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Diocese of Sheffield independent safeguarding audit (October 2016)



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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTEXT

The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) has been commissioned to undertake an audit of the safeguarding arrangements of each diocese of the Church of England. The aim of these audits is to work together to understand how safeguarding is working in each diocese, and to support the continuing improvements being made. Following pilot audits of four dioceses in 2015, an agreed audit model is being applied nationally during 2016 and 2017.

The audit of the Diocese of Sheffield was carried out by Hugh Constant (the lead auditor for this diocese) and Susan Ellery on 25, 26 and 27 October 2016.

The audit process, undertaken in three days, involved an examination of case files and other documents, along with conversations with key individuals and a focus group of parish representatives. Details of the process are provided in the appendix.

The draft report was written by Hugh Constant with support from Susan Ellery. Edi Carmi, the overall lead auditor, quality assured the report.

1.2 THE DIOCESE

The Diocese of Sheffield, part of the Northern Province of York, was formed in 1912. It has a population of about 1.2 million people, and covers Sheffield, large towns in South Yorkshire such as Rotherham and Doncaster, and areas in the East Riding of Yorkshire around the town of Goole. The Diocese therefore covers large urban areas, small towns and rural districts, and encompasses areas of affluence as well as large areas of relative deprivation.

The Diocese has 175 parishes, and is organised in two archdeaconries: the Archdeaconry of Doncaster, and the Archdeaconry of Sheffield and Rotherham. There are twelve deaneries. The position of Bishop of Sheffield was vacant at the time of the audit, and the Suffragan Bishop of Doncaster was acting as interim Diocesan Bishop.

The Diocese covers the metropolitan borough local authorities of Sheffield, Rotherham, Doncaster, and Barnsley, and parts of the local authorities of East Riding of Yorkshire, and North East Lincolnshire.

Sheffield Cathedral is the mother church of the Diocese. Church House, the diocesan office, is in Rotherham.

1.3 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

This report is divided into three sections and an appendix, as follows:

- Section 1: Introduction.
- Section 2: The Findings of the audit [links have been made with the S. 11

(Children Act 2004) Church of England national audit form], with 'Considerations for the Diocese', where relevant, at the end of each finding.

- Section 3: The conclusion provides a summary of what is working well and areas for development.
- An appendix sets out the review process.

Please note that the term 'considerations' instead of recommendations is used in the SCIE Learning Together methodology. The reason for this is that it is important that each diocese decides exactly how to implement the improvements indicated – this is likely to be different from place to place. Some considerations will be around taking specific types of action, whilst others will be alerting the Diocese to develop their safeguarding planning in the future.

2 FINDINGS

2.1 SAFEGUARDING MANAGEMENT

There is a noticeable sense of progress in safeguarding management and leadership within the Diocese. It used to be felt that the agenda was a priority primarily of the Archdeacon of Doncaster, but a combination of rising awareness, nationally and locally (where there is a complex case that has affected a number of senior clergy), new senior appointments, and a new Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) has helped the focus on safeguarding to develop markedly during the last year.

The Bishop of Sheffield post has been vacant since July 2016, and until a new appointment is made – expected to be in the first half of 2017 – the Diocese is led by the Bishop of Doncaster, as Acting Diocesan Bishop. The Acting Bishop acknowledged that on taking over the leadership role, he had to get up to speed quickly, having previously not been involved directly in safeguarding at a strategic level. An important part of this has been his six-weekly meetings with the DSA, to act as support to her, and to be updated on the safeguarding work. This strong degree of involvement is evident too in a supportive backing for the DSA in case work, with the Bishop taking an active role where necessary, but suitably deferring to the professional expertise of the DSA.

Whilst the frequent meetings with the Bishop are positive, more regular feedback by the DSA to the Bishop's Staff as a whole would allow for a better understanding of safeguarding across senior clergy.

The Acting Bishop follows the practice of his predecessors and delegates the leadership of the safeguarding function to the Archdeacon of Doncaster, who has been in post since 2012. Safeguarding was a part of the Archdeacon's interview, as it was always going to be part of his portfolio, and he has developed his understanding of the role in his time as safeguarding lead. He was instrumental in pushing for the DSA post to be made full-time. The Archdeacon, along with the Archdeacons of Sheffield and Rotherham, work well on cases alongside the DSA.

The Diocesan Board of Finance is the administrative body of the Diocese, working through the Diocesan Synod, the statutory governing body of the Diocese, and its standing committee, the Bishop's Council. In day-to-day terms, the lay functions of the Diocese are led by the Diocesan Secretary. The Diocesan Secretary post was filled in June 2016 by a former civil servant who has been organising the diocesan departments in such a way as safeguarding work can best flourish. The Diocesan Secretary has demonstrated a proactive willingness to address long-standing issues, such as the lack of resources and support for the DSA.

The safeguarding work of the Diocese is overseen by the Diocesan Safeguarding Management Group (DSMG), chaired by a former Director of Adult Social Services in Leeds, who is also the Chair of the Rotherham Safeguarding Adults Board (see 2.3). Among others, the Diocesan Secretary and the Archdeacon of Doncaster sit on the DSMG, and provide the link to other leadership groups within the Diocese, such as the Bishop's Staff team.

The DSMG has not had a representative from Sheffield Cathedral, although the safeguarding lead there, a Canon Missioner, joined the working group preparing for this audit, and is now joining the DSMG. This reflects the developing links between the Diocese and the Cathedral on safeguarding work, which until recently have been mainly at a casework, rather than strategic, level. Another example of the strengthened joint working is that the Dean of Sheffield Cathedral has signed in March 2016 an agreement to the effect that the Cathedral is subject to diocesan safeguarding agreements, and the DSA is leading a train the trainer session for Cathedral staff.

