heavy workload has created challenges and hindered potential progress. Capacity is a significant issue. The DSA/O's goodwill and dedication are exemplary, but this level of individual responsibility (notwithstanding the recent appointment of an ADSA) is unsustainable.

4.41 The current safeguarding structure, with a sole DSA/O and newly appointed assistant, presents significant challenges to the Diocese. This over-reliance on a small team creates a risk of unsustainability and hinders the potential for proactive and comprehensive safeguarding practice. To address this, the Audit believes that the creation of an appropriately staffed Safeguarding Directorate, led by a Director of Safeguarding, would bring significant sustainable benefits. This Directorate would cover the entire geography of the Diocese, incorporating the DBF, Diocesan Board of Education (DBE), Cathedral, and PCCs and would be established through an appropriate Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

Recommendation D10 (and C9): Establish an Independent Safeguarding Directorate.

To strengthen safeguarding across the Diocese, the DBF should establish an independent Safeguarding Directorate, led by a Director of Safeguarding. This Directorate would consolidate all safeguarding resources and provide comprehensive support to the DBF, parishes, and Cathedral. The Director of Safeguarding would have the authority and autonomy to:

- Provide expert advice and oversight on all safeguarding matters.
- Challenge senior clergy and church bodies when necessary.
- Escalate concerns to higher authorities, including the NST.

To ensure effectiveness, the following is required:

- **Clear Reporting Lines:** The Director should be a member of and report to the Bishop's Council, Chapter, and BLT / SLT.
- **Formal Agreements:** A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the DBF, Parish PCCs, and the Cathedral should clearly define the Director's authority and responsibility to provide safeguarding advice, support and ultimate authoritative decision making on any safeguarding related matter across the Diocese.
- **Adequate Resources:** The Directorate should have sufficient resources and staffing, including all professional safeguarding staff (including those at the Cathedral), and additional posts to backfill the DSA/O role and create at least one new Assistant DSA (ADSA) position.

To be clear, this structure would require three new posts: a Director of Safeguarding, at least one additional ADSA (beyond the recent appointment), and a Cathedral Safeguarding Advisor (CSA). This investment in safeguarding will enhance capacity, ensure consistent standards, and promote a safer environment for all.

Recommendation D11: The DBF should carry out a cost-benefit analysis of its current approach to outsourcing training provision. This would assess the potential advantages of recruiting an additional Assistant Safeguarding Advisor with a training function and creating a training budget for specialist courses, further enhancing capacity and support within the team.

Recommendation D12 (and C7): The Cathedral and DBF should jointly further consider investigating the potential for opportunities to expand their collaboration and explore efficiencies and the potential to alleviate the financial pressures which inhibit further investment in safeguarding. Specifically, they should assess the feasibility and benefits of sharing support services, such as HR, finance, or IT, which could lead to cost savings and streamlined operations for both organisations. A formal review should be undertaken to identify shared service possibilities and develop a plan for implementation where appropriate.

5 Prevention

- 5.1 The DBF has established a framework of preventative measures as part of its safeguarding arrangements. These measures prioritise safer recruitment, adherence to codes of conduct, and mechanisms designed to enhance awareness and engagement. Additionally, arrangements for workforce and site safety demonstrate good practice.
- 5.2 The DBF shows a strong commitment to safeguarding through its safer recruitment practices. Processes adhere to the House of Bishops' guidance, CofE policies and other key guidance. Those engaged in recruitment receive appropriate training, and guidance is readily accessible on the Diocesan website. Other strengths surrounding safer recruitment activity involve the DBF establishing role descriptions, including a safeguarding statement on all job adverts, asking appropriate safeguarding questions during interviews, reference gathering and role specific checks.
- 5.3 It is positive that the time allocated for DBS renewals factors in the potential for processing times running over. The contracted DBS provider offers specialist support for any queries and processes are in place for risk assessing DBS returns where soft intelligence and / or previous convictions raise concerns. This is good practice.
- 5.4 The Safeguarding Dashboard is used as a key tool to help evaluate and improve safer recruitment practices across parishes. The DBF has made good efforts to encourage participation, rolling out the system through targeted communications such as emails, e-News articles, video explainers, and online briefings, which were attended by over 200 Church Officers.
- 5.5 This strategic implementation has proven effective, with clergy members describing the

dashboard as “*incredibly helpful.*” Indeed, it is positive that the implementation plan for the Dashboards has been adopted beyond the Diocese of Carlisle.

- 5.6 To further reinforce safeguarding practices, the dashboard initiative is complemented by the provision of signage such as ‘Safer Church’ and ‘Safe Spaces’ posters, which visibly demonstrate the DBF’s commitment to safeguarding. In addition, parishes have access to direct advice and support on various safeguarding matters, including safer recruitment processes.
- 5.7 The Diocese website serves as a central communication platform, offering a modern, fast-loading, mobile-responsive design with strong SEO performance. The safeguarding section is prominently featured, providing easy access to guidance on safeguarding policies, training, safer recruitment materials, external support services, and a Safeguarding Concerns Reporting Form. However, other important materials (such as safer recruitment information for parishes) are embedded within the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy page and are not as easily accessible via the secondary navigation menu. This may prevent users from quickly locating critical resources.
- 5.8 To maximise its effectiveness, the Audit recommends strengthening the current online provision by consolidating and streamlining relevant materials. This would help to establish the website as the primary resource for PSOs seeking general guidance and non-case-specific advice.

Recommendation D13: The DBF should scope and consider options for improving website accessibility and navigation. This should include:

- a) A more prominent option to access resources, tools and support relevant to PSOs (e.g., Parish Dashboard).

- b) A re-design of the safeguarding webpage to align with hierarchy principles (i.e., information being organised in order of importance to users).
- c) A section on 'how to report a safeguarding concern' should take primacy, followed by a re-ordering of other sections that are most frequently accessed. This seeks to ensure that support material resources are categorised into logical groups and are easily accessible.
- d) A review of all supporting materials provided by the DBF and consolidating these on the Diocese website.

5.9 The DBF actively promotes safeguarding through a range of communication channels. Weekly e-News bulletins reach over 3,000 subscribers and social media channels (such as X, Facebook and YouTube) are used to disseminate key messages. Plans are underway to launch a bi-monthly safeguarding newsletter to further promote awareness. This approach will include promoting new training events, highlighting the annual Safeguarding Season, and encouraging utilisation of the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard.

5.10 The DBF demonstrates a commitment to inclusivity and accessibility by proactively considering the diverse needs of participants in their training programs. This is achieved through various methods, such as providing enlarged fonts and coloured paper for those with visual impairments or dyslexia, offering hearing loops and automated text facilities for individuals with hearing difficulties, and assisting with Zoom technology for those less familiar with online platforms.

5.11 To ensure safeguarding information is readily available, the DBF asks all churches to display Safe Spaces posters, typically on the back of toilet doors. To encourage help-seeking, the DBF employs the practice of removing a tear-off number to imply that others have already sought assistance. This is routinely checked during site visits and is seen by the Audit as good practice.

- 5.12 Domestic Abuse and NSPCC / Childline posters are also distributed during in-person training sessions. Furthermore, the DBF provides parishes with safeguarding pocket guides, offering concise and accessible information on safeguarding procedures.
- 5.13 Overall, the Audit found good evidence of various initiatives aimed at enhancing safeguarding practices. In addition to the above, including a safeguarding statement on all job adverts, the DBF promotes and conducts audits of essential information displayed on parish websites, as well as providing a concise two-page policy document for parishes (adapted from national guidelines) on effectively responding to disclosures.
- 5.14 A formal Memorandum of Understanding facilitates collaboration between the DSA/O and the Cathedral Safeguarding Lead (CSL) by establishing structured channels for regular meetings, the exchange of ideas and continuous professional development.
- 5.15 To keep informed of emerging trends and best practice, the DSA/O engages with a range of other resources. These include newsletters from the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP), Local Safeguarding Adults Board (LSAB), and local Police. At a national level, the DSA/O subscribes to updates from leading organisations such as SCIE and the NSPCC.
- 5.16 The Audit also endorses the DBF's plans to increase collaboration with counterparts in the Methodist and Catholic dioceses. Strengthening these partnerships will similarly support the exchange of expertise and the development of cohesive strategies across faith communities.
- 5.17 The DBF is committed to embedding safeguarding into all aspects of its youth work, with Network Youth Leaders encouraged to undertake annual evaluations with their groups. These evaluations include questions about safeguarding, helping to ensure that young

people feel safe and valued. However, there is currently limited clarity on the consistency of this practice across all groups. With a new NYC manager in place, this process is scheduled to be reviewed, and its development prioritised.

- 5.18 Safeguarding is a standing agenda item in all Solway Network Youth Church (SNYC) steering group meetings. Volunteer leader training evenings are used to refine practice and include valuable input from external experts, such as a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and a Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO). Building on these practices, the DBF sensibly plans to formalise the inclusion of safeguarding as a standard agenda item in all relevant meetings, even when safeguarding is not the primary focus.
- 5.19 Annual reviews are a positive step to seek feedback from young people about their experiences. The Audit acknowledges the challenges in collecting anonymous feedback, as it limits the ability to address safeguarding risks if they are reported, but equally recognises that the DBF is working to improve its processes in this area.
- 5.20 Additional methods are used such as posters, 'who's who' and the distribution of wallet-sized safeguarding cards. These cards contain safeguarding contact details and information on national and Cumbria-based charities, ensuring young people have access to resources and support.
- 5.21 The DBF has undertaken awareness-raising initiatives covering a range of abuse categories, including domestic abuse, spiritual abuse, financial abuse, sexual abuse, and modern-day slavery. Furthermore, there is active promotion of the annual 'Safeguarding Sunday'.
- 5.22 The Audit acknowledges the DBF's efforts to raise the profile of safeguarding through its social media channels. However, whilst there are safeguarding related posts, the

execution lacks frequency, novelty and local context that could help generate audience engagement and growth. To this end, the Audit makes the following recommendation.

Recommendation D14: The DBF should enhance its communication planning by:

- a) Developing a clear strategy outlining how each platform is utilised and why.
- b) Implementing mechanisms to measure input, output, and impact of communication efforts. This will allow for data-driven activity based on the needs of followers on each platform and adopting platform-specific techniques.
- c) Moving beyond mirroring national themes and ensuring that messaging is locally contextualised. This ensures relevance and resonance with the specific community relevant to the DBF.
- d) Embedding key safeguarding messages throughout its social media channels. This ensures consistent and frequent reinforcement of important information.
- e) Utilising relevant awareness days, campaigns, and events to amplify its message. This helps to leverage broader public discourse and increased reach.

5.23 The DBF has introduced a formal Lone Working Policy to safeguard the safety and wellbeing of Church Officers who are required to work alone. The policy is accompanied by detailed guidance and reflects good practice.

5.24 Guidance on maintaining appropriate boundaries is shared with parishes through the national 'Safer Environment and Activities' framework. Additionally, the DBF's Safeguarding Learning and Development Strategy 2023–2025 highlights the continued importance of creating a deeper understanding of boundaries across the Diocese.

5.25 In response to the increasing prevalence of youth work taking place in private residences, the DBF is actively developing a specific policy to address this practice. At the time of the

Audit, this policy was under development, however it seeks to define the parameters of youth work in private dwellings, incorporate the National Youth Agency's (NYA) stance on associated risks, and set out requirements for approval, comprehensive risk assessment, and DBS checks for all adults residing in the household.

