



Committee – Diocesan Synod

Paper Reference	3 – Safeguarding Report
Times	1000 – 1500
Meeting and Date	15 th March 2025
Paper Submitted by	Suzy Futcher
Last considered by this meeting on (meeting if applicable)	Last report came to Diocesan Synod on 17 February 2024
Background including any previous outcome(s)	This paper includes the Annual Safeguarding Report from Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel (DSAP), and our response to the Makin Review.
What is required of this meeting? <i>Note/Receive/Decision/Action</i>	Receive the annual report and support the Makin Review Response
State the relevant mandate of this committee that enables it to take the above action. <i>(Decision-making vs advisory as per TOR / SO / legislation)</i>	
Please explain any acronyms not explained in the text.	N/A

Annual Safeguarding Report 2025

This report covers the period of January 2023–2024

Our safeguarding strategy is aligned with the 5 Safeguarding Standards set by the National Safeguarding Team: Culture, Leadership and Capacity, Prevention, Recognising, Assessing and Managing Risk, Victims and Survivors, Learning, Supervision and Support.

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.*

In January 2024 Salisbury was the first Diocese and Cathedral to take part in an external audit led by INEQE. The report commended the work of the Diocese and the Cathedral in much of its safeguarding

practice including placing victims and survivors at the centre of its work with its trauma informed approach' being 'palpable'. They found that a culture of safeguarding was firmly embedded, aside from a few areas where there were pockets of negative culture. On the whole, parish staff and volunteers felt able to speak 'truth to power'. INEQE made 68 recommendations across the diocese and the Cathedral and our response to these is being overseen by the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel (DSAP) for the Diocese', and the Independent Safeguarding Advisory Group (ISAG) for the Cathedral.

In conclusion the auditors said 'During the audit, senior leaders demonstrated a willingness to open themselves to direct challenge and provided access to all areas and no questions were off limits. To the cynic, this may sound like rhetoric, but the real strength in Salisbury is its people. From the leadership teams to the volunteers, there was an absence of hubris, no defensiveness and a desire to learn'.

One of the recommendations from INEQE was for a Director of Safeguarding to be part of the senior leadership team to ensure that safeguarding was considered as a priority in strategic decisions. In response to this recommendation and in light of other significant safeguarding developments the Head of Safeguarding (Suzy Fatcher) has joined the Senior Leadership Team of the Diocesan Board of Finance. There has also been an uplift in the capacity of the team to meet increasing demands, which now brings the resource of Salisbury more in line with the resources of other Diocesan Safeguarding Teams across the country.

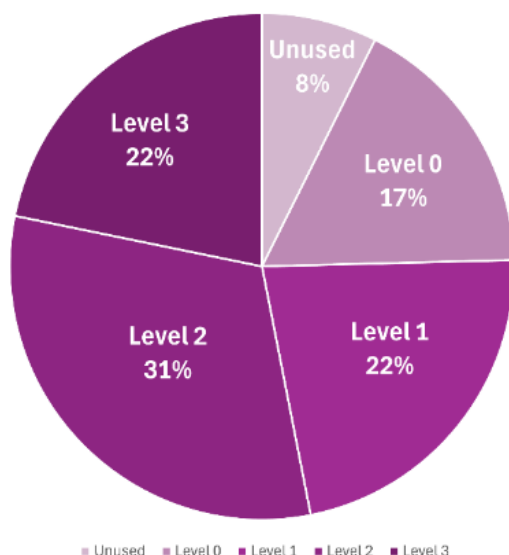
During November and December, a Healthy Cultures Survey was conducted focussing on safeguarding within parishes and the Cathedral. 549 people completed the survey, and the results are being analysed and used to plan future work.

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

Prevention (alongside 'Learning Supervision and Support'), is a key area of focus for us this year. It is acknowledged that the church has not always been a safe place in the past, and it is right that safeguarding standards are raised. Those who hold ultimate accountability for safeguarding within parishes (the incumbent and the PCC) are seeking additional assurances that safeguarding risks are being properly managed. However, as minimum expectations are raised, this also increases the demand on people within parishes who are undertaking safeguarding roles. We are seeking to provide systems and tools to help parishes to understand and act on their safeguarding responsibilities.