The Archdeacon of Doncaster is the line manager for the DSA. Other lay officers are managed within the non-clergy organisational structure headed by the Diocesan Secretary. Being managed by the Archdeacon of Doncaster (and until 2016, Chair of the DSMG) is perceived as being helpful in the parishes (according to feedback in the Focus Group), because it backs the DSA role with direct clerical authority. The Diocesan Secretary additionally meets with the DSA regularly to review progress of cases.

The parishes, as represented in the Focus Group, felt that safeguarding was a clear priority for senior clergy, and the auditors would share that view, even allowing for the difficulties of being in an interregnum period. How safeguarding work develops in the Diocese from here will be shaped significantly by the next Bishop of Sheffield.

(Reference: part 1 of S.11 audit: Provide a structure to manage safeguarding in the Diocese. Also to part 2: The Bishop appoints a member of his senior staff to be the lead person for safeguarding.)

There are no considerations for the Diocese.

2.2 DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING ADVISER/S

The current Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) has been in post since January 2016, and is employed directly by the Diocese on a full-time basis. Her predecessor worked part-time for the Diocese of Sheffield, and part-time for a neighbouring diocese, which has now been subsumed into the amalgamated Diocese of Leeds. The previous DSA worked largely from home, and was only in the diocesan office for about one day a month. The previous DSA retired in July 2015, at which point the need for a full-time appointment was recognised, having long been championed by the Archdeacon of Doncaster. However, the person appointed quickly decided the job was not for her, and left after a couple of weeks (albeit after doing some useful cataloguing work on the case files).

The current DSA began in January 2016. This was after a period of six months without a DSA, in which urgent matters were handled as best they could be by the Archdeacon of Doncaster, taking advice from a DSA in a neighbouring diocese and the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS). This, combined with many preceding years in which all that could be managed was a degree of casework, meant that the DSA was taking over a safeguarding role that had been underdeveloped. This was at a time when there was an increase in work arising from the developments nationally, especially new and revised policy requirements.

As the DSA settled into her role, however, the need for a strategic overview to help

shape her work, and a properly resourced team to support her, has become evident. The DSA quickly found herself spending a lot of time in training and administrative work. Initially, administrative support was provided from the general administrative team. In September, this was changed to provide dedicated safeguarding administrative time in recognition of the level of resources required, although at the time of the audit there was uncertainty about whether this was to be a full- or part-time appointment. Until the appointment is made, the Diocesan Secretary acted promptly to recruit an agency administrator to support the DSA.

A recruitment exercise is also underway for a full-time trainer, to help the DSA catch up on a considerable training backlog, and to smooth the roll-out of the new national learning and development framework. That post is advertised as an 18-month role, but the Diocesan Secretary stated her belief that it may need to be extended, so that the Diocese can get to a point where training is planned and delivered in a more consistent and structured way than has hitherto been possible.

The recognition of the need for a full-time DSA has clearly been an important milestone for the Diocese, enabling progress in meeting its safeguarding needs. It is to the Diocese's credit that they have quickly recognised that the full-time appointment is a stage of the safeguarding journey, and not a destination, and have responded to the need for further support. As the Archdeacon of Doncaster put it, they could not expect the DSA 'to be changing the wheels whilst driving the bus'.

The DSA herself has a social work background, with experience in children's and families work. She has been a qualified social worker for over 20 years, and has worked as a practitioner and a manager in the statutory and voluntary sectors. Prior to joining the Diocese, she worked as safeguarding lead for a children's charity with its roots in Christian ministry. This gave her an insight into safeguarding work in a faith context, and the DSA felt pleased with the way she was able to put safeguarding at the core of the organisation's work. The DSA appears to be operating to a high standard, and this is recognised by those around her, with senior clergy appreciating her input, and describing her as 'outstanding' and 'an absolute star'. The Parish Focus Group echoed the warmth of these words.

The planned additions to the safeguarding team make the delivery of the safeguarding function feel much more manageable. Upon arrival, not only was the DSA without adequate support, but she also felt unable to take annual leave, and indeed took none in her first six months, because there were no arrangements for cover. Overall, the auditors sensed that the Diocese has rapidly realised that having a full-time DSA in the office brings with it responsibilities as an employer, and as an organisation that is now fully committed to doing safeguarding well. The auditors noted that, upon recognising what was needed, the Diocese has acted swiftly to put it in place.

Professional supervision has also recently been arranged for the DSA. This is funded by the Diocese, and occurs on a monthly/six-weekly basis. The DSA has had three supervision sessions so far. The supervisor is a senior manager in children's social care. For expertise on adult safeguarding, the DSA has access to the Chair of the DSMG. The Diocese has yet to consider how the professional supervisor can link in with the DSA's line manager – the Archdeacon of Doncaster – to help shape and inform her annual appraisals and professional development.

The DSA is also supported by regular 'keeping-in-touch' meetings with the Diocesan Secretary, and has scheduled meetings with the Bishop of Doncaster roughly every six weeks. So the degree of support, by way of meetings with people organisationally senior to the DSA, feels strong. Indeed, the Diocese may want to consider how best strategically to manage and coordinate all these meetings.

(References: part 1 of S11 audit. 'Appoint a suitably qualified DSA, and provide financial, organisational and management support. The adviser must have full access to clergy files and other confidential material.

