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Diocese of Bristol independent safeguarding audit (February 2017)



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First published in Great Britain in April 2017
by the Social Care Institute for Excellence and the Church of England

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Contents

1	INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1	Context	1
1.2	The Diocese	1
1.3	Structure of the report	1
2	FINDINGS.....	3
2.1	Safeguarding Management	3
2.2	Diocesan safeguarding adviser/s	4
2.3	Diocesan Safeguarding Steering Group	5
2.4	Guidance, policies and procedures.....	7
2.5	Casework.....	8
2.6	Training	10
2.7	Safe Recruitment of clergy, lay officers and volunteers	11
2.8	Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).....	11
2.9	Complaints and whistleblowing.....	11
2.10	Quality assurance processes	12
2.11	Monitoring of safeguarding in parishes as part of Archdeacon's responsibilities.....	12
2.12	Resources for children and vulnerable adults.....	12
2.13	Information sharing	13
2.14	Links with national safeguarding team.....	13
2.15	National systemic safeguarding issues.....	13
3	CONCLUSION	14
3.1	What's going well	14
3.2	Areas for further development.....	14
	APPENDIX: REVIEW PROCESS	16
	DATA COLLECTION.....	16

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTEXT

The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) has been commissioned to undertake an audit of the safeguarding arrangements of each diocese of the Church of England. The aim of these audits is to work together to understand the safeguarding journey of the diocese to date and to support the continuing improvements being made. Following pilot audits of four dioceses in 2015, an agreed audit model is being applied nationally during 2016 and 2017.

The audit of the Diocese of Bristol was carried out by Lucy Erber (the lead auditor), Hugh Constant, and Sally on 7, 8 and 9 February 2017. The process involved both an examination of records and policies, alongside conversations with individuals in key roles in the safeguarding process and a Focus Group from parishes. The only limitation to this audit was that there was not sufficient time to audit lay officer or volunteer recruitment files. Further details of the audit process are provided in the appendix.

This report was written by Lucy Erber with support from Hugh Constant and Sally Trench and quality assurance provided by Edi Carmi, the overall auditing lead.

1.2 THE DIOCESE

The Diocese of Bristol covers the geographical area between Swindon and Bristol and North Wiltshire and South Gloucestershire. It covers five local authorities, Bristol, Swindon, Wiltshire, South Gloucestershire, and a small part of Somerset.

Located towards the western part of England, the M4 'corridor' cuts through the Diocese. Whilst large parts of the Diocese are rural, significant urban parts of it, such as Bristol and Swindon, have significantly expanded in terms of population and business growth in recent years due to the growth in the UK technology sector along the M4 motorway.

There are 207 churches in the Diocese and 167 parishes. The Diocese is led by the Bishop of Bristol, and is assisted by the Suffragan Bishop of Swindon. There are two Archdeaconries, Bristol and Malmesbury, that are covered by one Archdeacon. The Bishop of Bristol will be retiring in this summer after 14 years in the role.

In 2015, the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) received 62 new referrals (of which 32 were in regard to children) and 29 cases remained open from the previous year (19 of these were safeguarding agreements).

1.3 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

This report is divided into:

- Section 1: Introduction
- Section 2: The Findings of the auditors: the auditors have made links with the

S. 11 (Children Act 2004) audit form completed by the Diocese in preparation for the audit.

- Considerations for the Diocese are listed, where relevant, under each finding in section 2: The term 'considerations' instead of recommendations is used in the SCIE Learning Together methodology. The reason for this is that it is important that each diocese decides exactly how to implement the improvements indicated. This is likely to be different from place to place. Some considerations will be around taking specific types of action, whilst others will be alerting the Diocese to develop its safeguarding planning in the future.
- Section 3: Conclusions providing an overview of what is working well, what needs to work better and a summary of considerations for the Diocese.
- Appendix, providing detail of the methodology along with any limitations of the audit.