One of these tools is the Safeguarding Dashboard which is an online tool available to parishes to check levels of compliance with safeguarding. This time last year only 4% of parishes had reached Level 3 (the highest level), and this rose to 22% of parishes by the end of 2024.

Percentage of parishes using the Dashboard



Another tool becoming available to parishes this year is 'Safeguarding Hubs'. This helps parishes to record safeguarding training and safer recruitment and will help us move away from the 'DBS Microsite' which is not intuitive and proves problematic for many users. We are also changing our DBS provider to one used by the majority of diocese around the country as they are more effective, agile and offer a higher level of support than our current provider.

This year the safeguarding team have focussed on increasing the level of support available for those in safeguarding roles within parishes. The team have delivered Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) workshops in 11 locations across the diocese (attended by 144 PSO's) and have set up a monthly online drop-in session attended by around 40 PSO's. A highlight for many Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSO) was an invite to a PSO garden party at South Canonry in the summer.

2025 Prevention priorities:

- **Improved safeguarding systems** available for safeguarding within parishes – continue the roll out of Safeguarding Dashboards, introduce Safeguarding Hubs, and change DBS provider.
- **Increased levels of DBS compliance** – Alongside changing DBS provider, to review and clarify roles.
- **Clarity of roles and responsibilities** – Ensure all church officers are aware of their responsibilities and remit within safeguarding

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.*

Here is a flavour of some of the work that the safeguarding team has been involved with this year.

- The Safeguarding Team recorded 212 new 'concerns' on the casework management system (compared to 113 during 2023). These concerns range from giving advice about best practice and prevention, to responding where someone has suffered harm.

- There were 8 new Core Groups processes that started resulting from concerns being raised about Church Officers (there are 23 Core Groups currently ongoing).
- At the end of 2024 there are 22 former offenders who have active safeguarding agreements to attend church.
- 2 standard risk assessments have been completed and 1 independent risk assessment.

Alongside local casework, the team have engaged with two key national safeguarding reviews (Scolding review regarding Soul Survivor, and Makin review regarding John Smyth). We produced a 7-minute briefing which was shared widely so the learning could be disseminated across the diocese.

- [Soul Survivor 7-minute briefing](#)
- [Makin 7-minute briefing](#)

The Makin review followed by the resignation of the Archbishop of Canterbury regarding safeguarding matters has had a significant impact on the work of the team. Contacts with the team saw a sharp increase and many people expressed a depth of emotion when engaging with us. Safeguarding in the Church of England is under the spotlight currently and we are doing what we can to continue to promote safeguarding as the 'golden thread' that weaves through everything. As Bishop Stephen conveys, safeguarding is not an added extra, it is a gospel imperative.

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.*

'For the first time in my life I've been open about what happened to me.'

'I was listened to with empathy and I was completely believed from the beginning. My previous experience with the Church of England was that I wasn't believed. I was someone who should 'go away' rather than someone to be listened to. It's been a very very good experience.'

'My goal has been completely fulfilled.'

'I was offered a Bishop's apology... The time with the Bishop was a sacramental moment – having being listened to so carefully. Noone told me I should forgive'

Survivors' feedback

During 2024 the dedicated Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) we had working with the team for 2 days a week left due to a promotion with the National Safeguarding Team. We used this opportunity to evaluate and reimagine our offer to victims and survivors of church related abuse. Our new full-time

caseworker is undergoing IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advisor) and ISVA training and will become a 'Survivor Champion'. We are looking to develop a Victim/survivor panel which will provide survivor engagement and challenge to our policy, process and practice.

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.*

Courses delivered in 2024:

	No. of courses	No. attendees
Leadership pathway	40	331
PSO Induction	6	38
PSO Workshop	11	144

"I did very much appreciate the thoughtful and knowledgeable answers from some of the other people on the course. I learned from them, and so

"I think it was informative and well delivered. I learnt a good deal and had the chance to think things through and discuss things."