Part 6: The DSA's role is clear in the job description and person specification. And The DSA has sufficient time, funding, supervision and support to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities, including local policy development, casework, advice, liaison with statutory authorities, training, personal and professional development and professional registration.

Part 8: The DSA should be given access to professional supervision to ensure their practice is reviewed and improves over time.)

Considerations for the Diocese

Decide and put in place the administration arrangements as soon as possible.

How to make links between the DSA's line manager and professional supervisor, so that supervision case discussions are integrated into the internal processes and professional development is supported.

Consider how best to coordinate the support meetings offered to the DSA to maximise their effectiveness.

2.3 DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING MANAGEMENT GROUP

The Diocesan Management Safeguarding Group (DSMG) has been in operation since 2000. It was chaired until 2016 by the Archdeacon of Doncaster. In keeping with national policy that the Chair should be independent, the Archdeacon of Doncaster approached the now Chair of the group, to see if she would be willing to take over. The Bishop of Sheffield had previously requested she support the Diocese on safeguarding issues. An experienced and senior figure in social care, the Chair has a professional background in both children's and adult safeguarding, used to be Director of Adult Services for Leeds City Council, and is a former President of the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services. She is also the current Chair of the Rotherham Safeguarding Adults Board, and is a committed Christian with a connection spanning more than 40 years with the Church in Sheffield. She performs the role on a voluntary basis. The Chair brings considerable understanding of organisational structures and how they can best support the safeguarding agenda.

Upon taking over, the Chair told the auditors, she felt that the DSMG needed refocusing, with a clear Terms of Reference and a renewed sense of direction. The DSMG's function, according to the new Terms of Reference, is to 'provide assurance, advice and guidance' to the Bishop, the DSA, and others, with the Archdeacon of Doncaster as a key conduit. Membership, as well as the Chair, is:

- the Archdeacon of Doncaster
- the DSA

- the Diocesan Secretary
- the Diocesan Children and Young People's Adviser
- a representative of the clergy
- representatives from probation and local authority children's services.

The aim is additionally to obtain consistent representatives of local authority children's services, adult safeguarding services, and probation on the group. This is proving difficult to accomplish in practice, although there has been attendance of both children's services and probation at times. At time of the audit active recruitment was in process.

The DSMG meets bi-monthly, albeit with extra meetings to prepare for this audit. From the minutes seen by the auditors, the group looks to be becoming more action focused, with tasks set at each meeting, and followed up consistently. A clear annual business plan for the group, to encompass the training strategy, might further its efforts to be transparent and accountable in all that it does.

The Chair sees herself as accountable to the Bishop of Sheffield (so far exercised through working with the Bishop of Doncaster), but also identifies that the Bishops are accountable to her, as Chair of the group, for their work in promoting the safeguarding agenda. Meetings between the Chair and the Bishop of Doncaster (and in future the Bishop of Sheffield), or a report to Bishop's Staff, could help further this.

There is no job description for the Chair of the DSMG, and having one could help, alongside the Terms of Reference, to cement an understanding of the role of the group.

(Reference: part 1 of S.11 audit: Provide a structure to manage safeguarding in the Diocese. Also to part 2: The Bishop appoints a member of his senior staff to be the lead person for safeguarding.)

Considerations for the Diocese

Reporting mechanisms between the chair of the DSMG and the Diocesan Bishop to be formalised.

Put together a job description for the role of DSMG Chair, in line with awaited final national guidance and templates.

2.4 GUIDANCE, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Diocese has local safeguarding policies, for children and for vulnerable adults. Both are easy to locate on the diocesan website. The policy for vulnerable adults is older, dating from 2008, whereas the children's policy is from 2014. The vulnerable adults' policy therefore does not take into account the Care Act, or other important developments in adult safeguarding, such as Making Safeguarding Personal. Furthermore, it predates major recent policy documents from the National Safeguarding Team. It also refers to Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks, as opposed to the current terminology of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). It should be updated, although the Diocese may well want to wait until the Church of England's national safeguarding policy for children and vulnerable adults, Promoting

a Safer Church, is finalised, to ensure any new policy sits comfortably alongside it. Furthermore, the fact that there is an episcopal introduction to the policy for children, but not for vulnerable adults, could unwittingly give the impression that the two are not given equal weight, and this should be rectified.

The more recent children's policy incorporates Protecting All God's Children. A review of the more recent House of Bishops' guidance on responding to allegations against church officers, risk assessment and safe recruitment had taken place and is in the process of being incorporated. Again, the Diocese may benefit from awaiting the final publication of Promoting a Safer Church, and revising its local policies accordingly.

The local policies do have useful templates and guidance on, for example, room hire, overnight stays, and other aspects of the daily minutiae of safeguarding. As for guidance on how to spot and respond to abuse, it is well-written and clear, but may duplicate what is being produced nationally.

The national procedures were formally adopted by Diocesan Synod on 16 July 2016.

(Reference: part 1 of the S. 11 audit: Ensure the Diocesan Synod adopts the House of Bishops' safeguarding policies, together with any additional diocesan procedures and good practice guidelines.)

Considerations for the Diocese

To revise the children and adult safeguarding policies in line with the finalised Promoting a Safer Church.

2.5 CASEWORK

2.5.1 Quality of risk assessment and safeguarding agreement

The auditors saw three Type A Risk Assessments and a small number of safeguarding agreements. The Diocese currently has no Type B Risk Assessments¹. The decision-making in the cases audited appeared sound, with careful and holistic consideration of the risks in any given situation.