2 FINDINGS

2.1 SAFEGUARDING MANAGEMENT

2.1.1 Leadership

The Bishop of Bristol was clear about his leadership responsibilities in regard to safeguarding within his Diocese. His appointed lead for safeguarding is the Diocesan Secretary. The Diocesan Secretary also line manages the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA), who has responsibility for investigating allegations against church officers or volunteers, and also for undertaking risk assessments (NB in Section 2.5 the issues regarding risk assessments undertaken within the Diocese of Bristol are covered in greater detail).

The Bishop of Bristol told auditors that his door was always open to the DSA and he was prepared to see him whenever it was required. The DSA also said that this was his experience and that even though he had only been in post since early December 2016, there had already been two occasions when he had needed to alert/discuss an issue with the Bishop, and he had been granted ready access.

2.1.2 Structure

Bishop's Council is kept updated regarding safeguarding by the Diocesan Secretary, who is Secretary to the Council. The Bishop holds a Monday morning briefing for all his staff, which includes the Diocesan Secretary. The Bishop's Staff team meets monthly and a safeguarding report is a standing item on the agenda. The Diocesan Secretary reports on any safeguarding issues that they may need to know about.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Steering Group holds the Diocese to account for its safeguarding activity. It has an Independent Chair, and Terms of Reference, and meets every quarter. The Chair and DSA then meet with the Bishop of Bristol immediately after each meeting for information sharing and debriefing.

2.1.3 Links with Cathedral

There are strong links between the Diocese and the Cathedral in regard to safeguarding. In 2015, a service level agreement was signed which stipulated that the DSA would provide safeguarding advice and casework support to the Cathedral; diocesan training was available to the Cathedral and the Diocese would also undertake DBS checks on their behalf. The Cathedral is also represented on the Diocesan Safeguarding Steering Group (DSSG)

2.1.4 Culture

There is a strong culture of both getting safeguarding right, as well as ongoing improvement, within the Diocese. This can be first evidenced by the commissioning of a report undertaken by Barnardo's in 2013 that looked at how safeguarding was being undertaken in the Diocese, both strategically and operationally, and what improvements were required. The Bishop, the then Diocesan Secretary and the current Diocesan Secretary (then in another role) commissioned the report to bring

safeguarding activity in the Diocese in line with up-to-date practice, using the expertise and challenge of an organisation with a nationally recognised track record in safeguarding. The auditors felt that this was an innovative move to have made at that time. Following on from this report, the operational safeguarding staff team has grown and the DSSG was set up. Members of the Focus Group that was held during the audit stated that they felt supported in their safeguarding activities, that training was of a good quality and that the previous DSA was very approachable and responsive in a very timely manner.

(Reference: part 1 of S.11 audit: Provide a structure to manage safeguarding in the Diocese. Also to part 2: The Bishop appoints a member of his senior staff to be the lead person for safeguarding.)

2.2 DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING ADVISER/S

2.2.1 Roles and responsibilities

The Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) is new in post, having started in early December 2016. The previous post-holder had been in post for almost three years. Prior to that, a part-time Child Protection Adviser had been employed by the Diocese for 12 years and a part-time Vulnerable Adults Officer from 2010.

There is a job description and person specification in place for the DSA post, which is full time. The role covers both children's and adults' safeguarding casework, ensuring that policies/procedures are kept updated, liaising with relevant partners, and being responsible for provision of training. A part-time (two days per week) caseworker is also employed by the Diocese to complement the work of the DSA. This post was first filled in March 2016 and was initially for a year. This has now been extended and the Diocese is considering making it permanent. The caseworker's responsibilities are to undertake some casework, deal with telephone queries, create updated safeguarding agreements, and monitor policies and procedures. A part-time (21 hours per week) training and development officer role has recently been created, and the new post-holder will start work in March 2017. A full-time administrator supports the team and oversees DBS checks. They are also the Diocesan Secretary's PA. An out-of-hours safeguarding service is operated for the Diocese by the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS).

