

INEQE audit process overview

Overview

As part of the Church of England's ongoing commitment to improving safeguarding across all dioceses, the INEQE Safeguarding Group has been commissioned nationally to carry out a programme of independent safeguarding audits. The Diocese of Sheffield will take part in this process between 11–17 May 2026.

Their work will provide the Church with an external, evidence-based view of how well each diocese is fulfilling its safeguarding responsibilities.

Purpose of the Audit

The INEQE audit will offer an independent assessment of how effectively the Diocese of Sheffield prevents, identifies, and responds to safeguarding concerns.

It will explore our policies, practice, leadership, and culture, identifying both strengths and areas for development.

The aim is to learn and improve and it presents an opportunity for the Diocese to reflect honestly on what is working well and where further progress is needed to ensure that safeguarding remains central to our mission and ministry.

The audit process

INEQE's approach will include:

1. Document Review – Examination of diocesan safeguarding policies, procedures, governance records, and casework.
2. Interviews and Focus Groups – Conversations with clergy, parish safeguarding officers, diocesan staff, volunteers, survivors, and leaders across the Diocese.
3. Analysis and Benchmarking – Comparison against national Church of England safeguarding standards and best practice from other dioceses and sectors.
4. Reporting and Recommendations – A written report summarising findings and outlining practical, prioritised recommendations for improvement.

Engagement across the Diocese

This process will be project managed centrally but depends on active engagement from all parts of the Diocese. INEQE will invite contributions from clergy, lay leaders, parishes, and those with lived experience of safeguarding. Everyone's openness, honesty, and willingness to participate is essential to ensuring the audit provides an accurate reflection of safeguarding in practice.

In Summary

The INEQE audit is part of the Church of England's national journey toward a safer, more transparent, and more accountable Church. For the Diocese of Sheffield, it offers an important opportunity to listen, learn, and grow together in our shared safeguarding responsibilities.