In the cases the auditors saw, the perpetrator was not involved in the Type A Risk Assessments. The national practice guidance specifies they are interviewed, kept informed of the process and provided with a copy of the assessment, which is accomplished here by full involvement in drawing up the safeguarding agreement. The auditors took the view that the 'ownership' of any assessment would be

¹ A Type B Risk Assessment is commissioned by the Diocese or responsible body and referred to an independent agency or professional person qualified and experienced in safeguarding risk assessments. A Type B Assessment will only be undertaken in relation to a church officer, whether ordained or lay, and on completion of a statutory investigation

enhanced by bringing the individual in question into the assessment process, as occurs in safeguarding agreement process that follows.

There was one case in which a parish had managed an offender internally, without a formal safeguarding agreement. This seemed to be linked to the vicar thinking that the perpetrator, who had a conviction and was on the Sex Offenders' Register, was essentially a good man who had been poorly treated. Whilst such attitudes create a concern about safeguarding, there was good communication between the DSA, the Archdeacon of Doncaster, and the Bishop of Doncaster to ensure an agreement was put in place.

In a number of cases in the audit, the DSA showed an awareness that a safeguarding contract is only as good as the network that is in place to enforce it, and offered, for example, specific training to one group so that they could manage the agreement effectively. This is commendable and the DSA confirmed it is her practice for all parishes. This suggests an understanding that safeguarding requires more than a tick-box approach of having certain people in place for a safeguarding agreement, and actually needs a genuine understanding among those people of the challenges.

Historic safeguarding agreements that were not linked to Type A Risk Assessments would benefit from having a record of the risk-management thinking that underpins them on file, so that there is clarity about what the safeguarding agreement is seeking to achieve, and what behaviour it is seeking to manage.

The auditors did not see examples of safeguarding agreements for people without convictions, but there is nothing to suggest the Diocese would not consider this were it appropriate.

It is worth remarking that there has been a significant increase in the number of safeguarding agreements, with the current DSA doing seven in her first three months, as compared to her predecessor's three in 18 months. This is not to reflect poorly on the previous DSA, but is a recognition that a greater national awareness of safeguarding has combined with a greater availability and accessibility of diocesan safeguarding resources to generate a much higher workload. The Diocese is likely to see this workload increase further, as more training and more outreach work in the parishes is done, and could usefully plan for this possible upturn.

(Reference: part 1 of S. 11 audit: Provide access to a risk-assessment service so the Bishop and others can evaluate and manage any risk posed by individuals or activities within the Church.)

2.5.2 Quality of response to allegations

Reflecting the strengths of the DSA, the quality of case work that she leads on is high. Generally, concerns are responded to, and work is completed, promptly. The auditors saw one file in which the DSA found it necessary to apologise for a delay, due to work pressures, but on the whole, and particularly in complex cases, work is done in good time.

The DSA seems to be well able to hold a firm line in safeguarding cases, for instance in one situation where a pillar of the parish community was involved, to the shock of the incumbent. The incumbent seemed to be minimising the concerns, and the DSA

raised this with the relevant archdeacon so that the seriousness of the situation could be made clear. Throughout the case files, referrals to the police or children's social care are made as appropriate, and there is good joint working with social work services, the police, probation and other dioceses. This is reflected in the feedback sent to the auditors from statutory agencies, where the work of the DSA, and her predecessor, is clearly highly regarded.

Cases are responded to in line with national recommendations, and the core group model of handling cases was seen to be working well. The relevant Archdeacon attends the core group, which they find to be helpful because of the contextual knowledge they typically can bring to the case.

2.5.3 Response to wider welfare concerns

The DSA's decision-making, and understanding of risks to vulnerable adults and to children, seemed to be sure-footed throughout her work. The auditors were concerned about the practices of one church setting, which appeared to be running a semi-structured day-care provision for local children from their own home, and where there appeared to be a lack of openness in their dealings with social services, and a risky blurring of boundaries between the adult staff and the children. A significant piece of work may need to be done to bring the church into line with diocesan safeguarding expectations, but the DSA is aware and capable of handling this and had plans to do so.

2.5.4 Recording systems

The quality of case recording is rapidly improving from a low base. The previous DSA used paper files with hand-written notes, which tended to be unstructured to the point that it is difficult to ascertain what had happened in certain cases. This is not simply an historical issue, as these cases may again become live in the future, and whilst the Diocese cannot afford the time necessary to bring all the files up to scratch, it may be worth the investment of time to make sure the people involved are logged, and can be cross-checked against in the future. The Diocese has though invested in electronic recording, and it is designed to capture new and digitise old files, so there should be improvements in the future.

The files of the current DSA are much better, with typed notes and a clearer structure. The Diocese now has a mixture of paper and electronic files, which is somewhat difficult to manage, and the electronic files sometimes contain simply a list of emails, in which it is not always easy to track the development of a case.

The files are stored securely in the diocesan office.

The Blue Files relating to case work that the auditors saw did identify that safeguarding issues were ongoing, but in one case this was in a separate envelope which could easily become detached from the main file.

Considerations for the Diocese

Mechanisms for enabling, where appropriate, perpetrators to be involved in drawing up Type A Risk Assessments.

All safeguarding agreements to be explicit as to the risk assessment that underpins them.

To fully implement the recently purchased case management system to further improve the recording systems of the Diocese.

A system in place for tracking when safeguarding agreements need renewing.