6 Recognising, Assessing and Managing Risk

- 6.1 The DBF has implemented a risk management framework that prioritises safeguarding. This includes the appointment of a skilled and experienced DSA/O, the use of the National Safeguarding Case Management System (NSCMS), and the implementation of comprehensive safeguarding policies, training, and recruitment procedures. Clear reporting routes ensure prompt action and collaborative decision-making, promoting early identification of risks and timely intervention.
- 6.2 Safeguarding is incorporated into the DBF's overall approach to risk management, appearing in both the financial and non-financial risk registers, as well as a dedicated safeguarding risk register. Oversight of such registers is embedded within the DBF's key accountability structures, including the DSAP and the Diocesan Synod. At the time of the Audit, the Safeguarding Risk Register was alive to recent and relevant events and included a focus on the broader national context in which the DBF and the Diocese operates. This is good practice.
- 6.3 The DSA/O adopts a low-threshold model of practice. This approach encourages a culture of open communication and proactive safeguarding. The DSA/O handles a range of safeguarding matters which can be broadly classified into three areas. Firstly, the DSA/O responds to daily enquiries regarding safeguarding policies, guidance, and training, providing advice and signposting. Secondly, the DSA/O offers consultations on more complex situations involving vulnerable adults or children within church communities, often requiring detailed support, liaison with external agencies, and ongoing case management. Finally, the DSA/O manages safeguarding cases, typically involving Church Officers or individuals posing a significant risk of harm. These cases may involve allegations of abuse, safer recruitment issues, and collaboration with the NST and other agencies. This tiered approach assists the DSA/O to effectively manage their workload and prioritise cases

according to their complexity and potential risk.

- 6.4 For those cases referred to the DST, outcomes typically involve one or more of the following:
- a) Onward referrals to statutory authorities
 - b) The management of individuals within the worshipping community
 - c) The provision / signposting to support
 - d) The initiation of disciplinary processes, such as Clergy Disciplinary Measures (CDM)
 - e) Initiation of the Safeguarding Case Management procedure (formerly Core Groups)
- 6.5 There is good awareness about how and to whom concerns can be reported, supported by website signposting, published email addresses, and a direct phone number. It is positive that the Audit's survey across the Diocese found that most respondents are aware of who the safeguarding leads are within their setting and how to report a safeguarding concern.
- 6.6 The NSCMS is a centralised and secure database, allowing for safeguarding concerns to be reported and recorded. There is also a facility to attach relevant case reports, quickly retrieve referrals to external agencies and record correspondence and documentation in one place. The Audit saw evidence that the DSA/O has invested time in developing their expertise in the use of the NSCMS. They demonstrated a good understanding of its functionality and are effectively utilising it to manage their work.
- 6.7 The Audit also saw evidence of good practice in the core processes employed by the DSA/O. This included a collaborative multi-agency approach with statutory agencies, the convening of Safeguarding Case Management Groups (SCMG) (formerly referred to as Core Groups), risk assessments, the provision of support for persons of concern and co-ordination with other Dioceses as appropriate.

6.8 At the time of the Audit, there were 42 open cases recorded on the NSCMS. The DSA/O makes good use of the risk grading function, with cases are being allocated a risk level of 'high', 'medium' or 'low'. At the time of the Audit, three concerns were marked as 'high risk', 22 concerns were marked as 'medium risk' and 17 concerns marked as 'low risk'. Whilst positive, case recording could be strengthened by more detailed recording about the rationale for the risk grading and the prioritisation of cases, alongside clear timescales being set for actions and the review of these.

Recommendation D15: As part of the triage process, the DSA/O should record the rationale for risk grading and the prioritisation of cases, alongside specifying timescales for action and the review of progress.

6.9 Risk assessments conducted by the DSA/O are initiated in response to concerns involving Church Officers, members of the religious community, or individuals from specific high-risk categories seeking participation in Church events or services. These assessments adhere to national directives and prioritise the safety of victims, potential victims, and vulnerable individuals.

6.10 The Audit found evidence of the effective use of Safety Plans (known locally as Safeguarding Agreements) to manage risks posed by convicted offenders and others who present a risk within church settings. At the time of the Audit, there were eight active Safeguarding Agreements and two Interim Safeguarding Agreements in place.

6.11 The Safeguarding Agreements examined by the Audit were well defined, proportionate and authorised appropriately. They set prohibitions regarding expected behaviours and there was evidence of a multi-agency approach with statutory bodies. Alongside mitigating the risk derived from an individual, the safety and welfare of those posing the risk was also properly considered. Safeguarding Agreements recorded review dates and contained the

names of all relevant stakeholders including the respondent. The Audit found evidence of strong professional curiosity being exercised during this process, robust efforts to thoroughly contextualise the potential risk and a clear recognition of the influence of dynamic risk factors.

- 6.12 The Audit met with Church Officers responsible for managing a person on a Safety Agreement. They demonstrated a clear understanding of the agreement's conditions and openly acknowledged the associated risks. That said, as recommended with other Audits undertaken to date, more specialised training should be made available for those who work directly with this cohort of offenders. The need for tailored, local training is addressed in more detail in the *Learning, Supervision and Support* section of this report.
- 6.13 The Audit saw and heard convincing evidence of the effective use of SCMGs in managing complex cases involving Church Officers. The current arrangement, with meetings chaired by an Archdeacon and following a structured agenda, represents good practice.
- 6.14 Overall, there is evidence of good record keeping and proactivity in information sharing with statutory partners.
- 6.15 The DBF is a registered charity with a statutory requirement to submit Serious Incident Reports (SIRs) to the Charity Commission. The DBF follow the House of Bishops' guidance set out in 'Safeguarding Serious Incident Reporting to the Charity Commission'. The Audit was informed that one case had met the threshold for a SIR in the last three years and this SIR has been shared with the NST.
- 6.16 The DBF has several national information sharing agreements (ISAs). These include the data sharing agreement with the police and a CofE National Safeguarding Information Sharing Agreement.

6.17 The Audit was informed that the DBF currently lacks a formal process for escalating concerns regarding disagreements on safeguarding decisions / judgements, although a draft Dispute Resolution Escalation Process is scheduled to be discussed by the DSAP.

6.18 As an area participating in the pathfinder project, safeguarding supervision is currently provided by a regional lead from the NST. During the Audit, the outgoing regional lead was providing interim support to the DSA/O until the new lead assumes the role in February 2025. However, the Audit recognises that there is some concern that the new geographical structure for RSLs may fragment the regional approach to support and oversight.

Recommendation D16: The regional approach to RSL supervision (divided between part-time RSLs) should be evaluated in consultation with the relevant DSA/Os within nine months of its full implementation.

6.19 Supervision meetings are held regularly and follow a structured agenda, whilst good practice, the Audit believes these sessions could be further strengthened with more emphasis on case management. For example, cases discussed tend to focus on the more complex. Whilst relevant, there is no real oversight regarding lower-level cases or any reflection about the DSA / DSO's judgement against those cases that result in no further action. This has been a common theme for the Audits and will be addressed at a national level with the NST.

Recommendation D17: Referred cases resulting in no further action and / or the provision of advice / guidance should be included as part of the supervision discussions between the DST and NST. This will also be raised by the Audit with the NST.

6.20 In support of enhancing the DBF's overall approach to the quality assurance of practice, the Audit was made aware of ongoing discussions to establish a quality assurance sub-group.

- 6.21 The DBF prioritises the secure storage and handling of personal data. All information held on the NSCMS complies with UK data protection legislation and the UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR). The DBF actively monitors data protection compliance as part of its risk management strategy, recognising its importance in safeguarding sensitive information.
- 6.22 This commitment to data protection is further reinforced through a multi-layered approach. Firstly, a tiered system of GDPR training ensures that all staff receive appropriate instruction on data protection, with content and depth tailored to their roles and responsibilities. Secondly, the DBF leverages technology to enhance security. Microsoft Outlook's encryption features are used to protect sensitive information internally, whilst password protection and the promotion of church email addresses mitigates the risks associated with external communication. Finally, for particularly sensitive information, specialised tools like Egress are used for communication with the LADO, and the Diocesan Registrar uses a dedicated encryption method.
- 6.23 The effectiveness of these measures is reflected in the findings from the Audit's DBF and parish workforce surveys, which indicated that most respondents were aware of the Diocesan's privacy notice, demonstrating a good level of data protection awareness across the organisation.

7 Victims and Survivors

- 7.1 For many victims and survivors, living with the abuse they have suffered can be deeply traumatic. Disclosing this to others can be incredibly challenging. Victims and survivors may feel overwhelmed by the processes, the potential for re-traumatisation or anxieties about the outcome. In this context, it is crucial for Church bodies to create and maintain a nurturing environment that enables victims and survivors to feel heard, supported and protected, whilst also learning from their experiences.
- 7.2 In evaluating the DBF's response to this key standard of safeguarding practice, the Audit obtained feedback from victims and survivors from across the Diocese through an anonymous online survey. In addition, the Audit had the opportunity to listen to the authentic voice of a survivor through a face-to-face virtual discussion.
- 7.3 The DBF follows the House of Bishop's policy, 'Responding Well to Victims and Survivors of Abuse'. That said, not all respondents to the Audit's victim / survivor survey were aware of this guidance and there was uncertainty about whether having it in place at the time of reporting their abuse would have made a difference. In this respect, the Audit makes the following recommendation.

Recommendation D18: The DBF should reinforce its commitment to 'Responding Well to Victims and Survivors of Abuse' by:

- a) Including a statement of commitment on its 'Reporting Abuse and Finding Support' webpage.
- b) Linking to 'Responding Well to Victims and Survivors of Abuse' guidance.

- 7.4 The DBF demonstrates its commitment to trauma-informed practice on its 'Reporting

Abuse and Finding Support' webpage. This commitment is evident in the introductory text, which emphasises the creation of a safe and supportive online environment for individuals who may have experienced trauma. The webpage acknowledges the experiences of victims and survivors, empowers them to make informed choices, and assures them that their voices will be heard.

7.5 Overall, the Diocesan website serves as a central hub for anyone seeking assistance. Individuals can readily find contact information for the DSA/O, including their phone number and email address. The page also directs visitors to appropriate contacts within their local parish. A comprehensive list of external support resources is available, such as the NSPCC, Childline, the National Domestic Abuse Helpline and the Men's Advice Line, ensuring that individuals have access to a wide range of support options. Concerns about the abuse of older parishioners are common, so the DBF signposts to information and support on elder abuse. This centralised and easily accessible approach to providing information is coherent and reflects good practice.

7.6 A variety of resources are utilised to promote the disclosure of abuse, including training, posters, flyers, and the 'My Support Space' app. The DBF has a clear policy for responding to concerns and regularly audit parish websites to ensure information about reporting abuse is accessible. This activity helps to create a safe environment where individuals feel empowered to seek help.

