



The Church of England  

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Diocese of Ely

**Diocese of Ely  
Past Case Review 2 (PCR2)**

**Executive Summary**

**5 October 2022**

## Foreword from Bishop Stephen

I am pleased to provide this Foreword to the Diocese of Ely's Past Cases Review 2 (PCR2) Executive Summary. This Executive Summary is published along with others from all Dioceses in England, as well as alongside a report on the PCR2 produced by the Church of England National Safeguarding Team. The Diocese of Ely Executive Summary has been produced following the guidance from the national church, so as to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of any individuals that might have been identifiable on publication of the full internal document.

Due to concerns over the robustness of the first PCR, the Diocese of Ely was already undertaking a repeat of that review at the time that all Dioceses were also asked to undertake the Past Cases Review 2 (PCR2). Dioceses were asked to complete PCR2 throughout 2019-2020, (or as long thereafter as they might need to ensure a full and robust undertaking of the work). The Diocese of Ely welcomed the PCR2 requirements as it had a revised and extended scope which included a focus on safeguarding adults, which was a significant gap in the scope of the first PCR. The findings and recommendations of the Diocese of Ely review were presented to me in October 2021 before a submission was made that year to the National Project Management Board. In December 2021, the Chair of the National Project Management Board wrote to me and confirmed the findings of our report, which found that our review had been both thorough and independent.

Throughout this process, the Independent Reviewers appointment by the Diocese to undertake this vital work had the utmost support from me and the senior staff, as have the Diocesan Safeguarding Team and Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel (DSAP) and Independent Chair, whose collective hard work, expertise and professionalism has been such an asset throughout this process and beyond. As a Diocese we have welcomed the opportunity to undertake this important work and implement the recommendations that have come from it.

The PCR2 has been a very significant and detailed piece of work from which much has been learnt and action taken, both at a national and local level. While deeply regrettable that some additional concerns were found as part of this review, I am reassured that steps have been taken to correct these past mistakes and to put in place guidance and processes to help protect all those who worship and engage with our church communities both now and in the future. We must all remember that at the heart of this vital work there are survivors and victims that were too often failed by inadequacies and failings at all levels of the Church of England. I feel personally saddened by this and so welcome the findings and recommendations of our review and others, both regionally and nationally, that seek to learn from and correct the failings of the past. I am confident in and reassured by the action plan in place at the Diocese that will seek to strengthen our response, both preventatively and proactively, to safeguard the wellbeing of all who are part of our church life. We remain deeply saddened by all those that the Church community has failed in the past, and pray that with good guidance, process, care and support, at every level of church life, these tragic mistakes and errors will not be repeated again.

I wish also to add that if you, or anyone you know, is affected by a Safeguarding matter, you can contact one of the many supporting agencies that exist to help and support victims and survivors of abuse. A list of many of these organisations can be found on the Diocesan website here - <https://www.elydiocese.org/safeguarding/helplines-and-contact-numbers/>. If you wish to make a safeguarding referral to the Diocesan Safeguarding Team, you can also do so by calling 01353 652747. This number is also supported out of office hours by the organisation thirtyone:eight, an independent Christian safeguarding charity which helps individuals and organisations protect vulnerable people from abuse.

I commend this report to you.



**The Right Reverend Stephen Conway**  
**Bishop of Ely**

## Introduction to Diocesan Past Case Review 2 (PCR2)

In May 2007, the House of Bishops recognised the need for a review of past cases of child abuse. This followed court appearances by several clergy and church officers, charged with sexual offences against children. What became known as the Past Cases Review 2007-2009 (PCR) was considered necessary to ensure that:

- Any current or future risk to children was identified
- Action was taken to address these concerns – e.g., referrals to the statutory authorities where necessary
- Where cases were identified, support could be provided for the survivors of abuse where these people are known and still in contact with the Church
- Lessons from the past could be learned to inform the work of the Church today and in the future.

The PCR 2007-2009 (“PCR1”) was a large-scale review of the handling by the Church of child protection cases over many years. It involved a scrutiny of clergy and church officers’ files to identify persons presenting on-going risks to children but whose cases had not been acted upon appropriately.

The PCR was implemented using a House of Bishops’ Protocol and was carried out during 2008 and 2009 by all Dioceses (44 at the time).

In 2015 concerns were expressed about how well the PCR1 had been conducted. Consequently, in consultation with the National Safeguarding Steering Group, an independent assessment of the adequacy of the PCR was commissioned.

The Diocese of Ely Safeguarding Team recognised that the review undertaken in PCR1 had not been as robust as it should have been and suggested to the National Team that the Diocese should be part of any subsequent review. The Diocese also recognised that PCR1 had focused only on children and had not included a focus on safeguarding adults, and this represented a significant gap.

The National Safeguarding Team determined that the Diocese of Ely would be one of the Dioceses required to repeat PCR1, in addition to undertaking the work required by the Past Cases Review 2 in all Dioceses. This decision was expected and welcomed by the Diocese of Ely and in advance of the final decision, the Diocese of Ely had formed a Project Team, as a subgroup of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel (DSAP) to plan and oversee the review process.

The concerns about PCR1 (2007) are detailed in the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse 2020 (IICSA). One of the key recommendations of the IICSA report was that a further Past Case Review was required. The scope of PCR2 was far greater with the following key objectives:

- To identify all information held within parishes, cathedrals, dioceses or other church bodies, which may contain allegations of abuse or neglect where the alleged perpetrator is a clergy person or other church officer and ensure these cases have been independently reviewed.
- To ensure all allegations of abuse of children, especially those that have been recorded since the original PCR (2007), have been handled appropriately and proportionately to the level of risk identified and with the paramountcy principle evidenced within decision making
- To ensure that the support needs of known survivors have been considered.
- To ensure that all safeguarding allegations have been referred to the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers and are being/have been responded to in-line with current safeguarding practice guidance.
- To ensure that cases meeting the relevant thresholds have been referred to statutory agencies.