DSA to review and address child-care provision in leaders homes within church settings.

2.6 TRAINING

The Diocese has a considerable training challenge, with a backlog, estimated to be of between 2,000 and 2,500. In the 2015 audit return to the National Safeguarding Team, 396/521 licensed clergy were listed as having had safeguarding training in the last three years. This highlights where some work needs to be done, but there seems to be a greater challenge with those with Permission to Officiate, where only 14/134 have had training in that time period. There is also a need to focus on readers, lay church officers, and of volunteers, youth workers, spiritual accompaniers, and others.

Currently, the amount of training on offer, despite the efforts of the DSA, is unable to keep up with the demand, with the Parish Focus Group speaking of its frustration with how quickly training gets booked up, and that this means people are going too long untrained. The Parish Focus Group also expressed considerable confusion as to which people had to do which course, so it feels as if there is a need for clearer communications about training.

Where training has been received, people spoke very highly of it, and this would tally with the abilities and commitment of the DSA, as the trainer. But the Diocese needs to prioritise a training strategy that will allow it to map out who needs training; prioritise its efforts to cover the most immediate need; track who has and has not attended, whilst chasing up the latter; and incorporate the new national learning and development framework. Also needing addressing is that whilst the courses are always fully booked, in practice some people do not attend.

The Diocese already has a strategy for addressing the backlog as:

- The bulk of the backlog consists of those waiting for level 1 training. It is anticipated that the national online training will have a substantial impact on reducing the numbers waiting for training
- A safeguarding training officer is being recruited as a full-time trainer for 18 months

The Diocesan Secretary, the Archdeacon of Doncaster and the DSA all expressed the wish that the new safeguarding training officer post becomes longer than 18 months, so that training can become organised on surer, more sustainable footing. It is an encouraging and important commitment of funds by the Diocese. It will be best utilised if there is also skilled administrative support that will free up the trainers from the need to book rooms, print materials and so on, and that can identify gaps, track when training needs to be renewed, and chivvy non-responders.

(Reference: part 1 of S.11 audit: Select and train those who are to hold the Bishop's Licence in safeguarding matters. Provide training on safeguarding matters to parishes, the Cathedral, other clergy, diocesan organisations, including religious communities and those who hold the Bishop's Licence.

And to part 8: Those working closely with children, young people and adults experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect ...have safeguarding in their induction and are trained and have their training refreshed every three years.)

Considerations for the Diocese

The training strategy to be implemented and monitored to tackle the training backlog and plan for the introduction and roll-out of the national learning and development framework and provide clear communication about who is required to do what training.

2.7 SAFE RECRUITMENT OF CLERGY, LAY OFFICERS AND VOLUNTEERS

The auditors found a mixed picture in terms of Safer Recruitment. The diocesan recruitment of lay officers had some strengths, in that all bar one had three references on file, and the other had two of three. On no file was more than one of the references a personal one. However, two of the six files the auditors saw had people starting in their jobs without a DBS having come through. In both cases, there were clear limits placed on their role until the DBS was received, so that all lone contact with children or vulnerable adults was prohibited. And one of the people concerned, as a member of the Parish Focus Group, confirmed that she was closely monitored in this early period. Nonetheless, this may indicate that the recruitment process needs tightening, as whatever the restrictions placed on an employee, taking people on without a DBS is potentially risky.

The issue was repeated with one curate, and people in the Diocese acknowledged their uncertainty as to how a curate was appointed without a DBS. In his case, there was no mention on the Blue File of any restrictions in place on his activities whilst awaiting the DBS clearance, albeit the Diocese has assured the auditors that there were emails to this effect that had not been put on the Blue File.

There is a mention in DSMG minutes that suggests, perhaps, that some people with PTO lack a DBS. This relates to elderly individuals who wish to retain their PTO but have been slow or reluctant to apply for a DBS. This is being actively chased up and referred to the Bishop, as the intention is that they will not be allowed to retain their PTO without a DBS.

Of the Blue Files the auditors looked at in relation to Safer Recruitment, only one of the nine had any references for the person's current job, beyond having in some cases a Current Clergy Status Letter from the person's previous bishop. Most lacked any proof of identity, and there was no record of DBS checks on the Blue Files, although these are recorded elsewhere.

The auditors saw on some files regular use of Ministerial Development Review meetings, and one example of a good response to a person's mental health difficulties. It was generally straightforward to establish a person's current role from the file.

It is a positive development that the Diocese has put together a parish self-audit for safeguarding which clearly sets out Safer Recruitment expectations.

(Reference to part 7 of S.11 audit: The Diocesan Secretary has implemented arrangements in line with the House of Bishops' policy on Safer Recruitment 2015. And to part 1: Keep a record of clergy and church officers that will enable a prompt response to bona fide enquiries...where there have been safeguarding concerns, these should be clearly indicated on file.)

Considerations for the Diocese

An audit of the DBS elements of the recruitment processes to identify and iron out any glitches in the system.

Work to be undertaken on the Blue Files to bring them in line with the 2013 House of Bishops' guidance.

2.8 DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE (DBS)

The Diocese signed up to manage its DBS business online with the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS) in February 2015. At the time of the audit, only about half of parishes had signed up. The DSA reported spending a lot of her time dealing with DBS queries, despite clear instructions on the diocesan website to refer these queries to CCPAS. The Diocese reported some teething problems in parishes due partly to the lack of computers, but this is now being overcome with training. Those in the parish to whom the auditors spoke, had had contact with CCPAS and were very warm about the help they received. It seems reasonable to hope that as more parishes adopt the online system, eventually the queries coming to the DSA will lessen. In the meantime, that she is dealing with DBS questions is another indicator of the need for her to be supported by an administrator with the capacity and the skills to manage such things and free up the DSA for casework and training.