7.7 A person-centric approach to supporting victims and survivors of abuse is evident in the assistance offered. This includes providing therapy tailored to individual needs, with the cost covered by the DBF. The need for timely therapy is prioritised over seeking funding from the Interim Support Scheme. An initial agreement regarding the number of sessions is drawn up and kept under review, but it is always centred around the needs of the

individual. The Audit has seen evidence of the renewal of therapeutic support based on professional advice and individual need. This is good practice in demonstrating a compassionate response and prioritising better outcomes for victims and survivors.

- 7.8 The DBF is actively working to improve its safeguarding culture following past failures. The current Acting Diocesan Bishop demonstrates this commitment through his dedicated support of victims and survivors, providing both financial assistance and personal engagement. The Audit has seen evidence of the Bishop advocating for victims and survivors, offering apologies, and following up in writing. Furthermore, he is mindful of creating a comfortable and safe environment for meetings, going so far as to adjust his attire to avoid appearing imposing. The positive impact of the Bishop's approach, and the work of the DSA/O, was recognised and acknowledged by a survivor who shared their personal experience with the Audit. This renewed focus on prioritising the needs and experiences of victims / survivors represents a significant step forward in fostering a safer and more supportive environment within the Diocese.
- 7.9 There is a survivor representative who sits on DSAP with lived experience of church related abuse. The Audit heard of a planned presentation for senior leaders, focusing on mental health and how to effectively support those affected by trauma. The DSA/O has also been consulting local charities (Safety Net and Trauma in Cumbria) regarding the delivery of trauma-informed practice for all clergy and PSOs in 2025.
- 7.10 A formal mechanism to obtain feedback is now in place through Google Forms. This is designed for all those engaged with the DST, however, the DBF intends to formalise the collection of feedback from victims and survivors to enhance the specific focus on their views and experiences. This initiative has only recently been implemented and the Audit is unable to comment on its impact at this time.

7.11 Whilst the importance of listening to and learning from victim / survivor voices is recognised by the DBF, a planned support group was not established due to a lack of expressed interest. The Audit acknowledges the challenges that can exist in this space and recommends that the DBF explores Diocese-wide (and beyond) listening events as a broader approach to engagement. These events could offer numerous benefits, such as helping to inform the creation of safeguarding materials, evaluating the effectiveness of current support, and gaining valuable insights.

Recommendation D19: The DBF should identify opportunities to listen to victims and survivors utilising existing and established networks. This should include travelling to neighbouring dioceses which have established survivor forums.

8 Learning, Supervision and Support

Safeguarding Learning

- 8.1 The DBF benefits from an experienced DSA/O and trainers with professional safeguarding expertise. Identified strengths include the existence of a comprehensive strategy aligned with the CofE's national framework, strong participation levels, and good record-keeping. Whilst capacity to deliver training remains a challenge, the approach by the DBF has ensured that training and the necessary compliance is managed effectively.
- 8.2 Upon taking up the role, the DSA/O prioritised their direct involvement in training delivery to heighten their visibility across the Diocese. This investment accrued numerous benefits and was reflected in positive feedback and evaluation results. However, it has drawn focus away from other important responsibilities held by the DSA/O, for example, case management.
- 8.3 Most safeguarding training is now delivered online, driven in part by demand, and in other parts by cost and capacity constraints. However, the DBF recognises the value of face-to-face training and hopes that the introduction of new roles will enable more in-person opportunities in the future. In terms of the current arrangements, capacity issues have led to some delays in specific training modules, such as those relating to the Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour Based Violence risk assessment tool (DASH) and trauma-informed practice.
- 8.4 Given the challenges associated with capacity (as highlighted in Part one Culture, Leadership and Capacity section of this report), the Audit recommends that the DST conduct a cost-benefit analysis for recruiting an additional ADSA, with a particular focus on training. The benefit of having a ADSA is that they can build relationships and expand

safeguarding networks across parishes. This analysis should evaluate the current costs of outsourcing training against the potential benefits of the role, including the capacity to deliver specialist safeguarding sessions internally. Any budget allocation for externally sourced training should be carefully considered to complement this role. See **Recommendation D10 and D11**.

8.5 It is positive that some case studies within certain courses have been tailored to Carlisle's specific context, incorporating bespoke training for the Cathedral, PSOs, and clergy. This includes drawing upon a bank of locally relevant case studies within mandatory training to address unique needs which the Audit recognise as good practice. This was addressed in the Audit's 2024 Annual Report.

8.6 Good practice was also seen in the DBF's prioritisation of domestic abuse within its training programme. Trainers also ensure signposting to relevant external resources provided by the Carlisle Children's Safeguarding Partnership and Adults Safeguarding Board. Additionally, the tailored rollout of six training sessions for PSOs and clergy, culminating in guidance on managing offenders, reflects a good focus of priorities linked to existing threats. Exemptions and adaptations to training are made for individuals with lived experiences of harm or other issues where reasonable adjustments need to be made. This is good practice.

8.7 Feedback received through the Audit's survey indicated most respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they have seen improvements in the local safeguarding training provision.

Clergy Support

8.8 The variety of resources available to clergy, safeguarding leaders, and their families reflects a commitment to safeguarding the mental, emotional, and spiritual health of staff

within the Diocese. Through collaboration with Thrive Worldwide, clergy and employees can access counselling, pastoral supervision, psychosocial debriefing, and psychological first aid. Additional confidential and free professional counselling, listening services and tailored group support are also provided by a range of organisations.

- 8.9 That said, whilst the variety and volume of support available is impressive, given the context of the DST's workload and its regular exposure to trauma, psychological support should be viewed by the DBF as an expectation as opposed to 'available on request'.

Recommendation D20: The DBF should consider implementing mandatory counselling sessions for members of the DST to ensure they are sufficiently supported in the challenging role they do.

Supervision and Support of Safeguarding Roles

- 8.10 Through the DSA/O, the DBF has implemented a structured induction programme for new members of the workforce. All new staff undertake safeguarding training relevant to their role within the first month of employment. Induction content is regularly reviewed, and recent updates include training on modern slavery and people trafficking. The induction now includes a 'Welcome to the Diocese Day' for clergy who are new in post. The Audit heard that this mandatory part of the induction includes a one-to-one session with the DSA/O. This is good practice.
- 8.11 Those directly involved in safeguarding activities report feeling supported and connected to a wider network of safeguarding practitioners. This takes place through regular supervision, collaborative team meetings, and engagement with multi-agency forums such as the Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership Practitioner Forum. Although attendance at all meetings is not feasible, the team ensures key updates are accessed via minutes and shared resources.

8.12 Professional supervision is delivered to safeguarding staff within the DST through a nationally agreed model. The DBF participated in the IICSA 1&8 Project pilot, which provided the DSA/O with six-weekly supervision from a Regional Safeguarding Lead. This model remains in place post-pilot, with ongoing external supervision ensuring quality assurance and professional accountability. The supervisor observes meetings and provides feedback. The DSA/O also engages in CPD opportunities with the National Safeguarding Learning and Development group, which enables the sharing of ideas and good practice. Wider line-management issues are addressed in Part One, *Culture, Leadership and Capacity* section of this report.

9 Conclusion

- 9.1 The safeguarding arrangements within the DBF were identified by the Audit as having demonstrably improved. The culture is healthy, safeguarding is prioritised, support is valued and individuals across the Diocese feel able to report, question and challenge.
- 9.2 This progress is due in no small part to the commitment and hard work of the many volunteers at the grassroots level, within parishes and their congregations. It is also due to the sterling work of the highly credible and experienced DSA/O and the renewed focus, ambition and impetus provided by the Acting Diocesan Bishop.
- 9.3 The development of policy, investment in training, use of technology, and victim / survivor-centred approaches evidence a genuine desire to create a safer and more supportive environment. Collectively, everyone involved has helped to build a solid foundation upon which they can further build.
- 9.4 To enhance this positive trajectory, some difficult and potentially costly decisions must be made. Unsurprisingly, addressing the capacity challenges that have existed within the DST for far too long is paramount. That said, costs could be alleviated by exploring how a mutual benefit could be accrued by a shared service provision with the Cathedral. Furthermore, clarifying roles and responsibilities, particularly regarding the delegation of safeguarding functions amongst senior clergy, may help to strengthen accountability and communication.
- 9.5 Critically, adopting a new approach to operational and leadership arrangements for safeguarding will introduce professionally focused leadership and authoritative decision-making at the highest level within the DBF. This in turn will strengthen independent

supervision and support for the DST, and reinforce a transparent, victim / survivor-centred arrangements. By making these critical investments, the DBF has the potential to significantly enhance practice, accelerate improvement and cultivate an even stronger and more resilient safeguarding framework.

Part Two - Carlisle Cathedral

10 Context

- 10.1 Carlisle Cathedral was originally founded by King Henry I in 1122 as an Augustinian Priory, becoming the Cathedral Church eleven years later. The Cathedral celebrated its 900th anniversary in 2022. Whilst originally consecrated as a symbol of authority, this emphasis shifted towards peace and over its years, the Cathedral has welcomed and offered shelter to visitors, travellers, and pilgrims. The main site of the Cathedral is accessible to the public free of charge almost every day of the year. This makes the Cathedral grounds a popular destination not just for visitors, but also for locals using it as a shortcut to the city centre.
- 10.2 The Fraternity building, once the dining hall of the Cathedral Priory in medieval times, has been revitalised through a £3.5 million Heritage Lottery Fund partner project. Designed by Feilden Fowles, this Grade I listed building has won numerous awards, including the RIBA North West Award 2022, RIBA North West Project Architect of the Year 2022, and the RIBA National Award 2022. The project focused on preserving the Fraternity building's physical heritage and its connection to the surrounding Cathedral precinct, the Library collections, and the social, political, religious, and archaeological heritage they represent. The Fraternity is one of the most historically significant buildings in Carlisle and one of the few remaining monastic refectories in the country.
- 10.3 The Cathedral is situated within Cumbria's only city, Carlisle, which serves as the economic hub for a region of half a million people. Key industries include agriculture, manufacturing, construction, and tourism. The local economy has prospered in recent years, with unemployment remaining low. However, salaries are lower when compared to other local areas and on a national level. Carlisle's deprivation index ranks 109/326 (1 being the highest). Educational achievement is below national averages, with a high proportion of people lacking qualifications. Plans are underway to improve this, notably

through the multi-million-pound development of the University of Cumbria, based in Carlisle.

- 10.4 According to Cumberland Council’s website, Carlisle has an estimated population of approximately 108,000 residents, with a comparatively younger age profile. The Cathedral receives an average of 2500 visitors weekly, with 120 adults and 20 children (under 16) attending Sunday Service and typical midweek attendance averaging 83 adults and 30 children (under 16).

11 Progress

- 11.1 The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) audit of the Cathedral was published in April 2020 and resulted in 42 'considerations'. The Cathedral was also involved in the Diocesan Past Cases Review 2 (PCR2) process and whilst there were no formal recommendations for the Cathedral itself, feedback received was incorporated into its joint action plan and safeguarding strategy.
- 11.2 The Cathedral accepted all of the SCIE audit considerations that were responded to by way of a defined action plan owned by Chapter and led by the Chapter Safeguarding Lead (CSL). This plan, redrafted in April 2024 to align with National Safeguarding Standards, is overseen at key governance meetings, including the Cathedral Safeguarding Group (CSG), Chapter and the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel (DSAP). It is published on the Cathedral's website.
- 11.3 In terms of evidenced progress, the improvement activity that followed the SCIE audit has resulted in the majority of recommendations being met or superseded by new, revised or national developments. Areas of focus have included chorister safeguarding, governance meetings, record keeping and culture. Areas noted as requiring ongoing attention include training, support and developing clear leadership roles within each volunteer area.
- 11.4 In November 2023, the Cathedral underwent a Peer Review managed through the Association of English Cathedrals. Safeguarding was one of a range of issues examined, with the review recommending an external person be included on the Cathedral's Safeguarding Group (covered in more detail in the following section). This led to the appointment of a new Cathedral Lay Safeguarding Lead (CLSL) in August 2024. The Cathedral believes this process and appointment have strengthened the work and visibility of its safeguarding group but are aware that its impact will require assessing over time.