## Methodology

The Diocese of Ely commissioned a team of four Independent Reviewers in September 2018, who undertook an extensive review, which required them to review a wider category of files than the scope of the PCR2 National Guidance determined.

There were 10 cases in relation to previously unidentified individuals reported in response to the Bishop of Ely's letter to parishes across the Diocese, due to their behaviour in relation to children or adults at risk of harm. The Independent Reviewers concluded that they were satisfied with the action taken by the Diocese and the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel chair was made aware of these cases.

There were 76 cases which were referred to the Independent Reviewers that had come to light since February 2007 (PCR1), which were still being dealt with. Of these cases 5 were identified as being best practice. There were 22 cases which required further action, all other cases were deemed to be being managed appropriately.

In total there were 3,650 files examined by the independent reviewers, the files that were flagged with concerns or requiring further attention represent 0.8% of this number.

The review also included all files which were held by Ely Cathedral for clergy, paid staff and volunteers, this amounted to an additional 964 files.

The cases identified as requiring attention were then individually reviewed by a sub-group of the Diocese Safeguarding Advisory Panel, which included a member to advocate on behalf of victims and survivors.

The findings of the review were presented to the Bishop of Ely who signed-off the PCR2 in October 2021 and a submission was made to National Project Management Board.

In December 2021, the Chair of the Board wrote to the Bishop of Ely and confirmed the findings of the review. The Board found that the review had been a thorough and independent review.

### **Local Themes and Implementation of Local Recommendations**

The review identified a number of both local and national themes. The national themes were communicated to the National Safeguarding Team.

The review made the following recommendations:

#### **National**

- There needs to be a clear process of notifying cases of actual or potential national interest to the National Safeguarding Team.
- An improved and consistent national system for recording safeguarding matters is needed (national project).

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#### **Diocese**

- A triage system is needed to quickly identify reports that are not safeguarding matters so resource can be focused on the correct priorities.
- Improvement through training of the safeguarding knowledge of local clergy and Church officers, particularly related to adults at risk of harm.
- Review supervision processes for safeguarding staff (including Parish volunteers) to ensure that they are supported in their work.
- A decision-log process is maintained to ensure consistent decision-making, for example with grant of PTO (Permission to Officiate) authority and visits to the Diocese of persons with Worship Agreements, due to offending history.
- For there to be clear links in clergy files and appraisals to safeguarding concerns.
- Develop clear protocols to manage the complex arrangements with Theological Education Institutions (TEIs) and University Chaplains (and other types of Chaplains), particularly in unusual matters such as 'Royal Peculiar' appointments to ensure safeguarding concerns are known, recorded and appropriately shared.

These recommendations have been subject of an action plan and the progress is overseen and monitored by the Diocese Safeguarding Advisory Panel.

## Good Practice

The independent reviewers noted the following areas of safeguarding good practice: -

- Noted that there was a culture and ethos in the Diocese that supported protective behaviour.
- It was noted the Diocesan Safeguarding team work well and cohesively in some very challenging cases and that the team have excellent working relationships with the Local Authority Designated Officer and local police which are of huge benefit to the Diocese in managing safeguarding matters effectively.
- Within the Diocese there was strong safeguarding leadership.

## Survivor Strategy

The Diocese of Ely, post the PCR2 process, recognised that there was a need for more concerted focus into the area of engaging and meaningfully understanding the support required for victims and survivors.<sup>1</sup>

The Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel, following recommendation from the Safeguarding Team, agreed that an audit of the support offered to victims and survivors would be independently<sup>2</sup> undertaken. The Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel developed and agreed terms of reference for the review.

The terms of reference were based on the Church of England's *Responding Well to Victims and Survivors of Abuse Practice Guidance 2021* (Implementation date 04.04.2022).

The key remit of the review was to diagnose organisational functioning in the following areas.

1. Whether the Diocese can demonstrate a safe and conducive environment and culture for safeguarding disclosures to be made?
2. Whether the Diocese can demonstrate that the policies, processes, training and experience are in place to respond appropriately to safeguarding disclosures and to provide the necessary support?
3. Is the Diocese able to connect victims and survivors to support services?
4. Is the Diocese able to respond to and support Church based abuse?

The review reported to The Diocese Safeguarding Advisory Panel in July 2022 identifying strengths, Aspirations, Challenges and Areas for Development.

These areas have been fully reviewed and will be made subject of a development plan.

Advice for victim and survivor support can be accessed [here](https://www.elydiocese.org/safeguarding/helplines-and-contact-numbers/) (<https://www.elydiocese.org/safeguarding/helplines-and-contact-numbers/>)

## Role of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel

The Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel was recognised in both the PCR2 and the more recent Survivor Care Review as a being effective and providing external scrutiny with good representation from statutory services.

The recommendations from the PCR2 and the subsequent Survivors Care Review will be overseen and monitored by the panel. The panel will also continue to strive for improvements and appropriate development in all areas of safeguarding children and those adults at risk of abuse by appropriately challenging and supporting the Diocese.

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<sup>1</sup> Victim refers to someone whose experience of abuse is current or recent at the point they disclose. Survivor refers to someone whose experience of abuse is non-recent – this may have been disclosed or undisclosed until the time they talk to someone in the Church.

<sup>2</sup> Review undertaken by thirtyone:eight - an independent Christian safeguarding charity which helps individuals, organisations, charities, faith and community groups to protect vulnerable people from abuse.