The diocesan self-audit for 2015 states that there is no mechanism for tracking DBS renewals, as even though CCPAS can provide this information, there is not anyone with the scope in their workload to keep on top of monitoring the information.

The DSA handles blemished DBS checks, and the auditors looked at six examples of these, and how they were handled. Generally, the judgements appear sound, both when people were subsequently approved for employment, and when they were not. The Diocese now records any risk assessments on the DBS system as well as the safeguarding system to enable future queries being answered with reference to assessments.

Considerations for the Diocese

Provision of dedicated administrative support to strengthen tracking of DBS, and to be able to handle complex DBS queries.

2.9 COMPLAINTS AND WHISTLEBLOWING

The Diocese has a complaints policy with a two-stage process, implemented in June 2016. This states that:

'This policy does not cover complaints from staff which are covered by the grievance or whistleblowing policy or safeguarding which should be raised with the safeguarding adviser in the first instance.'

From reading this it is not clear if this means that complaints about how a safeguarding matter was handled are excluded and/or if safeguarding concerns are excluded. This needs to be clarified, so that it distinguishes between these two different circumstances and that the procedure clearly states that it includes complaints about the safeguarding service, but it excludes safeguarding concerns, which should be raised with the safeguarding adviser.

A comprehensive whistleblowing policy and procedure was implemented at the same time, which provides advice on how to report the concern and the different stages of the response. It would be further improved if it provided information about Public Concern at Work, a charity which is able to provide advice to individuals with whistleblowing dilemmas at work.

(Reference: part 1 of S. 11 audit: Provide a complaints procedure which can be used by those who wish to complain about the handling of safeguarding issues. Also part 4: "There is an easily accessible complaints procedure including reference to the Clergy Disciplinary Measures and whistleblowing procedures.)

Considerations for the Diocese

How to clarify the complaints policy so that it states clearly that it covers complaints about how a safeguarding matter was handled.

Include contact details of Public Concern at Work on the whistleblowing policy.

2.10 QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES

It has been discussed earlier that the Diocese has only had a full-time DSA since January 2016. She has though already begun to consider developmental processes such as quality assurance. She has undertaken the nationally-required work to review deceased clergy files and past cases, but because of the lack of time available (as explained in 2.2), has not yet had the opportunity to learn from this work.

The Diocesan Secretary undertakes quality assurance reviewing files and requesting situations be revisited if appropriate.

The DSA has been pivotal in trying to move the safeguarding work of the Diocese to a more reflective and developmental position. In part, this has been seen in the work the Diocese has put in to preparing for this audit. A specific group was brought together, bringing in new people such as a Cathedral representative, and this in itself has led to more opportunities to think about improving safeguarding practices. A major effort has also gone in to devising, circulating and chasing up on a parish safeguarding self-audit. This is the first time an audit of this kind has been done, and presents an opportunity to get a clear sense of where the parishes are in terms of safeguarding, and from that, develop a plan to strengthen the overall diocesan position. For the opportunities the audit creates to be maximised, the DSA, along with archdeacons and area deans, should be afforded the time to analyse and then respond to the information received. Already plans are in place to make use of the information – such as checking on safeguarding training in Ministerial Development Reviews – which demonstrates the worth of the work. Ongoing annual audits might enable rich further learning.

Feedback from the Parish Focus Group indicates the need for clearer communications about the use that the Diocese is making of the parish self-audits, to help people feel that the time they are spending on them is worthwhile. The learning from the audits has been regularly on key meeting agendas e.g. Synod agendas and the area deans will provide further feedback and support.

The DSA is also taking the time to attend regional and national DSA groups, which give the opportunity to share ideas and learn from other processes. Given the rapid pace of change in the diocesan safeguarding response over the last year, it may soon be possible to develop a wider range of quality assurance processes, such as peer reviews, DSMG away-days, or other mechanisms the Diocese would find helpful.

Considerations for the Diocese

Incorporate the learning from the parish self-audits into an overall plan for furthering the safeguarding work of the Diocese.

Build on the recently completed parish self-audit by completing annually.

2.11 MONITORING OF SAFEGUARDING IN PARISHES AS PART OF ARCHDEACON'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Both Archdeacons have been in the Diocese for a little while now: the Archdeacon of Sheffield and Rotherham for nearly three years, and the Archdeacon of Doncaster for nearly five. They are both well-established, therefore, and have a clear sense of their respective roles in relation to safeguarding.

An important part of this for both is the monitoring of their parishes. The Archdeacon of Sheffield and Rotherham described a process whereby the Archdeacons seek views from all the departments in the Diocese – including safeguarding – as to what questions they want included in each year's Articles of Enquiry, and how they make

sure that the answers are followed up on. They would, for example, follow up on any Articles that revealed a parish lacked a safeguarding policy. It was acknowledged that the questions were usually tick-box ones, to ensure a full response, but as a safeguarding culture becomes more embedded, questions which allow for richer learning may be possible.

The Visitations to parishes occur on a three-yearly cycle, and are divided between the Archdeacons and the area deans. Again, if concerns are identified, such as the lack of a parish safeguarding officer, then it is always the Archdeacon who follows up.

The Archdeacons have played their part in the effort to get the parish safeguarding audits completed, and are planning a series of 'robust conversations' with those priests who have not replied.