12 Culture, Leadership and Capacity

Culture

12.1 The Audit identified a largely positive picture of safeguarding at the Cathedral, with survey feedback from the workforce and worshipping community revealing a strong sense of security and personal safety. Improvements in the Cathedral's safeguarding arrangements were also noted by the majority of the workforce and over half of the worshipping community. Significantly, a high level of confidence exists within both groups that a robust safeguarding culture is now embedded. This culture is consistently described in positive terms, such as "welcoming," "supportive," and "respectful."

12.2 Most of the workforce and the worshipping community also expressed their confidence in raising concerns without fear of reprisal. Nearly all members of the workforce could identify their safeguarding lead, although awareness was lower amongst the worshipping community, with just over half being able to do so.

Recommendation C1: The Cathedral should increase awareness of the safeguarding lead/s within the worshipping community by implementing a multi-faceted communication campaign that involves:

- a) Prominently displaying the safeguarding lead's name and contact information on notice boards, in service leaflets, and on the Cathedral website.
- b) Including a short introduction of the safeguarding lead during services and other community events.
- c) Offering a brief, informal Q&A session with the safeguarding lead after a service.
- d) Utilising social media and email communication to share information about safeguarding and the safeguarding lead.

Recommendation C2: The Cathedral should set a target to raise awareness of the safeguarding lead(s) across the worshipping community within six months to 80% and measure impact via a short, anonymous survey distributed after services and via email.

12.3 Although safeguarding at the Cathedral is viewed positively, feedback from a small number of individuals highlighted perceived concerns regarding the manner with which decisions were made and communicated by the Senior Leadership within the Cathedral. Whilst these concerns were not substantiated by the Audit and were not widely representative of the entire Cathedral community, addressing them will be an important next step in the Cathedral's ongoing improvement efforts.

Recommendation C3: The Cathedral should address these concerns and improve perceptions of decision making and communication by:

- a) Providing ongoing forums through which the cathedral community can better understand the decision-making structures within the Cathedral, particularly since the passing of the Cathedral's Measure of 2021. These forums should seek to address how decisions are made and at what level, and also continue to review and improve the patterns of communication to the wider Cathedral community.
- b) Following these forums, implement agreed-upon actions and assess their effectiveness through a follow-up survey within six months of each forum taking place.

12.4 The Audit observed a clear willingness on the part of the Cathedral to engage and collaborate both internally and externally. A prime example of this is the Cathedral's leadership collaborating with the DBF to develop and promote the Safeguarding Season initiative in 2021. This now-annual event demonstrates a strong commitment to supporting survivors and encouraging the Church to lament, listen, and learn from those who have experienced abuse. Further evidencing this collaborative approach, the Cathedral has

supported the installation of the LOUDfence, providing opportunities for those who engage with or pass by the Cathedral and its grounds to reflect on the experiences of victims and survivors.

Leadership

- 12.5 The Dean is unambiguous in both his understanding and acceptance of the ultimate accountability that he holds for safeguarding at Carlisle Cathedral. During discussions with the Audit team (corroborated by the written material examined), the Dean was able to provide examples of how this accountability was discharged, such as through his direct engagement with complex safeguarding challenges and his involvement in an approach to create a safer and more welcoming environment. He maintains a good working relationship with the Acting Diocesan Bishop, with whom he engages routinely to ensure alignment of safeguarding policy and practice across the DBF and the Cathedral.
- 12.6 In terms of safeguarding leadership, the Cathedral benefits from a highly effective and deeply committed Cathedral Safeguarding Lead who is one of the Residentiary Canons, working part time in this role, with approximately one day a week being dedicated to safeguarding. Whilst lacking professional safeguarding experience, the CSL possesses a strong understanding of safeguarding issues and has developed innovative initiatives, such as one designed to encourage the Church to engage with survivors of abuse. The CSL's commitment to these issues is exemplary.
- 12.7 Collaboration is a key strength at the Cathedral. A non-financial MOU with the DBF formalises the professional support provided by the DSA/O. The CSL and DSA/O meet monthly, fostering ongoing communication and joint working arrangements, including the development of a new Safeguarding Action Plan. The CSL's active participation in the DSAP, exemplified by contributions to discussions on gathering children's views, further demonstrates this collaborative approach.

12.8 The CSL's expertise is further developed through 'Train the Trainer' certification, enabling them to deliver safeguarding training within the Cathedral and the wider Diocese.

12.9 The Cathedral also benefits from an experienced Chief Operating Officer (COO), with a background in education and active operational insights via chairing the Senior Management Team (SMT), which oversees operational activity across the Cathedral.

Governance and Oversight Framework

12.10 The Cathedral maintains a robust structure with governance and oversight meetings that meet the requirements of the Church and relevant external bodies, such as the Charity Commission. This framework encompasses a range of meetings, from Chapter and the Senior Management Team (SMT) to the Audit and Risk Committee and the Cathedral Safeguarding Management Committee (CSMC).

Cathedral Chapter

12.11 As the principal governing body of Carlisle Cathedral, the Chapter, chaired by the Dean, has ultimate responsibility for all aspects of its life, from spiritual matters to financial health and safeguarding. Serving also as Charity Trustees, all Chapter members are individually and collectively accountable for their decisions and actions.

12.12 The Chapter's commitment to safeguarding is evident in its membership, which, in addition to the CSL, includes a lay member with significant safeguarding experience from the education sector (who is shortly to retire). The Audit welcomes the Dean's stated commitment to replacing this role with a similarly qualified individual.

12.13 Chapter meeting minutes confirm safeguarding as a standing agenda item at all meetings (including the annual strategy day) ensuring its consistent consideration, scrutiny, and integration into all decisions. For example, the Chapter has demonstrably considered

safeguarding training resources during budget discussions, reviewed learning outcomes, developed safeguarding policies and explored innovative, victim and survivor focused outreach approaches.

The Carlisle Cathedral Audit and Risk Committee

12.14 The Cathedral's Audit and Risk Committee plays a crucial role in ensuring its long-term stability and security. As a sub-committee of Chapter, it meets at least three times annually to scrutinise all Cathedral risks, including safeguarding. The committee's independent oversight is strengthened by its external Chair and the inclusion of a former DSA alongside two non-executive Chapter members, ensuring balanced perspectives.

12.15 To reinforce the Audit and Risk Committee's advisory role regarding risk, and to maintain the primacy of safeguarding oversight by Chapter, the CSG, and the SMT, the following recommendations are made.

Recommendation C4: The Cathedral should review and, if necessary, revise the Terms of Reference for the Audit and Risk Committees to emphasise its advisory capacity on risk matters relating to safeguarding.

- a) The Terms of Reference should clearly articulate that whilst the Committee provides scrutiny and challenge regarding risk management, it does not have executive responsibility for safeguarding. They should also specify that accountability for safeguarding remains with Chapter, the CSG, and the SMT, as appropriate.
- b) The Audit and Risk Committee should agree safeguarding risk assessments with the CSG and SMT prior to submission to Chapter.

The Carlisle Cathedral Safeguarding Group

12.16 The Cathedral Safeguarding Group (CSG) is at an early stage of development but has significant potential. It can play a crucial role in ensuring safeguarding is embedded within the Cathedral community.

12.17 Following a 2023 Peer Review and the retirement of the previous post holder, the Cathedral strengthened its safeguarding oversight by enhancing the Cathedral Lay Safeguarding Lead (CLSL) role. This resulted in it attracting and recruiting a credible and experienced CLSL to Chair the Group.

12.18 This has proven to be a strength, as has the group's diverse membership, which includes representatives from the congregation, choir parents, staff, volunteers, the bell tower, lay members, the pastoral team, and the nurture team. This broad range of perspectives ensures that safeguarding concerns are considered from all angles. In essence, the CSG acts as a bridge between policy and practice, providing support, feedback, and constructive challenge to the various groups that contribute to Cathedral life. With recently renewed Terms of Reference, the group operates with increased independent influence. The Audit considers their approach to be good practice.

Recommendation C5: With the upcoming retirement of a non-executive Chapter member with an education background, Chapter should consider using the vacancy to bring the CLSL onto the Chapter. This would better connect meetings, providing extended oversight and more contemporary and informed safeguarding challenge.

Cathedral's Senior Management Team (SMT)

12.19 As the executive body overseeing all operational activity at the Cathedral, the SMT includes safeguarding as a standing agenda item at each meeting. Chaired by the COO, the SMT comprises key figures including the Dean, Chapter Safeguarding Lead (CSL),

Heads of Finance, Fundraising, and Commercial Activity, and the Senior Executive Assistant to the Dean and the COO (SEA). This diverse membership ensures representation from all operational areas and facilitates collaborative decision-making. For example, the Head of Commercial Activity's involvement ensures safeguarding considerations are integrated into commercially driven events, whilst the Head of Finance's presence facilitates resource allocation for safeguarding initiatives.

12.20 Whilst positive, the Audit identified a lack of clarity amongst some senior staff regarding the division of responsibilities between the SMT and Chapter. This ambiguity must be addressed so that everyone understands the Cathedral's comprehensive governance, assurance, and operational oversight and delivery frameworks, including the distinct roles and interrelationships of its various bodies.

Recommendation C6: To address the ambiguity surrounding roles and responsibilities, Chapter should produce a clear outline of the Cathedral's governance, assurance, and operational oversight and delivery frameworks. This document should explicitly define the distinct responsibilities of Chapter, the SMT, and other relevant bodies, clarifying their interrelationships, roles and responsibilities. This document should then be disseminated and discussed with all staff, including senior management, to ensure a shared understanding. Regular reviews of this document should be conducted to maintain its accuracy and relevance.

Cathedral Safeguarding Team

12.21 Safeguarding responsibilities at the Cathedral are shared on a part-time basis across a range of posts, most notably the CSL (one day per week) and the SEA (half a day a week). Whilst both are committed and knowledgeable and further supported by the DSO/A (who spends one day a month onsite and offers other support remotely) the part-time approach is not sustainable. The risk this represents is magnified by the fact that the DST is itself

under resourced. Any major incident or unforeseen extraction could create significant difficulties in the Cathedral, the DBF and the wider Diocese.

12.22 Safer recruitment practices within the Cathedral are managed by the HR Officer, or in their absence, by the Cathedral Business Support Officer. This function is quite rightly one for the HR department and the only time Safeguarding team members should be involved is when a return on a vetting (DBS) application indicates a blemish / concern.

12.23 The MOU between the Cathedral and DBF is delivered without a financial impact on the Cathedral. This reflects the strength and collegiate nature of current relationships and once the Audit is complete, the DBF and Cathedral should come together to establish how they might better deal with financial pressure by extending the areas in which they work together.