2.2.2 Qualifications and experience

Both the current and previous DSA post-holders are qualified social workers and registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). The current DSA has experience as a frontline social worker in a local authority children's social work team. He then moved into a hospital social work team as a senior social worker, before becoming a policy officer with a safeguarding children board. From this role he became a business manager for an adult and children's safeguarding children board, before joining the Diocese as its DSA at the end of 2016. Whilst a member of the Church of England, the DSA holds no roles at all within his church community, thus no conflict of interest is presented.

The caseworker had a long career working in a police Public Protection Unit, and continues to work as a senior police officer (in a unit investigating child sexual exploitation) during the working week when he is not employed by the Diocese.

The Diocese consequently has the benefit of both social work and police safeguarding experience within the safeguarding service.

2.2.3 Management and supervision arrangements

The DSA line manages and supervises the caseworker, and will similarly manage and supervise the new training and development officer. The DSA himself is line managed by the Diocesan Secretary and supervised by an independent social work consultant who has many years' experience as a team manager of a children's social work team. This arrangement has only just been agreed and a contract is currently being worked on that will include how the supervisor will relate to the DSA's line manager in order to monitor performance.

The previous DSA also had an external supervisor who had a background in social work, but they stepped down when the previous DSA left.

2.2.4 Adequacy of resources

The capacity of the diocesan safeguarding service has gradually increased from one full-time DSA in 2013 to a full-time DSA, a part-time case worker and a part-time training and development officer by March 2017. This is equivalent to two full time, supported by a full-time administrative post. The Diocesan Secretary was clear that if a reasonable business case was presented for any extra resources in regard to safeguarding it would be sympathetically received, and there had been no resistance to finding the funding to increase to the current capacity.

(References: part 1 of S11 audit. Appoint a suitably qualified DSA, and provide financial, organisational and management support. The adviser must have full access to clergy files and other confidential material. Part 6: The DSA's role is clear in the job description and person specification. And The DSA has sufficient time, funding, supervision and support to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities, including local policy development, casework, advice, liaison with statutory authorities, training, personal and professional development and professional registration. Part 8: The DSA should be given access to professional supervision to ensure their practice is reviewed and improves over time.)

2.3 DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING STEERING GROUP

2.3.1 Chair

There is an Independent Chair for the Diocesan Safeguarding Steering Group (DSSG) who has held this role for nearly three years and is about to undertake a second three-year term. The role is unpaid and undertaken on a voluntary basis, and there is an agreement in place that outlines the roles/responsibilities of the Chair. The post-holder has extensive qualifications in relevant areas of professional practice, including a Bachelor's Degree (with Honours) in Social Work Studies and a Master's Degree in Child Protection & Strategic Management. He has extensive experience working for local authority children's services, his last public sector role being an Assistant Director for Quality and Performance in a Health and Social Care Directorate. He is currently Executive Director for the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS), an independent Christian charity providing professional advice, support, training and resources in all areas of safeguarding children and adults at risk of harm.

The auditors had some concerns about a possible conflict of interest, as CCPAS has two service contracts with the Diocese to support its safeguarding services. The Diocesan Secretary informed the auditors that all commissioning in safeguarding is operational with the Diocesan Secretary accountable to the Finance Committee of the DBF in line with Standing Financial Instructions (SFI). There is no involvement from the Independent Chair of DSSG. The DBF's SFIs have a requirement to tender for services over £5k and to review approved suppliers for price and best value at least every five years. CCPAS does provide a range of services that are of potential value to a diocese. It provides the Diocese's e-bulk service. followed the tender process prior to the Chair's appointment. If a service of less material value is sought, it is done on appropriateness and value. The DSSG Chair is not involved as a representative of CCPAS. Whilst accepting this, the auditors felt that some consideration probably should be given regarding how this could be formalised, to give reassurance that there is no conflict of interest. The Diocese plans to raise this issue with the DBF's Audit Committee.