The Archdeacons also play a role in parishes of being the 'eyes and ears' around safeguarding – seeing where policies are not in evidence, and where incumbents may be struggling. They acknowledged too that some parishes are struggling with safeguarding because they struggle on a number of fronts, including recruiting incumbents, and where what is perceived as diocesan interference is not welcomed. This makes safeguarding a considerable challenge.

Embedding a culture of safeguarding across all parishes is therefore a focus for the Diocese, and it is positive that the Diocese is honest and aware about the task ahead. Freeing up the DSA's time will be helpful, but the mantra of 'safeguarding is everyone's business' has to be recognised here. All senior clergy, the area deans, and relevant diocesan departments such as the Communications Department and the Parish Support Department could usefully come together, along with the DSMG, to think through a long-term strategy, including expectations once safeguarding becomes more embedded in the parishes.

Some parishes have a safeguarding children's officer and a safe church representative, with the latter being responsible for safeguarding adults. In other parishes the safeguarding children's officer covers both children and vulnerable adults. In recognition that this is misleading, and undercuts the effort to make it understood that safeguarding also applies to adults, the Diocese plans to use the term 'parish safeguarding officer' in the future. This will be used in the directory when it is revised in 2017, as well as in training and the database.

Considerations for the Diocese

Consider developing questions in the Articles of Enquiry to include more requiring a fuller, more qualitative response (as opposed to yes/no response).

Make engagement with parishes a central part of strategic planning for safeguarding in the Diocese, and think broadly about which departments can contribute to this.

Review and retitling the safeguarding role/s in parishes.

2.12 RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

The Diocese has no Authorised Listeners, and some people expressed their doubts about whether having an offer of support to survivors located within the Church of England was the best way of approaching this. The auditors were told of one example where someone in need of counselling had it swiftly arranged at the Bishop of Doncaster's behest, and funded by the Diocese. Nonetheless, having Authorised Listeners in place is included in the Responding Well guidance, and the Diocese should consider how it will make a supportive offer to survivors of abuse.

Considerations for the Diocese

To develop an offer that would allow survivors of abuse to seek appropriate support.

2.13 INFORMATION SHARING

The information sharing that revolves around the DSA, both the current and the former one, seems to work well. Statutory partners, in their feedback, commented positively about the joint working with both DSAs, and all the feedback that the auditors received mentioned information sharing specifically as a strength.

Case files revealed strong joint working and information sharing between the DSA(s) and the Archdeacons, with alerts and concerns being passed both ways promptly and appropriately. This includes alerts where the DSA was concerned that clergy were minimising the severity of situations, and wanted to tell the relevant archdeacon.

The Bishop of Doncaster also appears from the case files to be actively but appropriately engaged in sharing safeguarding information. He seeks the DSA's support and advice, and meets with her every four to six weeks to be kept informed. The auditors saw less involvement from the last Bishop of Sheffield demonstrated in records, but read of one case where he had consulted appropriately with the National Safeguarding Team over a complaint – that was unsubstantiated.

Upon becoming Acting Diocesan Bishop, the Bishop of Doncaster told the auditors, he was very surprised at the number of safeguarding cases that were current in the Diocese. This perhaps suggests that the information sharing about safeguarding between senior clergy at the time was limited. It is worth noting that the auditors saw three case files in which disclosures were made to, or drawn to the attention of, senior clergy. The first is being looked at by the National Safeguarding Team, so the auditors will not comment on this. The subsequent two cases show a good response to the disclosures with appropriate information sharing.

There is good ecumenical work in the Diocese. The DSA demonstrated it in individual cases, such as alerting a different Protestant faith group about the transfer to it of someone who had refused to sign a diocesan safeguard agreement. Additionally, the Bishop of Doncaster helped establish the Faith and Culture Group on the Doncaster Safeguarding Children's Board, and the Archdeacon of Sheffield and Rotherham is engaged in ecumenical work as a response to the Jay report into child sexual exploitation in Rotherham.

The auditors also saw evidence of good joint working with other dioceses, including in one case involving many dioceses, and led by the National Safeguarding Team.

Considerations for the Diocese

Systems for information sharing between senior clergy to be developed upon the arrival of the new bishop.

2.14 LINKS WITH NATIONAL SAFEGUARDING TEAM

The Diocese considers that it has good links with the National Safeguarding Team (NST). The Diocesan Secretary had a session with the National Adviser, and the NST provided induction training for the DSA and the Bishop's Staff Team. The NST provides a regular newsletter, which is cascaded down within the Diocese.

The NST is leading on a case, mentioned above. The DSA has engaged fully in an ongoing series of meetings.

The DSA is keeping on top of new guidance coming from the NST, and this is reflected in her casework.

2.15 NATIONAL SYSTEMIC SAFEGUARDING ISSUES

Concern was expressed in the Parish Focus Group and elsewhere about the volume of new training coming from the national safeguarding team, and there was a call for a greater understanding about the pace of change that is achievable in some parishes.

3 CONCLUSIONS

3.1 WHAT IS WORKING WELL?

The Diocese is realistic and honest about where it has come from in safeguarding terms, where it is now, and where it needs to get to. The appointment of a full-time Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) in January 2016 is perceived as the turning point in its safeguarding journey. There is though recognition that whilst this appointment addresses the immediate resource need, further work is needed to improve safeguarding in the Diocese.