Capacity

12.24 It is clear that whilst the Cathedral has some outstanding and committed personnel responsible for safeguarding, they fundamentally lack capacity. To alleviate these pressures, the Audit makes the following recommendations:

Recommendation C7 (and D12): The Cathedral and DBF should jointly further consider investigating the potential for opportunities to expand their collaboration and explore efficiencies and the potential to alleviate the financial pressures which inhibit further investment in safeguarding. Specifically, they should assess the feasibility and benefits of sharing support services, such as HR, finance, or IT, which could lead to cost savings and streamlined operations for both organisations. A formal review should be undertaken to identify shared service possibilities and develop a plan for implementation where appropriate.

Recommendation C8: The Cathedral should appoint a dedicated, professional Cathedral Safeguarding Advisor (CSA). Whilst routinely based at the Cathedral, the CSA would be line managed and professionally supervised by the DSO/A. This would consolidate professional safeguarding resources (providing resilience and contingency) and ensure a consistent approach to safeguarding policy and practice.

12.25 The above recommendations align with the Audit's suggestion for a new operating model featuring a Safeguarding Directorate led by a suitably qualified Director of Safeguarding. This proposal (as set out below) should form the basis of discussions between the DBF and the Cathedral regarding next steps on efficiencies, financial pressures and collaboration.

Recommendation C9 (and D10): To strengthen safeguarding across the Diocese, the DBF should establish an internal but operationally independent Safeguarding Directorate, led by a Director of Safeguarding. This Directorate would consolidate all safeguarding resources and provide comprehensive support to the DBF, parishes, and Cathedral. The Director of Safeguarding would have the authority and autonomy to:

- a) Provide expert advice and oversight on all safeguarding matters.
- b) Challenge senior clergy and Church bodies when necessary.
- c) Escalate concerns to higher authorities, including the NST.

To ensure effectiveness, the following is required:

1. **Clear Reporting Lines:** The Director should be a member of and report to the Bishop's Council, Chapter, and BLT / SMT.
2. **Formal Agreements:** A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the DBF, Parish PCCs, and the Cathedral should clearly define the Director's authority and responsibility to

provide safeguarding advice, support and ultimate decision making on any safeguarding related matter across the Diocese.

Adequate Resources: The Directorate should have sufficient resources and staffing, incorporating all professional safeguarding staff (including the CSA).

Chorister Safeguarding

12.26 The Cathedral’s chorister programme consists of around 30 children, aged 8–13, and is managed by the Director of Music. Approximately 20 older children form the Consort Choir which is overseen by the Assistant Organist. A choral outreach programme, which engages local schools to inspire a love of singing and prepare children to perform in the Cathedral, is also in operation. Complementing this is the Children’s Cantate Choir which meets weekly, participates in concerts, and plays an active role in Cathedral performances.

Scheduling and Wellbeing

12.27 Given the Cathedral’s substantial cohort of young singers, encompassing various choirs, there is flexibility within scheduling that offers choristers much-needed time off that smaller choirs may not be able to accommodate. The Audit found that Carlisle Cathedral have achieved a positive balance with regard to chorister wellbeing and musical commitments – the benefits of which are reflected in the positive attitudes of both choristers and their parents.

Parent and Chorister Views

12.28 Choristers engaged during the Audit were overwhelmingly positive about their experiences at Carlisle Cathedral. All choristers, including probationers and a member of the Consort Choir, expressed a genuine love for the musical education they receive and the strong friendships they have formed – a sentiment that was echoed through the chorister survey conducted by the Cathedral.

12.29 Importantly, there was a clear sense that these children knew who to approach if they had any concerns. They also appreciated recent improvements to their safety, such as the installation of a key-coded door to the Song Room. This measure was introduced following incidents of public access to the room and represents an example of good practice.

12.30 Parents engaged by the Audit expressed positive views about the safeguarding arrangements surrounding their children and commented favourably about the use of the choir mobile phone, which creates a direct and quick form of communication between staff and parents.

Chaperoning

12.31 The music department utilises dedicated Cathedral staff and volunteers as chaperones for the choristers. These individuals are appropriately DBS checked and provided with relevant safeguarding training. The Audit found that chaperones had a good understanding of safeguarding arrangements, such as doors remaining open and maintaining the appropriate ratios of staff to children.

Other Safety Provisions (Toilets and CCTV)

12.32 The Song Room offers a suitable rehearsal space for the choirs, although it is not always ideal for hosting multiple choirs or larger groups. For such rare occasions, the sensible decision is made to split the choir.

12.33 Within the Song Room, dedicated chorister-only toilets are available and the Cathedral benefits from appropriately positioned CCTV in most chorister areas. The Audit found that the organ loft, as a secluded area with low visibility, should also benefit from CCTV to ensure line of sight.

Recommendation C10: The Cathedral should install CCTV in the organ loft to improve visibility and act as a deterrent for anyone who might seek to misuse this area.

12.34 Additionally, to further enhance a culture of safeguarding within the Song Room, the Cathedral should consider placing child-friendly signposting within the toilet cubicles or upon noticeboards that direct children to help and support in a way that gathers their attention.

Recommendation C11: The Cathedral should ensure that child-friendly safeguarding posters are displayed in the Song Room and associated toilets, to serve as a clear reminder of whom to approach should they need support or have concerns.

Information Sharing

12.35 Low-level and routine information about choristers is stored in a communal handbook that is accessible to all music staff and on duty volunteers. This system ensures seamless information sharing, even during shift changes. Additionally, staff were aware of the need to use this handbook to regularly review patterns that might indicate emerging concerns.

Training

12.36 Currently, staff manage behaviour effectively to the best of their ability, but many recognise that additional training in this area could further enhance the support they provide. The Audit recommends that all staff who engage with choristers undergo behaviour management training, which includes a focus on neurodiversity and other additional needs. This training should be embedded in the induction process for new music staff and refreshed regularly for all. The Cathedral could collaborate with local schools that they share a connection with, or via other external sources.

Recommendation C12: All music staff should undertake behaviour management training, including direction and guidance for supporting children with neurodiversity and additional needs. This training should form part of the induction process and be renewed regularly.

12.37 The organ scholar, having previously held a different role within the Diocese, had completed basic safeguarding training. However, upon transitioning into a role involving close work with choristers, it was expected that he would undertake leadership training. Unfortunately, this training did not take place and was later deemed unnecessary. The staff member, their colleagues, and the Audit identified this as an oversight that must be addressed promptly.

12.38 It is recommended that leadership training be provided, not only for the organ scholar but also for the music administration role and any staff who regularly engage with or have responsibility for choristers or members of the Consort Choir.

Recommendation C13: All staff who regularly engage with or have responsibility for young people should complete leadership safeguarding training as a minimum.

Policies

12.39 The Cathedral's Safeguarding Handbook houses information relevant to choristers and a further booklet with information for parents is available. The latter includes more detailed information which the Audit considers good practice.

13 Prevention

- 13.1 As part of its safeguarding arrangements, the Cathedral has in place a good range of preventative measures. These include a focus on safer recruitment, codes of conduct, mechanisms to raise awareness, engagement, workforce and site safety.
- 13.2 The Cathedral has strong safer recruitment procedures. Processes are aligned to legislation, relevant policies and key guidance issued by the CofE. Recruiters at the Cathedral are suitably trained, support is easily accessible and there is routine promotion about the importance of this issue. The Cathedral has developed some useful guidance to outline the minimum level of training and criminal record checks for certain roles.
- 13.3 Pre-recruitment activity is also strong. Applications are clear and easy to navigate, including a 'self-disclosure' and 'confidential declaration' form. References are appropriately sought and there is a defined process in place for seeking criminal records checks. Arrangements are also in place at the Cathedral for re-checking DBS staff on a three yearly cycle. The Audit acknowledges that significant efforts have recently been undertaken to ensure accurate and up-to-date recruitment records for staff and volunteers. Whilst the Audit recognises and supports the Cathedral's efforts and objectives, there is further work to do in this regard as the Audit found that some staff members had exceeded the timeframe for a renewed DBS.

Recommendation C14: The Cathedral should ensure that all relevant staff and volunteers have up-to-date DBS checks.

Recommendation C15: Within the next twelve months, the Cathedral should ensure that all recruitment records are complete in the central database with no gaps in data.

- 13.4 There is evidence of meaningful and appropriate discussions at the Cathedral about safeguarding. Safeguarding is a regular agenda item for both Chapter and Senior Management Team meetings, and is also a key responsibility of the Audit and Risk Committee. Furthermore, the Cathedral has implemented quarterly induction sessions for all staff, new and existing. These sessions include a presentation by the Chapter Safeguarding Lead, reinforcing best practices and addressing any questions regarding safer recruitment and general safeguarding procedures.
- 13.5 To ensure safeguarding is embedded within the wider Cathedral community, a Congregational Representative actively participates in the Cathedral Safeguarding Group. Additionally, the Cathedral holds an annual Safeguarding Sunday service, which includes a formal recommitment to the Cathedral's Safeguarding Pledge by the whole congregation.
- 13.6 Recognising the unique safeguarding considerations associated with bell ringing, the Cathedral has taken proactive steps to ensure a safer environment for young people. The Bell Tower Captain and the Cathedral Safeguarding Lead have worked on protocols to ensure that under-18 bell ringers are able to learn in a safer environment. Such protocols include the use of chaperones. The Audit fully supports the Cathedral's intentions to develop these arrangements further.
- 13.7 The Cathedral actively promotes good safeguarding practice through a variety of resources and initiatives. These include a comprehensive Safeguarding Handbook, signposted resources, a safeguarding pledge, and a clear safeguarding policy statement. Furthermore, the CSL actively participates in the DSAP and maintains regular contact with the DSA/O, fostering collaboration and ensuring alignment with wider national safeguarding networks.
- 13.8 The Audit observed a proactive and context-specific approach to sharing good practice

with the Cathedral workforce. A notable example is a document outlining how staff and volunteers should interact with a vulnerable adult who frequently seeks refuge in the Cathedral. This document acknowledges that the individual's behaviour might be disconcerting to those unfamiliar with him but assures readers that there is a regular pattern to it. It then provides clear instructions for interacting with this individual, including managing their verbal and physical behaviour, and designates specific staff members to assist if needed. The document emphasises clear communication and signage to help the individual understand which areas are off-limits, and includes a plan for ongoing support and monitoring, with clear procedures for reporting concerns. Importantly, it concludes with a commitment to regularly reviewing and updating the plan.

13.9 The Cathedral utilises a variety of methods to disseminate safeguarding information. These include email newsletters, safeguarding seasons, the activity of the CSL, and the use of pew news sheets, notice boards, and social media. Wallet purse cards with safeguarding contacts are also provided.

13.10 The Cathedral has taken proactive steps to raise awareness of specific safeguarding issues. For example, during Safeguarding Season, they focused on child sexual abuse, sharing resources and hosting a talk by a survivor and advocate. In September 2023, the Cathedral conducted training on domestic abuse and continue to actively support the Mothers' Union's 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence. In the Safeguarding Season (October 2024), the Cathedral featured a sermon by a survivor of domestic abuse and a Mothers' Union-supported exhibition.