2.3.2 Composition of Group

The terms of reference for the DSSG state that the group will comprise the following individuals:

- Independent Chair
- Vice Chair
- Diocesan Secretary (Also holds role as Bishop's Staff safeguarding lead)
- Bishop's Chaplain
- Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser
- Local authority representative (1 x children and young people and 1x adults)
- Registrar/or representative
- Parish Safeguarding Officer
- Chair of House of Clergy
- Diocesan Director of Education
- Communications Officer
- Youth and Children's Adviser

The engagement of statutory services to provide membership of the DSSG has been a challenge. At times, the police and children's services have been represented, but this has not been sustained, although a commitment to provide representation from Avon and Somerset Police has recently been given to the Diocese. The Chair felt that this may be because the Diocese covers several local and police authorities. However, with the contacts of the new DSA and caseworker it is hoped that more consistent representation from statutory agencies can now be addressed.

2.3.3 Clarity of purpose and function

There are Terms of Reference for the DSSG and the Group meets on a quarterly basis. The Chair of the DSSG (and the DSA) meet with the Bishop following each meeting to brief him. The auditors viewed three sets of minutes and were satisfied that the Group conducts itself as per its Terms of Reference.

The DSSG has a Risk Management sub-group, and the auditors were unclear about its function and purpose. The Chair explained that this was a sub-group that had met virtually (although rarely to date) using a selection of DSSG members appropriate to the level and nature of risk being assessed. Initially, the intention had been that this sub-group would scrutinise risk assessments and would act as an appeals process for the individual being assessed if they were not in agreement with the outcome. He said that difficulties had been experienced in the operation of this Group and that revisions had been made, including for the new Vice Chair of the DSSG to oversee this sub-group. The auditors were told that the DSSG intend to revisit the sub-group and change how it operates in line with the revised guidance for risk assessments and new arrangements for the risk management process for safeguarding cases. We felt that this was timely and, that perhaps the sub-group could take on a quality assurance role, for instance, on a spot check basis, bearing in mind the issues raised below in 2.5 (Quality of risk assessments).

Under 2.6, it is noted that numbers of Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSOs) in receipt of safeguarding training are low. Under its Terms of Reference, the DSSG has the responsibility to oversee training activity and planning. At its October 2016 meeting the low numbers of PSOs with safeguarding training were noted. The minutes then state that this will need to be addressed when a training and development officer comes into post (at that point one had not been appointed). The auditors feel that with such low numbers, more robust monitoring and action should have been proposed for the Diocese to follow up (see 2.6 Considerations for the Diocese).

(Reference: part 1 of S.11 audit: Provide a structure to manage safeguarding in the Diocese. Also to part 2: The Bishop appoints a member of his senior staff to be the lead person for safeguarding.)

Considerations for the Diocese

Explore ways to ensure that there is no conflict of interest between the professional position of the DSSG Chair and the commissioning processes of the Diocese.

Continue to attempt to recruit children's services and adults' services representatives onto the DSSG.

Revisit the role and purpose of the Risk Management sub-group.

2.4 GUIDANCE, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

All House of Bishops' policies have been adopted by the Synod in 2014. All national and local policies and guidance are available on the diocesan website, under the Safeguarding pages. Local policies and guidance were all updated in August 2016. There is also a very helpful change tracker which clearly shows what national guidance is in current use, what is not and what is in the process of being updated. The auditors felt that this was a helpful document of great assistance in keeping up to date with what is current guidance. Some key national guidance has been appropriately and accurately localised. Members of the Focus Group spoke very highly of the Diocese Safeguarding Information Pocket Guide which gives basic information about what to do/who to contact for any children's or adults' safeguarding concerns. However, they also said that they found it a struggle (in terms of time

capacity) to have to write their own parish-based policies and guidance, and would welcome some very basic templates that could then be adapted for parish use. In fact, the auditors were informed subsequently that, in response to this feedback, in 2016 the Diocese provided and promoted a **sample parish policy**. If a Parish Audit discloses that they do not have a policy, the Action Plan points them to this web page and parishes are directed to the templates in the Safer Recruitment Guidance.