The pace of change over the last nine months has been very impressive. There has been considerable learning involved demonstrating a proactive approach to progressing priorities, whilst also responding to a demanding national agenda for change.

The Diocese has recruited good safeguarding expertise in its DSA and the Chair of their Diocesan Safeguarding Management Group (DSMG). The DSA is a skilled caseworker with the capacity to take a more strategic lead, given the time. She builds good relationships with statutory partners and colleagues, and is dedicated, hard-working, and committed. The DSMG Chair is hugely experienced in safeguarding and in strategy at a senior level and is an excellent addition to the diocesan team. She has brought clarity to the DSMG, and a sense of where the DSMG and Diocese need to go.

There is commitment from senior clergy. The Bishop of Doncaster clearly understands the challenges of safeguarding. This is the case too for the Archdeacons of Doncaster and of Sheffield and Rotherham. The auditors have seen evidence of all three actively involved in cases, displaying a good understanding of safeguarding, and the powers and authority they have to promote it. There is good communication with the DSA and it is clear that they recognise her expertise. The senior clergy do not try to manage safeguarding, but support the DSA appropriately in delivering it. This support is demonstrated by the Bishop of Doncaster seeing the DSA every six weeks. This is an impressive standard of episcopal commitment.

The Diocesan Secretary understands the importance of safeguarding and has acted quickly to improve the resources of the safeguarding service. For example, a new contract is in place with CCPAS, additional administration support is in place, and two new posts are being recruited.

The self-audit of the 175 parishes is an important indicator of the willingness to develop, and a vital exercise in getting baseline information and highlighting the importance given to safeguarding at a senior level. The effort of senior staff to get compliance is also a sign of their commitment and of the importance of safeguarding with over 85 per cent returns received from parishes at time of audit

St Peter's College was launched on 2 October 2016. It will act as a diocesan vehicle to deliver a vast array of training and create new learning networks and resources for participants.

3.2 AREAS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Safeguarding is, as yet, not absolutely embedded in the culture of the Diocese. Whilst at senior levels in the Diocese and in the clergy, the message about safeguarding's importance has been heard loud and clear, parishes are at different stages in their progress in understanding safeguarding challenges and in some parishes are reported to feel very conscious, and anxious, that they don't yet know enough about safeguarding.

Despite the major efforts of the DSA, there remains a large backlog in the numbers who require training. The Diocese is addressing this by recruiting a training officer for 18 months and through use of the national online level 1 training, when it becomes available.

A recognition needs to be developed that the new training, welcome though it is, is likely to lead to more casework, and planning for the future should take that into account.

In the past, communication among senior clergy has not been as strong as it might have been. Recent practice shows an improvement in such information sharing, but this is something to bear in mind when the new bishop arrives.

The Blue Files were concerning in terms of evidence of Safer Recruitment. The diocesan files are better. The file audit showed two people had started their job whilst awaiting DBS clearance, indicating the recruitment process needs to be checked so that this does not happen again. Further weaknesses relating to DBS concern some elderly individuals who are reluctant to give up their PTO, but been slow to apply for the DBS.

The safeguarding service will benefit from the planned dedicated administrator, which will be able to provide consistent responses and support to the DSA.

There needs to be more support to and communication with parishes and parish safeguarding officers. This in part needs to push the adult safeguarding message more.

There is a potentially concerning situation with regard to one particular church setting, which has raised issues around blurred boundaries. The DSA is aware of the circumstances and plans to investigate the concerns.

The Diocese has to decide how they will meet the requirement of Responding Well with regard to the provision of Authorised Listeners.

Although case recording has improved, the Diocese has not yet fully implemented the recently purchased electronic case management system that allows cases to be linked, tracked etc.

APPENDIX: REVIEW PROCESS

DATA COLLECTION

Information provided to auditors

These documents were sent to the auditors in advance of the site visit:

- 2015 diocesan self-audit return and statistical return to the National Safeguarding Team
- 2014 statistical return to the National Safeguarding Team
- Deceased Clergy Review 2013–2014
- Past Cases Review 2009
- Diocesan safeguarding policies (made available via the website)
- Local authorities' safeguarding procedures (made available via the website)
- Minutes of the last three meetings of the Diocesan Safeguarding Management Group
- Terms of Reference for the Diocesan Safeguarding Board [the same body as above, with a new name]
- Job description for the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser
- Training update, and a sample of training materials
- Recent safeguarding newsletters
- An example of a parish safeguarding audit and action plan

Participation of members of the diocese

The auditors met with, in chronological order:

- the Archdeacon of Sheffield and Rotherham
- the Diocesan Secretary
- the Bishop of Doncaster, acting diocesan bishop
- the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser
- the Archdeacon of Doncaster
- the Chair of the Diocesan Safeguarding Management Group

In addition, the auditors met a Parish Focus Group comprising:

- the Canon Missioner and safeguarding lead of Sheffield Cathedral
- two Vicars/Area Deans
- a Mission Development Worker
- a Centenary Project Officer
- a Youth Worker who is also a Safeguarding Children's Officer
- a Churchwarden who is also a Safeguarding Children's Officer
- a Safeguarding Children's Officer

The auditors were provided with feedback from six partners working in statutory safeguarding services.

The audit: what records / files were examined?

The auditors examined the files on 19 cases, 16 of which dealt with safeguarding children, and three with safeguarding adults. This included the Blue File where the concern related to a member of the clergy. In addition, the auditors looked at the records of six people with blemished DBS checks; nine general Blue files for evidence of safe recruitment practices; and six recruitment files of lay diocesan appointments.