13.11 The Cathedral has taken several steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children involved in its activities. In the summer of 2024, an online safeguarding questionnaire was issued, with positive feedback received from children about their sense of safety within the Cathedral.

13.12 Recognising the importance of consistently incorporating children's perspectives about safeguarding, the Cathedral Safeguarding Group is actively exploring ways to build upon this initial questionnaire model. Current practice includes one-on-one conversations between the CSL and parents / carers during chorister auditions, where safeguarding commitments are emphasised. Additionally, the Director of Music discusses safety with choristers, as detailed previously in this report.

13.13 Despite these efforts, the Cathedral acknowledges the need for more consistent and systematic engagement with children. The Audit supports the Cathedral plan to draw learning from the Chorister questionnaire, and collaborations with Prism Arts, to inform future strategies for hearing the voices of all children and vulnerable adults involved in the Cathedral's activities.

13.14 The Cathedral undertakes risk assessments for various activities, overseen by relevant personnel: worship and opening by the Head Verger; music by the Director of Music; bell ringing by the Bell Tower Captain; children's activities and under-18 work experience by the Learning and Volunteer Officer; pastoral visits by the clergy lead for Pastoral care; and the all-age service by the Nurture Lead.

Recommendation C16: For choir visits to parishes - the risk assessment should include discussion with the DSA / CSL to cross reference any relevant information held pertinent to the visit (e.g., the likelihood of a person of concern being subject to a Safety Agreement attending the church).

13.15 The Cathedral prioritises the safety and wellbeing of all visiting choirs, especially those with children. To ensure this, the Cathedral provides a comprehensive 'Information Pack' outlining specific safeguarding requirements. This pack mandates that visiting choirs with children must have a robust Safeguarding Policy in place and be prepared to present it to

the Cathedral upon request. This ensures that the choir operates within a framework of established safety procedures. Furthermore, all group leaders accompanying visiting choirs must have a clear Enhanced DBS check. Finally, to ensure clear communication and accountability, the visiting choir must provide contact information for their designated safeguarding lead.

- 13.16 Carlisle Cathedral's Lone Working Policy aims to ensure the safety of staff and volunteers working alone in various situations. The policy defines lone working and emphasises planning and risk assessment, especially for one-to-one interactions. It details control measures like notifying colleagues, being aware of dangers, and reporting incidents. Specific guidelines are provided for those in ministry, including maintaining boundaries and record keeping. The policy also addresses using personal homes for Cathedral activities, requiring pre-agreement and adherence to safety guidelines. The policy is reviewed regularly and is accessible to all staff.
- 13.17 The Cathedral has implemented some safeguarding measures specific to the layout of its buildings, particularly in areas frequented by children or vulnerable individuals. For instance, the Choir Chaperone handbook and training program explicitly address maintaining safe spaces for children and choir members within the Song Room and the Cathedral itself.
- 13.18 Similarly, the Bell Tower handbook details safety and etiquette guidelines, which are emphasised during the induction process for new bell ringers. Safeguarding information, including a copy of the Safeguarding Handbook, is displayed on the tower notice board.
- 13.19 The Cathedral Safeguarding Handbook details guidelines regarding appropriate physical contact between adults and children within the Cathedral.

14 Recognising, Assessing and Managing Risk

- 14.1 The Audit observed a considered approach to safeguarding at Carlisle Cathedral aimed at identifying, managing and mitigating risk. This framework includes having the relevant policies, procedures and guidance in place, as well as promoting a culture where everyone is aware of and responsible for safeguarding.
- 14.2 Safeguarding is included in the Cathedral's Risk Register and the Audit saw evidence of concerns and control measures being appropriately documented with oversight applied by the CSG. The Audit believes that the register could be further strengthened by considering broader societal issues.

Recommendation C17: To further strengthen the Cathedral's Risk Register, it should be expanded to include a comprehensive assessment of safeguarding risks specific to the Cathedral's context and environment. This should include specific safeguarding focused consideration of:

- a) Risks arising from allegations of abuse or misconduct, mishandling of safeguarding cases, or negative publicity. This should include protocols for managing allegations, proactively searching for and addressing (open source) online criticism and media relations.
- b) Risks associated with the cost-of-living crisis, such as increased vulnerability to exploitation and abuse due to financial hardship. This could involve strategies to support vulnerable individuals and families and to prevent financial abuse.

- 14.3 Concerns can be raised in several ways, including through a dedicated 'Cause for Concern' reporting system, which uses a simple form and flowchart to assess and escalate concerns as needed. All staff and volunteers have access to these forms, which are

available in various locations across the Cathedral buildings. Concerns can also be reported directly to safeguarding leads, whose contact details are displayed prominently on the Cathedral's website and on posters. Every concern is logged and tracked, with a central record maintained for all reports and a digital record of corresponding information. The DSA/O has access to all information, which is stored securely on the Cathedral Server. Looking ahead, the Audit supports the Cathedral's plans to implement the National Safeguarding Case Management System (NSCMS) once formal Data Sharing Agreements are in place. This will further enhance the efficiency and security of the safeguarding process.

- 14.4 The current safeguarding arrangements facilitate the effective triaging of referrals within the Cathedral. The CSL reviews all safeguarding concerns initially. If further investigation is needed, the CSL consults the DSA. After this consultation, they jointly decide whether to escalate the concern to the next level.
- 14.5 Out of all the 'Cause for Concern' referrals received, 28 required further action: either advice from the CSL to the person raising the concern, or guidance from the DSA/O on how to proceed. Over the past year, only one case necessitated a referral to statutory authorities.
- 14.6 The Cathedral operates a 'low threshold' safeguarding approach, meaning they encourage the reporting of any concern, no matter how small. All staff and volunteers undergo basic and foundation-level safeguarding training, empowering them to recognise potential issues, respond appropriately to the individual and their needs, record the encounter using the 'Cause for Concern' form, and refer the matter to the DSA, CLSL, or CSL.
- 14.7 The Cathedral has implemented risk assessments for a variety of activities to ensure the safety of staff, volunteers, and visitors. These assessments cover a range of events and

activities, including educational workshops and visits, bell ringing, tower open days, general access to the Cathedral tower, the all-age service, choir practices, events involving choristers, and pastoral visits to people's homes.

- 14.8 Whilst Carlisle Cathedral hasn't yet needed to implement a formal Safety Agreement (Safety Plan), processes are in place should the need arise.
- 14.9 The Audit was advised there have been no Core Groups or disciplinary processes at the Cathedral over the past 12 months. The findings in relation to Core Group procedures are outlined in Part One of this report.
- 14.10 The Cathedral is registered as a charity and has a legal requirement to submit Serious Incident Reports (SIRs) to the Charity Commission. Whilst it has yet to make any SIRs, the Cathedral follows the House of Bishops' guidance set out in 'Safeguarding Serious Incident Reporting to the Charity Commission'.
- 14.11 The Cathedral has several information sharing agreements (ISAs) in place and follows the National Data Sharing Agreement with the Police.
- 14.12 The Cathedral has an escalation process for resolving disputes related to safeguarding. This is set out through the Memorandum of Understanding and complaints and whistleblowing procedures.
- 14.13 Findings from the Audit's survey (involving the Cathedral's workforce) indicated that the majority of respondents were aware of the privacy notice in respect of data protection. This is positive and reflects the overall sustained efforts to comply with data protection requirements.

14.14 New volunteers receive basic data protection information in their welcome package and handbooks. Additionally, formal GDPR training has been completed by two employees. The Audit supports the additional training being introduced which is being built into a new staff training programme.

15 Victims and Survivors

15.1 The Cathedral is committed to engaging with victims, survivors, and all those affected by abuse. A key part of this commitment is its annual ‘Safeguarding Season’, held each autumn since 2021. It was developed by the CSL and other leaders to provide the Cathedral with a focused opportunity to lament, listen and learn from the experience of those who have suffered abuse. This is complimented by the LOUDfence initiative, inspired by a local advocate for victims of church-based child sexual abuse. At the heart of Safeguarding Season is ‘Safeguarding Sunday’, a service that includes a renewal of the Cathedral's Safeguarding Pledge. In October 2024, the Cathedral also focused on domestic abuse with a sermon by a survivor and advocate and the Mothers' Union exhibition ‘Souls of our Shoes’.

15.2 The Audit recognises that whilst informal conversations with those engaging throughout the Safeguarding Season are occurring, there is a need to measure the impact of this engagement. Implementing a formal feedback mechanism could help the Cathedral measure the true impact this has on victims and survivors. Obtaining feedback could be undertaken in a variety of ways and as such, the Audit makes the following recommendations.

Recommendation C18: The Cathedral should consider implementing a formal feedback mechanism to assess the impact of Safeguarding Season, particularly on victims and survivors. This could include surveys, feedback forms, or facilitated listening sessions. Gathering this data will provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of the season and identify areas for improvement.

- 15.3 Routes for disclosure are evident at the Cathedral, with signage on posters for Safe Spaces, the NSPCC and Promoting a Safe Church all being clear, alongside contact details for the DSA, CLSL and CSL. Up-to-date contact information for these key roles are also available on the Cathedral's website. The 'Find Help and Support' webpage signposts to Safe Spaces, Cumbria Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) website and Domestic Abuse support services, including the National Domestic Abuse Helpline and Mankind.
- 15.4 The Cathedral's primary approach to offering support involves active listening, providing guidance to appropriate resources (based on individual needs), and documenting these interactions as they occur. One of the most common safeguarding themes encountered at the Cathedral is supporting and managing adults at risk and working with local social services and other support services where necessary.

16 Learning, Supervision and Support

Safeguarding Learning

- 16.1 The Cathedral benefits from a range of training options delivered through the NST, DST and local organisations such as People First. Courses include training in leadership, senior leadership, and domestic abuse for clergy, alongside bespoke sessions on communication with individuals with learning difficulties.
- 16.2 The Cathedral rely on the DBF to capture feedback from safeguarding training and do not conduct their own independent evaluation. This limits its ability to assess the specific impact of training on its workforce and risks overlooking areas for improvement. To ensure that training remains meaningful and effective, particularly in the absence of a dedicated trainer, the Cathedral should implement an evaluation process.

Recommendation C19: The Cathedral should develop an internal system for evaluating the effectiveness of safeguarding training for its workforce. This could involve collecting feedback directly from participants and analysing its relevance to their roles or undertaking a longer-term impact assessment to ensure that the training translates into improved safeguarding practices.

- 16.3 The Cathedral is in the process of digitising training records and whilst progress has been made with the development of a Single Central Register, initiated in 2021 with the appointment of the COO, challenges remain with historical paper records, which has resulted in incomplete data.
- 16.4 The Audit note that those in high-risk groups such as staff, chaperones, bell ringers, and the education team have been prioritised in the digitisation process. This is good practice.

16.5 As of September 2024, through the process of the digitisation of the Cathedral training records, the Cathedral identified gaps in the recording of safeguarding training for a number of the Cathedral workforce, including clergy, committee members, trustees, staff, and volunteers. Whilst many records (with unknown statuses) may reflect training that is not overdue but undocumented, this gap highlights the need for the Cathedral to continue the work they have already begun to ensure complete oversight of training compliance.