*[Participant on online course]
"Face to face training is much better for me. I found myself swept away by some of the participants and then couldn't get my voice heard when I tried so a bit frustrating"*

Along with Prevention, we recognise this standard is one that requires our particular focus in 2025. With the departure of our in-house trainer last year, training has been delivered by external trainers with a member of the safeguarding casework team in attendance. The feedback from this change of mode has been mixed with some positive feedback and others struggling with the national material and mode of delivery. We have always required that course participants evaluate the impact of their learning, but in the past, we have not used analysed this data for emerging trends to shape future work which is something we want to consider going forward.

We have consistently excellent levels of training compliance for roles that we actively monitor and send reminders for (Clergy, retired clergy with Permission to Officiate and Licenced Lay Ministers) with 97% compliance and only 1% of the cohort out of date for their training by less than 3 months without a valid reason such as illness. However, we do not have a good level of oversight for other volunteer roles within parishes which is something that needs developing.

The national safeguarding team have made some changes to the Learning and Development Framework and in light of recommendations from INEQE we will be reviewing how we deliver and measure the impact of safeguarding training in the coming year.

2025 Learning Priorities

- **Support** – Develop the support available for those in safeguarding roles within parishes via monthly online PSO drop-in sessions, and debrief sessions routinely being offered to people who have received disclosures or dealt with difficult safeguarding situations.
- **Training compliance and effectiveness** – Develop greater oversight of safeguarding training compliance of volunteers and measure the effectiveness of training.
- **Trauma Informed Practice** – develop and deliver trauma informed practice training for Diocesan Board of Finance staff, volunteers and other key leaders within the diocese.



Response to Makin Recommendations

In November 2024 Keith Makin published a [report](#) into abuse perpetrated by John Smyth and the Church of England’s handling of the allegations. This report contained 25 recommendations for ‘the Church of England’ as a whole. Some of these recommendations are relevant to be responded to by all church officers within all church institutions, and others can only be actioned by specific National Church Institutions. The National Safeguarding Team have begun work considering which areas they may be responsible for and will no doubt publish their planned response in due course. However, within Salisbury Diocese we want to ensure we respond swiftly and appropriately to some very challenging and significant recommendations which at least in part can be responded to locally.

Acronyms – DSAP (Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel), LPA (Lay Pastoral Assistant), IICSA (Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse), NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children), MPS (Metropolitan Police Service), DBF (Diocesan Board of Finance)

	Makin Report Recommendation	Expected national response/responsibility	Salisbury Diocese (local) response
1	Ensure a clear mandate for all Church officers, institutions and participants that safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility, until children and vulnerable adults are safe from harm and that this is referenced in job and role descriptions for all Church officers, participants and those employed in its institutions.	National – policy and practice development	– Discuss and agree actions to be overseen by DSAP. To consider safeguarding training material and Code of Conduct, and job and role description templates (in progress).
2	That the learning and recommendations from this review are disseminated across Church constituencies, institutions, and provinces.	National – action plan.	– Local response to recommendations overseen and tracked by DSAP via audit tracker (in progress). – Dissemination of ‘7-minute briefing’ (complete)