(Reference: part 1 of the S. 11 audit: Ensure the Diocesan Synod adopts the House of Bishops' safeguarding policies, together with any additional diocesan procedures and good practice guidelines.)

Considerations for the Diocese

Consider ways to further publicise the sample parish safeguarding template in order that parishes are aware of its existence and whether there is any need for additional templates.

2.5 CASEWORK

The auditors reviewed 15 cases, of which 12 related to children, and three related to vulnerable adults. These were all undertaken prior to the 2015 practice guidance.

2.5.1 Recording systems

Historically, efficient record-keeping was a considerable problem for the Diocese, highlighted in the 2013 Barnardo's report. Significant work has been undertaken to gather all information together, case by case, and download/scan into individual electronic casefiles. There are separate folders for open and closed cases and the system is a secure one available only to those given relevant access details in the Diocese. This has been a major achievement, as the auditors were told (and indeed, observed) some older case notes that had been written on odd bits of paper, undated and unsigned.

However, further work needs to be done for the electronic case files to be fit for purpose and in line with national guidance. The files do not have Basic Information Sheets and case notes in use as a standard method of recording. This made it difficult for the auditors to quickly 'understand' the key issues and risks, and, as mentioned below (see response to allegations), to ascertain when and how agencies/people were contacted, and what discussions were undertaken.

2.5.2 Quality of risk assessment and safeguarding contracts

The auditors only viewed a few risk assessments. None of these had been done in line with national guidance and, in some cases, were done in the format of a letter, or as notes of a meeting that involved some/all relevant professionals exchanging information. There were also several cases audited that required risk assessments which were not yet in place.

Safeguarding contracts were of more variable quality: some did appear to be clear about what was expected, why, and how. But, as none were a follow-on from an acceptable risk assessment, it was unclear if they were appropriate and fit for

purpose. They did not appear to be regularly monitored and were usually only signed by the DSA and the person of concern, with no one from the parish signing the contract. Feedback received from Probation reflected these same concerns. They had experienced their own involvement in safeguarding contracts as 'variable' regarding their own input, quality and monitoring of the contract.

(Reference: part 1 of S. 11 audit: Provide access to a risk assessment service so the Bishop and others can evaluate and manage any risk posed by individuals or activities within the Church.)

2.5.3 Quality of response to allegations

Due to the standard of record-keeping of case files, it was difficult to judge the timeliness of the response to allegations, although members of the Focus Group had experienced the former DSA to be very responsive in a timely manner. None of the Focus Group had had any contact with the new DSA.

It was clear from reading certain letters, meeting minutes, etc., that action was taken and appropriate agencies were being involved/liased with. But, due to a lack of case notes, it was difficult to ascertain timelines, who was involved and when.

Due to the previous backgrounds of the DSA (Children's and Adults' safeguarding Boards) and the case worker (Police Public Protection Unit) there is an expectation that their links to key agencies will ensure good and timely input from the partners they have previously worked for.

Core Groups are held when required (called a Strategy Group in Bristol) to oversee any allegations that are made against members of the clergy.

Considerations for the Diocese

Consider what measures are needed to consistently undertake all further risk assessments in line with national guidance.

Consider what measures are needed to undertake all further/updated safeguarding contracts in line with national guidance and based on a current risk assessment.

The Diocese to satisfy itself that it is aware of each individual with a safeguarding contract, when their contract is due to be reviewed, and if a recent risk assessment has been undertaken.

Case files to be arranged in line with national guidance, and to include Basic Information Sheets and for case notes to be made on cases whenever there are relevant contacts.