Recommendation C20: The Cathedral should continue to prioritise the digitisation of historical paper records to ensure the Single Central Register provides complete and accurate oversight of training compliance. Alongside this, the Cathedral should implement a system for addressing those with incomplete training to ensure that all personnel are up-to-date with safeguarding requirements.

Clergy Support

16.6 The Cathedral's induction process introduces safeguarding through pre-read materials and targeted one-to-one meetings with key personnel. Over the past year, the Cathedral has enhanced this process with quarterly inductions for both new and existing staff. These arrangements offer ongoing opportunities to reinforce safeguarding awareness, with an annual 'inset' further reinforcing this focus. Importantly, induction takes place prior to Church Officers engaging with children, young people, or adults at risk. This is good practice.

16.7 The support outlined for clergy and the MDR process outlined in the DBF learning, supervision and support section of this report has equal relevance to the Cathedral.

Supervision and Support of Safeguarding Roles

16.8 The Cathedral's supervision and support arrangements are provided through the DBF. The DSA/O acts as the primary link for relationships with safeguarding professionals and

participation in multi-agency forums. Professional supervision, work-life balance provisions, and access to psychological support for safeguarding roles are also overseen by the DBF.

17 Conclusion

- 17.1 From a safeguarding perspective, the Cathedral benefits from strong leadership, driven by committed and experienced volunteers, staff, and a hardworking, highly effective, part-time CSL.
- 17.2 A genuine commitment to safeguarding is clearly evident, underscored by numerous strengths. These include a positive safeguarding culture, robust governance structures, proactive and innovative initiatives, strong internal and external collaboration, and a dedicated focus on victim and survivor support and engagement.
- 17.3 The Cathedral's partnership with the DBF, the development of the Safeguarding Season (which encourages lamenting, listening, and learning from those who have experienced abuse), and the dedication to chorister wellbeing are particularly commendable.
- 17.4 To build on its progress, the Cathedral must address the issues relating to safeguarding capacity. Increased capacity and resilience, through the appointment of a dedicated safeguarding professional, will help address key areas essential to strengthening the existing framework. These include improvements in communication, training and record management, awareness raising, clarification of safeguarding roles, and more consistent engagement with children.
- 17.5 More broadly, the Audit's recommendations can provide a springboard for continued growth. Many can be delivered through a sensible and mutually beneficial arrangement with the DBF on shared back-office services, and the adoption of a consolidated Safeguarding Directorate led by a qualified Director of Safeguarding. By exploring this opportunity, the Cathedral can mitigate its financial pressures, ensure transparent and



operationally independent safeguarding, and invest its resources in further cultivating a truly safe and nurturing environment.

Appendices

18 Appendix 1 – DBF Recommendations

Recommendation D1: In line with the current CofE framework, the Diocesan Bishop should retain ultimate responsibility and accountability for all safeguarding matters. Whilst delegation of specific support tasks is permissible and can enhance effectiveness, the Diocesan Bishop must maintain clear oversight and leadership, ensuring their direct involvement is evident in all safeguarding practices. Delegated responsibilities must be clearly defined, documented, and regularly reviewed.

Recommendation D2: On the appointment of the new Bishop of Carlisle, the Clergy HR and Bishop's Chaplain roles should be separated. Whilst the Bishop's Chaplain may provide administrative support for governance meetings and related activities, they should not hold a senior clergy HR oversight position. This separation is essential to avoid conflicts of interest and ensure impartial HR practices.

Recommendation D3: Before any formal or informal visit to a Church body within their Archdeaconry, Archdeacons should consult with the DSA/O for an update on current safeguarding trends, themes, and any relevant local issues. Following the visit, they should debrief with the DSA/O, providing a record of the visit, issues discussed, and agreed actions.

Recommendation D4: The Lead Safeguarding Archdeacon should coordinate and chair quarterly safeguarding meetings with the other Archdeacons. These meetings could include presentations from relevant experts to help upskill and brief the Archdeacon team, ensuring a consistent approach to safeguarding across all Archdeaconries.

These meetings should be recorded in minutes, with an agenda agreed with the DSA/O covering (but not limited to) areas such as:

- g) Safeguarding trends and themes: Sharing updates on any emerging trends or developing patterns related to safeguarding issues, including information from the safeguarding team about areas of concern or matters they wish to be reinforced.
- h) Challenging cases: Reviewing complex or difficult safeguarding cases encountered locally and nationally, and identifying lessons learned that can improve and ensure a consistent response to safeguarding matters in a local context.
- i) Training and development: Focusing on training needs, including evaluating training delivery and identifying areas for professional development.
- j) Feedback and communication: Gathering feedback for the safeguarding team, including suggestions on how to improve and consolidate communication and collaboration across the parishes.

Annual review of visits / visitations and articles of enquiry: Updating and ensuring continuous improvement of the safeguarding template for formal and informal visits.

Good practice: Capturing what has worked well and ensuring that those involved receive recognition and encouragement for the good work they have done.

Recommendation D5: The Bishop of Carlisle should ensure that MDRs effectively support the development of clergy, including their safeguarding knowledge and practice by:

- e) Clarifying the purpose and scope of MDRs, emphasising how safeguarding considerations are integrated into the process.
- f) Communicating the agreed purpose, process and application of the MDR process within and across the dioceses to all clergy.
- g) Including a dedicated section within the MDR on safeguarding, where clergy reflect on:
 - iv. Safeguarding issues encountered in their past and present roles.
 - v. Areas where they wish to develop their safeguarding knowledge and expertise.

- vi. How they plan to apply safeguarding best practice in their current and future roles.

Prioritising the completion of outstanding MDRs, ensuring that all clergy receive timely feedback and support. This may involve continuing the use of additional resources to ensure that all MDRs are up-to-date by the of 2025.

Recommendation D6: To enhance collaboration and ensure a cohesive approach to safeguarding, an annual meeting should be established between the Chairs (or their designated representatives) of the following groups:

- Bishop's Council (BC)
- Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF)
- Bishop's Leadership Team (BLT)
- Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel (DSAP)
- Archdeacons' Quarterly Safeguarding Meeting (if established)

This meeting should focus on:

- h) **Agreeing on key safeguarding themes:** Identifying priority areas for the upcoming year, ensuring alignment with specific oversight responsibilities, national guidance and local needs.
- i) **Defining roles and responsibilities:** Clarifying leadership and accountability for each theme, avoiding duplication of effort and ensuring clear lines of responsibility.
- j) **Planning collaborative activities:** Developing a coordinated plan for addressing the chosen themes, outlining specific actions, timelines, and resources.
- k) **Considering overall skills, inclusion, and diversity representation.** To ensure that within and between the bodies they reflect the communities they serve and possess the necessary skills and perspectives to address a wide range of issues, leading to better informed decision-making and improved outcomes.

- l) **Identified areas for improvement.** Monitoring collective progress.
- m) **Charity Commission reporting:** Ensuring that each group has considered any issue that may engage Charity Commission requirements. This will ensure compliance, transparency, and accountability.
- n) **Risk Registers:** Ensuring regular reviews and alignment of Risk Registers to help differentiate risk at each level, ensuring a complementary approach focused on aspects of risks linked to safeguarding issues.

Recommendation D7: The DSA/O⁶ should be granted ex-officio membership of the BLT which would enable attendance and involvement in BC and the DBF. This will ensure that:

- e) A safeguarding perspective is routinely incorporated into all discussions and decision-making.
- f) That such bodies receive consistent and timely advice on direct and indirect safeguarding matters.
- g) Potential risks and concerns are identified and addressed proactively.
- h) A culture of safeguarding is embedded throughout the Diocese.

Recommendation D8: The DSAP should:

- h) Further broaden and diversify its membership, e.g., incorporating a Chair from a local domestic abuse charity or similar organisation into the DSAP lay membership.
- i) Implement a three-year themed cycle for DSAP meetings that focuses on deep dives into the application of National Safeguarding Standards in a local context.
- j) Ensure that archdeacons and other senior leaders are actively engaged in cascading their experience and learning into the DSAP process. This will help to triangulate and constructively challenge feedback / briefings from others including the DST.
- k) Actively explore how it could improve Victim / Survivor engagement. For example, involving its members in outreach, seeking opportunities to go and listen at existing

⁶ This position would be occupied by the Director of Safeguarding if that recommendation is agreed.

victims and survivor forums, inviting victim and survivors and / or their advocates to deep dive session of DSAP that focus on listening to and learning from victims and survivors.

- l) Consider a role in establishing a multi-faith victim and survivors' group to facilitate listening and feedback, in collaboration with other churches and community organisations.
- m) When considering the adoption of operationally or task specific sub-groups, the DSAP should utilise its membership to facilitate (the equivalent of) multi-disciplinary / agency audits. For example, using membership from a LADO, police officer and clergy person to deep dive and audit safer recruitment policy and practice.
- n) The DSAP should aggregate all recommendations from this Audit, along with any outstanding recommendations from other scrutiny / audit / LLR activity into a themed and prioritised Action Tracker. This should be subject to periodic reviews and updates (at least twice a year).

Recommendation D9: To ensure comprehensive oversight and support for incoming clergy, all incoming Clergy (Blue) Files must be reviewed by the DSA/O as well as the person delegated on behalf of the Diocesan Bishop. This approach should:

- d) Verify the CCSL statement regarding the individual's safeguarding history and experience.
- e) Ensure those supporting the new appointment are aware of any areas for development or potential vulnerability.
- f) Provide an opportunity to identify and address any safeguarding concerns proactively.

Recommendation D10 (and C9): Establish an Independent Safeguarding Directorate.

To strengthen safeguarding across the Diocese, the DBF should establish an independent Safeguarding Directorate, led by a Director of Safeguarding. This Directorate would consolidate all safeguarding resources and provide comprehensive support to the DBF, parishes, and Cathedral. The Director of Safeguarding would have the authority and autonomy to:

- Provide expert advice and oversight on all safeguarding matters.
- Challenge senior clergy and church bodies when necessary.
- Escalate concerns to higher authorities, including the NST.

To ensure effectiveness, the following is required:

- **Clear Reporting Lines:** The Director should be a member of and report to the Bishop's Council, Chapter, and BLT / SLT.
- **Formal Agreements:** A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the DBF, Parish PCCs, and the Cathedral should clearly define the Director's authority and responsibility to provide safeguarding advice, support and ultimate authoritative decision making on any safeguarding related matter across the Diocese.
- **Adequate Resources:** The Directorate should have sufficient resources and staffing, including all professional safeguarding staff (including those at the Cathedral), and additional posts to backfill the DSA/O role and create at least one new Assistant DSA (ADSA) position.

To be clear, this structure would require three new posts: a Director of Safeguarding, at least one additional ADSA (beyond the recent appointment), and a Cathedral Safeguarding Advisor (CSA). This investment in safeguarding will enhance capacity, ensure consistent standards, and promote a safer environment for all.

Recommendation D11: The DBF should carry out a cost-benefit analysis of its current approach to outsourcing training provision. This would assess the potential advantages of recruiting an additional Assistant Safeguarding Advisor with a training function and creating a training budget for specialist courses, further enhancing capacity and support within the team.

Recommendation D12 (and C7): The Cathedral and DBF should jointly further consider investigating the potential for opportunities to expand their collaboration and explore efficiencies and the potential to alleviate the financial pressures which inhibit further investment in safeguarding. Specifically, they should assess the feasibility and benefits of sharing support services, such as HR, finance, or IT, which could lead to cost savings and streamlined operations for both organisations. A formal review should be undertaken to identify shared service possibilities and develop a plan for implementation where appropriate.