3	<p>That the following learning is included in Safeguarding training, policy/procedure and guidance: a. signs of abuse of power by those in positions of trust b. amendment to the Sexual Offences Act 2003 in 2022 to expand “Position of Trust” offences to include anyone who is coaching, teaching, training, supervising, or instructing in [a sport or] a religion c. how ‘status related’ systems, cultures and practices can enable perpetrators to abuse their power d. the negative impact of victim blaming language and behaviour in terms of safeguarding all at risk of harm, and e. the impact of adultifying children, and use of adultifying language, erasing childhood vulnerability and their rights as a child. f. safeguarding statutory guidance, and associated legislation takes prime place in the ordering of decision-making and actions to stop and prevent abuse. g. risks specific to religious organisations in terms of exploitation of theology, grooming and sexual abuse, including dangers of social media.</p>	National – development of training material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide training to PSO’s to be disseminated more widely re themes identified in these recommendations. - Track response to this recommendation via DSAP audit tracker. - Implement any national training material changes.
4	<p>Review the non-mandatory status of safeguarding guidance for Church officers with a view to making this mandatory for all Church officers, institutions and participants.</p>	National –policy development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adoption of any future changes to national Church of England policy.
5	<p>Review relevant guidance to clarify the remit of pastoral carers and those providing ‘spiritual direction’ in the light of the learning identified in this case, to enable Church officers to be alert to the risks and indicators of grooming.</p>	National – development of guidance and training material.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of the Diocesan provision of Spiritual Direction, and review training of and written guidance for LPA’s. - Track response to this recommendation via DSAP audit tracker.
6	<p>Ensure oversight of an independent body, free from direct influence from Church leaders, to provide external oversight of safeguarding practice, and provide quality assurance within the Church. This body should include monitoring of the implementation of the recommendations given in this review, and ensuring learning from other inquiries and reviews of similar prolific offenders are considered alongside this (including IICSA, Peter Ball, Past Cases Review, ‘Giving Victims a Voice’ NSPCC/MPS review).</p>	National – Response to Alexis Jay recommendation s about independence of safeguarding being debated at	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engage with the consultation process responding to the Jay and Wilkinson reports (in progress).

		February synod	
7	Review safeguarding training, safeguarding procedures and supervision guidelines to include avoidance of confirmation bias in safeguarding practice using the learning from this Review, reinforcing the need for a victim-centred focus in safeguarding practice.	National training, procedure and guidelines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue to have a victim focussed approach within the diocese (in progress). - Provide training on confirmation bias. - Track response to this recommendation via DSAP audit tracker.
8	Establish international reciprocal safeguarding procedures with other Anglican communion institutions/leaders, including protocols for informing overseas Anglican leaders and statutory authorities, where there are allegations against a person in position of trust and they relocate abroad	National process and protocol.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider this recommendation where relevant in casework (has already been followed in prior cases).
9	Safeguarding developments currently underway should take full account of the learning from this Review, with a particular focus on the need for a clear “golden thread” of safeguarding, and line of sight from leaders within the Church (at Diocesan and Provincial levels) to those dealing directly with abuse investigations.	National developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In progress (see Diocesan Safeguarding Team annual action plan)
10	The principle of ‘never not clergy’ should be made clear in relevant Codes Of Conduct and to all those ordained, in relation to their duties to safeguard children and vulnerable adults and as representatives of the Church in all of their activities.	National – review Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of Clergy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discuss recommendation with Sarum College and Mission and Ministry Department and agree possible actions. - Track response to this recommendation via DSAP audit tracker.
11	Ensure Clergy Discipline Measures (CDM) procedures include provision for the consideration of historic, as well as current, conduct issues. Include consideration of use of social media in any revised CDM.	National – CMD process	N/A
12	Develop and agree guidance to detail how Church officers, participants and ordained persons, who are also victims of abuse, should be investigated, where a safeguarding allegation related to their abuse is raised.	National – guidance development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When there is a safeguarding Core Group relating to a concern about a Church Officer consideration is given to any extenuating circumstances or special considerations as well as the pastoral and/or professional support respondents may require during the process (complete).

