

## Safeguarding Report for Diocesan Synod

**Date of meeting:** 07.03.2026

**Report presented by:** LJ Buxton

**Report prepared by:** Siân Checkley (Diocesan Safeguarding Officer)

### INEQE

We are currently in our audit period that ends with an onsite visit 11-17 May. We are being assessed against the five national safeguarding standards set by the national church as detailed below. We will be assessed in a number of ways: providing evidence of safeguarding culture across the working life of the diocese; through surveys; through focus groups; through interviews with selected individuals.

#### Activity to date:

The Single Point of Contacts (SPOCs) are LJ Buxton (for DBF) and Jason Carr (for the Cathedral). We have had our welcome email from INEQE and introductory meeting with our INEQE contact. This is mainly just procedural and to make sure we had access to all the support documents, timeline and systems relating to our audit.

A full communications plan has been developed. This includes a major push to distribute and encourage engagement in completing surveys. Letters and a video from the Bishop are in the final stages of development and will be going out at the end of January. The deadline for survey completion is 11 March 2026. The surveys can be accessed here [Church of England – Sheffield - Ineqe Safeguarding Group](#) and we would encourage you to complete the relevant questionnaire.

The 360 audit tool has opened for us to submit evidence. A small INEQE Project team has already gone through the audit in paper form and identified areas for gathering evidence. The Executive Assistant has been following this up to help with the digital upload. We have until 11 March to do this.

**Culture, Leadership and Capacity** - Church bodies have safe and healthy cultures, effective leadership, resourcing and scrutiny arrangements necessary to deliver high quality safeguarding practices and outcomes. Include organisational issues.

The safeguarding team have continued to work on tidying up the records in My Concern to ensure they accurately reflect the work we are currently engaging with. Elizabeth Pollard, formerly of the National Safeguarding Team, has been through all our open records, reviewed the cases and given advice around closure or ongoing actions. We have now worked our way through Elizabeth's recommendations and apart from a few that still require updates from parishes My Concern reflects our caseload. Elizabeth has identified some learning points from this exercise which will assist us to maintain an accurate reflection of the work we are engaged in.

Claire Sayce launched drop in sessions for PSOs to come together informally to discuss any aspect of their role. Whilst the first session in October saw no PSOs attend, five PSOs attended the second opportunity and agreed on a time and date for a third session. With Claire's departure from the Diocese we are looking for an experienced PSO to take the lead in this group until a new trainer is appointed and is able to take this up.

**Prevention** - Church bodies have in place a planned range of measures which together are effective in preventing abuse in their context.

Claire has worked hard to get all parishes registered on the parish dashboard and currently only one dashboard remains unregistered. 97% of parishes are actively using the dashboard meaning there are only 2 that are not active on their already registered account. At the last meeting of DSAP consideration was given as to whether to make use of the safeguarding hub mandatory however it was decided that this was not appropriate at this time.

Of the 163 active dashboards 4 are operating at level 0 which means they have registered to use the dashboard but have not actually started using it, 42 parishes are at level 1, 67 at level 2 and 54 at level 3. Claire has been the driver for increasing engagement with the dashboard by parishes and with her departure from the Diocese the safeguarding team will not be able to promote and encourage use in the same way.

**Recognising, Assessing and Managing Risk** - Risk assessments, safety plans and associated processes are of a high quality and result in positive outcomes. The assessment and management of risk is underpinned by effective partnership working.

Since my last report the safeguarding team has been involved to a greater or lesser extent with 62 cases which includes six new cases and seven cases which we were previously aware of. We have closed eleven cases. We have reviewed three safety plans and are in the process of reviewing a further fourteen plans of which we are awaiting the return of two. We have set up two new safety plans and are considering a further six. We have three cases which involve ongoing core group processes and three which are currently subject to LADO processes.

We received slightly more requests for advice and guidance as in the same period last year with the greatest numbers being requests for advice due to concerns around domestic abuse and mental health issues.

**Victims and Survivors** - Victims and survivors experience the timeliness and quality of Church bodies' responses to disclosures, and their subsequent support, as positively meeting their needs, including their search for justice and helping their healing process.

The Diocese has a standard offer for financial support for victims and survivors of church-based abuse to enable them to access therapy and counselling. We are currently in the process of setting up a new support package.

Graham Sandersfield is working with Gillian Straine from GoHealth to produce a short training package around trauma informed practice which can be shared with PCCs, congregations and others.

Three individuals have expressed an interest in becoming more involved in the work of the survivor support and engagement working party and we are currently undertaking a safer recruitment process and identifying the most appropriate level of involvement.

**Learning, Supervision and Support** - All those engaged in safeguarding related activity in Church bodies receive the type and level of learning, professional development, support and supervision necessary to respond to safeguarding situations, victims and survivors, and respondents, effectively. Include training delivery.

During November and December 2025 317 online courses were accessed, with 92 face to face courses being completed. This breaks down as 110 people completing the basic safeguarding course and 98 the foundation course with 33 completing the combined basic and foundation course. 39 people completed the leadership course, 21 the safer recruitment and people management course, 100 raising awareness of domestic abuse and 7 the modern-day slavery course provided via the clewer initiative. 1 person attended a dashboard drop in training session. Claire visited two parishes to deliver training in person and voluntary trainers delivered training in a further two parishes.

Elina and Siân attended a two day confident manager training course. Rachel and Claire attended a day with the deliverance team.

Recruitment for a new trainer is underway with the job currently being advertised. The closing date for applications is the 4<sup>th</sup> February. We have received a lot of interest in the post and a number of application forms have already been received.

Siân Checkley  
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