Recommendation D13: The DBF should scope and consider options for improving website accessibility and navigation. This should include:

- e) A more prominent option to access resources, tools and support relevant to PSOs (e.g., Parish Dashboard).
- f) A re-design of the safeguarding webpage to align with hierarchy principles (i.e., information being organised in order of importance to users).
- g) A section on 'how to report a safeguarding concern' should take primacy, followed by a re-ordering of other sections that are most frequently accessed. This seeks to ensure that support material resources are categorised into logical groups and are easily accessible.
- h) A review of all supporting materials provided by the DBF and consolidating these on the Diocese website.

Recommendation D14: The DBF should enhance its communication planning by:

- f) Developing a clear strategy outlining how each platform is utilised and why.
- g) Implementing mechanisms to measure input, output, and impact of communication efforts. This will allow for data-driven activity based on the needs of followers on each platform and adopting platform-specific techniques.

- h) Moving beyond mirroring national themes and ensuring that messaging is locally contextualised. This ensures relevance and resonance with the specific community relevant to the DBF.
- i) Embedding key safeguarding messages throughout its social media channels. This ensures consistent and frequent reinforcement of important information.
- j) Utilising relevant awareness days, campaigns, and events to amplify its message. This helps to leverage broader public discourse and increased reach.

Recommendation D15: As part of the triage process, the DSA/O should record the rationale for risk grading and the prioritisation of cases, alongside specifying timescales for action and the review of progress.

Recommendation D16: The regional approach to RSL supervision (divided between part-time RSLs) should be evaluated in consultation with the relevant DSA/Os within nine months of its full implementation.

Recommendation D17: Referred cases resulting in no further action and / or the provision of advice / guidance should be included as part of the supervision discussions between the DST and NST. This will also be raised by the Audit with the NST.

Recommendation D18: The DBF should reinforce its commitment to 'Responding Well to Victims and Survivors of Abuse' by:

- c) Including a statement of commitment on its 'Reporting Abuse and Finding Support' webpage.
- d) Linking to 'Responding Well to Victims and Survivors of Abuse' guidance.

Recommendation D19: The DBF should identify opportunities to listen to victims and survivors utilising existing and established networks. This should include travelling to neighbouring dioceses which have established survivor forums.

Recommendation D20: The DBF should consider implementing mandatory counselling sessions for members of the DST to ensure they are sufficiently supported in the challenging role they do.

19 Appendix 2 – Cathedral Recommendations

Recommendation C1: The Cathedral should increase awareness of the safeguarding lead/s within the worshipping community by implementing a multi-faceted communication campaign that involves:

- e) Prominently displaying the safeguarding lead's name and contact information on notice boards, in service leaflets, and on the Cathedral website.
- f) Including a short introduction of the safeguarding lead during services and other community events.
- g) Offering a brief, informal Q&A session with the safeguarding lead after a service.
- h) Utilising social media and email communication to share information about safeguarding and the safeguarding lead.

Recommendation C2: The Cathedral should set a target to raise awareness of the safeguarding lead(s) across the worshipping community within six months to 80% and measure impact via a short, anonymous survey distributed after services and via email.

Recommendation C3: The Cathedral should address these concerns and improve perceptions of decision making and communication by:

- c) Providing ongoing forums through which the cathedral community can better understand the decision-making structures within the Cathedral, particularly since the passing of the Cathedral's Measure of 2021. These forums should seek to address how decisions are made and at what level, and also continue to review and improve the patterns of communication to the wider Cathedral community.
- d) Following these forums, implement agreed-upon actions and assess their effectiveness through a follow-up survey within six months of each forum taking place.

Recommendation C4: The Cathedral should review and, if necessary, revise the Terms of Reference for the Audit and Risk Committees to emphasise its advisory capacity on risk matters relating to safeguarding.

- c) The Terms of Reference should clearly articulate that whilst the Committee provides scrutiny and challenge regarding risk management, it does not have executive responsibility for safeguarding. They should also specify that accountability for safeguarding remains with Chapter, the CSG, and the SMT, as appropriate.
- d) The Audit and Risk Committee should agree safeguarding risk assessments with the CSG and SMT prior to submission to Chapter.

Recommendation C5: With the upcoming retirement of a non-executive Chapter member with an education background, Chapter should consider using the vacancy to bring the CLSL onto the Chapter. This would better connect meetings, providing extended oversight and more contemporary and informed safeguarding challenge.

Recommendation C6: To address the ambiguity surrounding roles and responsibilities, Chapter should produce a clear outline of the Cathedral's governance, assurance, and operational oversight and delivery frameworks. This document should explicitly define the distinct responsibilities of Chapter, the SMT, and other relevant bodies, clarifying their interrelationships, roles and responsibilities. This document should then be disseminated and discussed with all staff, including senior management, to ensure a shared understanding. Regular reviews of this document should be conducted to maintain its accuracy and relevance.

Recommendation C7 (and D12): The Cathedral and DBF should jointly further consider investigating the potential for opportunities to expand their collaboration and explore efficiencies and the potential to alleviate the financial pressures which inhibit further investment in safeguarding. Specifically, they should assess the feasibility and benefits of sharing support services, such as HR, finance, or IT, which could lead to cost savings and streamlined

operations for both organisations. A formal review should be undertaken to identify shared service possibilities and develop a plan for implementation where appropriate.

Recommendation C8: The Cathedral should appoint a dedicated, professional Cathedral Safeguarding Advisor (CSA). Whilst routinely based at the Cathedral, the CSA would be line managed and professionally supervised by the DSO/A. This would consolidate professional safeguarding resources (providing resilience and contingency) and ensure a consistent approach to safeguarding policy and practice.

Recommendation C9 (and D10): To strengthen safeguarding across the Diocese, the DBF should establish an internal but operationally independent Safeguarding Directorate, led by a Director of Safeguarding. This Directorate would consolidate all safeguarding resources and provide comprehensive support to the DBF, parishes, and Cathedral. The Director of Safeguarding would have the authority and autonomy to:

- d) Provide expert advice and oversight on all safeguarding matters.
- e) Challenge senior clergy and Church bodies when necessary.
- f) Escalate concerns to higher authorities, including the NST.

To ensure effectiveness, the following is required:

3. **Clear Reporting Lines:** The Director should be a member of and report to the Bishop's Council, Chapter, and BLT / SMT.

4. **Formal Agreements:** A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the DBF, Parish PCCs, and the Cathedral should clearly define the Director's authority and responsibility to provide safeguarding advice, support and ultimate decision making on any safeguarding related matter across the Diocese.

Adequate Resources: The Directorate should have sufficient resources and staffing, incorporating all professional safeguarding staff (including the CSA).

Recommendation C10: The Cathedral should install CCTV in the organ loft to improve visibility and act as a deterrent for anyone who might seek to misuse this area.

Recommendation C11: The Cathedral should ensure that child-friendly safeguarding posters are displayed in the Song Room and associated toilets, to serve as a clear reminder of whom to approach should they need support or have concerns.

Recommendation C12: All music staff should undertake behaviour management training, including direction and guidance for supporting children with neurodiversity and additional needs. This training should form part of the induction process and be renewed regularly.

Recommendation C13: All staff who regularly engage with or have responsibility for young people should complete leadership safeguarding training as a minimum.

Recommendation C14: The Cathedral should ensure that all relevant staff and volunteers have up-to-date DBS checks.

Recommendation C15: Within the next twelve months, the Cathedral should ensure that all recruitment records are complete in the central database with no gaps in data.

Recommendation C16: For choir visits to parishes - the risk assessment should include discussion with the DSA / CSL to cross reference any relevant information held pertinent to the visit (e.g., the likelihood of a person of concern being subject to a Safety Agreement attending the church).

Recommendation C17: To further strengthen the Cathedral's Risk Register, it should be expanded to include a comprehensive assessment of safeguarding risks specific to the

Cathedral's context and environment. This should include specific safeguarding focused consideration of:

- c) Risks arising from allegations of abuse or misconduct, mishandling of safeguarding cases, or negative publicity. This should include protocols for managing allegations, proactively searching for and addressing (open source) online criticism and media relations.
- d) Risks associated with the cost-of-living crisis, such as increased vulnerability to exploitation and abuse due to financial hardship. This could involve strategies to support vulnerable individuals and families and to prevent financial abuse.

Recommendation C18: The Cathedral should consider implementing a formal feedback mechanism to assess the impact of Safeguarding Season, particularly on victims and survivors. This could include surveys, feedback forms, or facilitated listening sessions. Gathering this data will provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of the season and identify areas for improvement.

Recommendation C19: The Cathedral should develop an internal system for evaluating the effectiveness of safeguarding training for its workforce. This could involve collecting feedback directly from participants and analysing its relevance to their roles or undertaking a longer-term impact assessment to ensure that the training translates into improved safeguarding practices.

Recommendation C20: The Cathedral should continue to prioritise the digitisation of historical paper records to ensure the Single Central Register provides complete and accurate oversight of training compliance. Alongside this, the Cathedral should implement a system for addressing those with incomplete training to ensure that all personnel are up-to-date with safeguarding requirements.

20 Appendix 3 – Glossary of Abbreviations

ADSA	Assistant Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser
ADSO	Assistant Diocesan Safeguarding Officer
ALM	Authorised Lay Minister
BC	Bishop's Council
BLT	Bishop's Leadership Team
CCSL	Clergy Current Status Letter
CCTV	Closed-circuit TV
CDM	Clergy Discipline Measure
CLSL	Cathedral Lay Safeguarding Lead
CofE	Church of England
COO	Chief Operating Officer
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service
CSA	Cathedral Safeguarding Advisor
CSG	Cathedral Safeguarding Group
CSL	Cathedral Safeguarding Lead
CSMC	Cathedral Safeguarding Management Committee (
CSO	Cathedral Safeguarding Officer
DASH	Domestic Abuse, Stalking, Harassment and Honour based violence Assessment Tool
DBF	Diocesan Board of Finance
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service
DSA	Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor
DSAP	Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel

DSL	Designated Safeguarding Lead
DSO	Diocesan Safeguarding Officer
DST	Diocesan Safeguarding Team
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
HR	Human Resources
IICSA	The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse
ISA	Information Sharing Agreement
LADO	Local Authority Designated Officer
LLR	Learning Lessons Reviews
MDR	Ministerial Development Review
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NSCMS	National Safeguarding Case Management System
NST	National Safeguarding Team
NYA	National Youth Agency
NYC	Network Youth Church
PCC	Parochial Church Council
PCR2	Past Cases Review 2
PSO	Parish Safeguarding Officer
PTO	Permission to Officiate
RIBA	Royal Institute of British Architects
RSL	Regional Safeguarding Lead
SCA	Safer Church Agreements
SCIE	The Social Care Institute for Excellence
SCMG	Safeguarding Case Management Group
SEA	Senior Executive Assistant

SENCO	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
SIR	Serious Incident Report
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
SMT	Senior Management Team
SRPM	Safer Recruitment and People Management



©Ineqe Group Ltd 2025

Date of Publication: 14/03/25

Version: V1.0

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