13	Provide clear guidance relating to “giving” of financial and other donations by Church officers, institutions and participants, particularly where this relates to overseas missionary work and other related, unregulated activity outside the UK. This should take full account of the need for due diligence to be carried out, however small the funding amount.	National – develop guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adopt future national guidance. - Explore with DSAP if there is a local action that could happen ahead of any national guidance development. - Track response to this recommendation via DSAP audit tracker.
14	Independently review Church of England systems and constituencies to identify areas of concern that may undermine a ‘safeguarding first’ approach, highlighting potential conflicts linked to beliefs, reputational damage that may prevent ‘whistleblowing’ reflecting on the learning from this case.	National reviews	
15	Seek independent safeguarding assurance that the current whistleblowing procedures are robust and that individuals, whether ordained, lay or volunteers feel able to report concerns of a safeguarding nature, as well as institutional and individual ‘cover-up’ of abusive situations. This to include a review of all relevant policies and procedures, ensuring that they explicitly protect people from the risk of personal criticism when reporting allegations or suspected abuse.	National review of whistleblowing procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review DBF whistleblowing procedures to ensure compliance with this recommendation. - Track response to this recommendation via DSAP audit tracker.
16	That the Church takes account of the learning from this Review to avoid ‘groupthink’ in terms of safeguarding decisions, and assures itself that there is sufficient external and independent influence on decision-makers and leaders in their everyday approaches to safeguarding matters	National response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Diocesan Safeguarding Officer to continue to receive supervision from the National Safeguarding Team (complete). - Local response to recommendations from this review tracked via DSAP audit tracker.
17	Ensure Church safeguarding guidance includes a requirement to assess the risk posed by alleged perpetrators to their own family including children in their care, partners/ex partners and other family members, and that referrals are made to statutory services immediately where any risk is identified.	National guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This is the current practice of the Diocesan Safeguarding Team and of those holding safeguarding roles within parishes (under the guidance of the safeguarding team).
18	Include a new declaration to the “Confidential Clergy Declaration Form” to facilitate disclosure of an individual’s ‘prior knowledge’ of allegations of abuse, perpetrated by individuals or within institutions. This should	National change to guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adopt national changes.

	also be included in the Church's Safer Recruitment Practice Guidance.		
19	That the revised clergy declaration is resubmitted by those that have completed it (within a reasonable timeframe to be determined by the Church) to ensure that similar safeguarding issues come to light, are risk assessed and responded to.	National change to guidance	- Adopt national changes.
20	Develop a joint working protocol with key statutory safeguarding organisations and safeguarding partnerships to include an 'Escalation Policy' for Church officers to follow when they are dissatisfied with the response or where there is no update from; Police, LADO and other statutory services to a report of allegations.		- Continue to follow statutory services escalation policies (complete).
21	Ensure that records are kept relating to refusals for ordination where safeguarding of children or adults is a concern, and that these are regularly reviewed to ensure relevant information is passed to relevant statutory safeguarding services.	National guidance	- Already adopted in local practice (complete).
22	Learn from trauma informed approaches that have developed in recent years across statutory safeguarding services and apply the learning to Church safeguarding practice through training, policy development and engagement with victims.	National – training and policy development	- Develop and deliver trauma informed practice training. - Track response to this recommendation via DSAP audit tracker.
23	Consider applying 'mandatory' reporting within future Church safeguarding policy and procedure, ahead of this being introduced as a national requirement, reflecting on learning from this review, Past Cases Review and IICSA.	National – policy development	- Adopt any future policy changes.
24	Expand Core Group guidance, specifically where a nationally led group is convened, stating the need to ensure that the Group develops: a) ToR for the Core Group, clearly stating the scope of the group, and how a victim (as well as respondent) focus will be ensured b) A trauma-informed approach with risks posed by respondents to victims and family members proactively considered, assessed, and documented c) An approach that enables victim participation (via advocacy or directly) with the Group d) Qualified, trauma-informed and independent (from the case) support including helplines where multiple victims are likely or	National – policy development	- Review current Core Group process to take account of recommendation (most of the recommendation is already present). - Track response to this recommendation via DSAP audit tracker.

	known, that are well communicated, and a single contact point for victims e) Single point of liaison from the Church to Police and vice versa f) Due diligence checks in terms of conflict of interest for all Core Group members g) Clarity about contact and collaboration with other Church organisations and those overseas.		
25	Ensure that future learning lessons reviews relating to national, high-profile cases involving serial abusers, overseas contact, with multiple victims are led by a multidisciplinary reference group, with independent safeguarding advice, legal advice and victim voices represented.	National – policy development	- Adopt as good guidance when conducting relevant future learning lessons reviews.

Suzy Fatcher (Head of Safeguarding)
January 2025

Received by DSAP, Bishop’s Council and to be received by Diocesan Synod (March 2025)