

Canterbury Diocese Past Cases Review 2: Executive Summary

Introduction

Dear friends,

Our diocesan ethos tells us that Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility – and this is undoubtedly true. Each one of us has a calling and a duty to play our part in ensuring that our churches and church activities are safe and welcoming for all. But there are also those among us who have specific responsibilities in relation to Safeguarding – and we have structures and processes that rightly hold us accountable for fulfilling these responsibilities.

The Past Cases Review 2 is one such process. We are enormously grateful to the Church of England's National Safeguarding Team for initiating this work and to our Independent Reviewers – Carol Wells and Adrienne Plunkett – for undertaking the work in Canterbury Diocese and our Cathedral.

While the risk of compromising survivor anonymity means that we cannot publish their report in full, we commend to our parishes and cathedral community this executive summary, which gives an overview of the process, findings and recommendations of the report. We also commend to you [the National Church's full PCR2 report](#). Both of these documents should be considered crucial reading for our parishes, clergy, lay staff and church officers – please do take the time to read and reflect upon them.

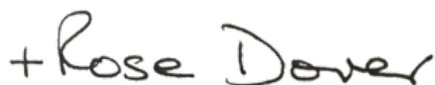
The reports are clear that we haven't always got things right. Sometimes we have failed to protect people or to take the right action at the right time – and for that we are deeply and truly sorry. But we know that words without actions do not make for a better world. We have already made good progress on implementing the detailed recommendations of the report – which you will find summarised below. And we remain firmly committed to being held accountable on these issues.

We are deeply indebted to our Diocesan and Cathedral Safeguarding Executive

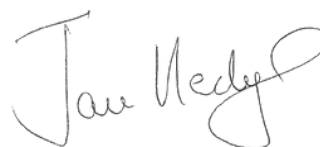
Groups and our Diocesan and Cathedral Safeguarding Advisory Panel, which is Independently Chaired by Carol Iddon, who will ensure that this work continues. We must also thank our Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers, Paul Brightwell and Fiona Coombs – and every single person who responded to our call for information for this review. Thank you for your hard work, for your courage and for your wisdom.

PCR2 is not the end, but a milestone on the next stage of our journey towards becoming a safer Church. We must learn its lessons and we must each continue to work hard to live up to our calling to respect, care for and protect all those with whom we have contact. Thank you for your partnership in this work.

With blessings,



The Rt Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin
Bishop of Dover



The Very Revd Dr Jane Hedges
Acting Dean of Canterbury

PCR2 Executive Summary

What is PCR2?

The Past Cases Review 2 (PCR2) has been commissioned by the Church of England. It is an independent review of safeguarding cases and practice in every Church of England Diocese and Cathedral over the last ten years.

What did it involve?

The review of the Diocese of Canterbury and Canterbury Cathedral began in the Autumn of 2019, with two Independent Reviewers – Carol Wells and Adrienne Plunkett - undertaking the work. We wrote to all of our parishes, asking them to identify any allegations that have ever been made against church officers (this includes clergy, those employed in the parish in any other role or anyone volunteering – including anything from building maintenance, serving tea and coffee to helping with children's groups).

What was found by the reviewers?

There was a 99% response rate from our churches and all but one of the cases raised by parishes within the scope of the Review were already known to the Safeguarding Team. This is encouraging and seems to show that our parishes have adopted an “if in doubt, contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser” approach. It also demonstrates that a culture of Safeguarding is already established in our churches and continues to be developed at the parish level.

The Independent Reviewers looked at a total of 968 clergy, employee and safeguarding files that were within the scope of the review. From those files they identified two cases (representing 0.2% of all the files reviewed) that had previously not been known to the Safeguarding Team - one from the parish returns and one from the review of files. In neither case was anyone at immediate risk of harm.

There were a further eight cases (one from parish responses and a further seven from scrutiny of existing files), where the independent reviewers felt, on their interpretation of procedure, that further actions needed to be taken. For example, in three of these cases the reviewers requested that a ‘lessons learned’ meeting be held in order for the diocese and cathedral to reflect on their learnings. In all cases these further actions have now been completed.

Further issues were raised within the review concerning the need for the good processes already in place to be better adhered to and more consistently followed.

The independent reviewers also identified at least nine cases of best practice and stated in their report that:

“Canterbury has two full-time Diocesan Safeguarding Advisors (DSAs)... Both are highly experienced social workers, who have previously held management positions in statutory agencies... Therefore, they have a good knowledge and understanding of the relevant legislation and procedures... [Both] Diocese and the Cathedral are on a journey in terms of safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults, and there is an improving picture in terms of the safeguarding structures, processes and practice...”

What do we need to do now?

There were a total of 24 recommendations made for our Diocese and Cathedral.. These can be grouped into four broader areas, on which work is already underway:

1. Record-keeping and oversight of information: reviewers highlighted the need for better recording, storing, processing and overall oversight of information within our Diocese and Cathedral.

The Archbishop's Council has agreed to the establishing of a GDPR Board which will be responsible for reviewing all data held within the Diocesan and Bishop's Offices and will ensure that both remain GDPR compliant.

2. Ensuring the Diocese and Cathedral are fully compliant with the House of Bishop's Guidance on establishing a formal Survivor Care Strategy and Domestic Abuse Policy.

These policies have now both been drafted. They have been formally adopted by the Canterbury Diocesan Board of Finance and will be formally adopted by the Cathedral Chapter at their next meeting. Both will be made available on the Cathedral and Diocesan websites as soon as possible after these meetings.

3. The Diocese needs to reflect on all recommendations, the newly-identified cases, Safeguarding and other agreements, Action Plans and the inclusion of the experiences and feelings of survivors. All of these elements should be reviewed and any learning reflected on by our Diocese and Cathedral so that lessons can be taken forward and the culture and practice around Safeguarding continually improved.

Both the Diocesan Safeguarding Executive Group and the Cathedral Safeguarding Executive Group have reviewed the cases and any identified learning from these has been brought into current practice. In many cases, both groups have been satisfied that the issues highlighted were contextual and unlikely to be repeated.

4. The Diocese, Cathedral and Church of England need to continue to ensure that they develop a culture of inclusivity for all, in particular ensuring that women, black and ethnic minority groups and the LGBTQ+ community are treated with respect and dignity.

This is an ongoing culture change within the Church of England which the Senior Team of the Diocese and the Cathedral Chapter continue to be committed to establishing and are looking at what practical steps should next be taken.

Responsibility for oversight and accountability in terms of the implementation of these recommendations rests initially with our Diocesan and Cathedral Safeguarding Executive Groups. Additionally, our Diocesan and Cathedral Safeguarding Advisory Panel which is Independently Chaired by Carol Iddon will continue to review and hold both our Diocese and Cathedral accountable for the implementation of each of the 24 recommendations. We anticipate, that as and when a further independent Audit takes place (by 2025 at the latest), reviewers will initially want to check progress on the PCR2 recommendations, which will also provide a further layer of independent scrutiny and accountability.

Carol Iddon
**Independent Chair, Diocesan &
Cathedral Safeguarding Advisory Panel**

Fiona Coombs
PCR2 Project Lead

Finding support

If you or anyone you are in contact with are affected by the publication of this report and want to talk to someone independently please call the Safe Spaces helpline on 0300 303 1056 or visit www.safespacesenglandandwales.org.uk.

Alternatively, you may wish to contact the diocesan safeguarding team ([details here](#)) or the National Safeguarding Team – email safeguarding@churchofengland.org.

[Other support services are available here.](#)