2.6 TRAINING

2.6.1 Delivery of training

Most safeguarding training in the Diocese has been delivered by the DSA and a small group of volunteer trainers who have experience of delivering training in their professions. The C3 module (Foundation course for members of the clergy) has recently been delivered by the case worker and the Head of Ministry Development. All training delivered is in line with national requirements

2.6.2 Who is being trained?

Data drawn together by the Diocese in readiness for the 2016 self-assessment show that 82 per cent of members of the clergy, 81 per cent of those with Permission to Officiate, 95 per cent of Licensed Lay Ministers, and 42 per cent of Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSOs) have had safeguarding training within the last three years. The figure for PSOs is of concern. Members of the Focus Group were aware that there remained some resistance in the parishes for various reasons, such as time constraints (having to give up evenings/weekends) or questioning the need as training had been undertaken in a work/employment context. The October 2016 minutes of the DSSG meeting state that they expect the Training and Development Officer to follow this up when they comes into post. The auditors would expect this too, but would also suggest that the DSSG robustly monitors these figures and holds the Diocese to account if there is not improvement.

2.6.3 Organisation and recording systems

The safeguarding administrator undertakes the record-keeping for those who have been trained, and when refresher training is due. Monitoring and follow-up will be undertaken by the Training and Development Officer when she starts in March 2017.

(Reference: part 1 of S.11 audit: Select and train those who are to hold the Bishop's Licence in safeguarding matters. Provide training on safeguarding matters to parishes, the Cathedral, other clergy, diocesan organisations, including religious communities and those who hold the Bishop's Licence. And to part 8: Those working closely with children, young people and adults experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect ...have safeguarding in their induction and are trained and have their training refreshed every three years.)

Considerations for the Diocese

The new Training and Development Officer to formulate a plan to urgently increase the numbers of PSOs with safeguarding training, and to follow up on all those whose training is outstanding.

The DSSG to robustly monitor and hold the Diocese to account for the low numbers of PSOs trained and the Chair to report progress to the Bishop.

2.7 SAFE RECRUITMENT OF CLERGY, LAY OFFICERS AND VOLUNTEERS

Eight Blue Clergy Files were reviewed. Due to time constraints, recruitment files for lay officers or volunteers were not reviewed. All Blue Clergy Files contained evidence of Safer Recruitment, such as completed application forms, references, identity confirmation, DBS checks. Two files were reviewed where there had been safeguarding concerns, and they both contained clear and visible reference to safeguarding files also held and detailed the concerns. However, in one case (highlighted to the DSA and the Diocesan Secretary by the auditors) the blue file contained more, and quite concerning historical information from other Diocese and employers, than the safeguarding file contained.

(Reference to part 7 of S.11 audit: The Diocesan Secretary has implemented arrangements in line with the House of Bishops' policy on Safer Recruitment 2015. And to part 1: Keep a record of clergy and church officers that will enable a prompt response to bona fide enquiries...where there have been safeguarding concerns, these should be clearly indicated on file.)

Considerations for the Diocese

Where a safeguarding matter is being investigated by the DSA, and the person of concern has been a member of the clergy in another Diocese, the Blue File to be reviewed by the DSA as part of their overall assessment and information gathering.

2.8 DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE (DBS)

The safeguarding team's administrator oversees the DBS process and keeps records of who has a DBS and when it will require updating. CCPAS provides the DBS service for the Diocese, and auditors heard feedback that this was an efficient and reliable service. In 2015, the Diocese undertook 818 DBS checks, of which seven came back as flawed. A risk assessment is undertaken when a concern is identified to inform the future employment decision.

2.9 COMPLAINTS AND WHISTLEBLOWING

2.9.1 Complaints

There is a fit-for-purpose complaints policy and procedure in place that relates specifically to safeguarding. It is on the Diocesan website. Within the procedure there is an undertaking that the number and nature of complaints will be reported to the DSSG twice a year. This will be to identify, understand and address any possible trends in areas being complained about. The auditors felt that this was a good area of practice that should be highlighted.

2.9.2 Whistleblowing

There is a fit-for-purpose whistleblowing procedure and policy in place that deals specifically with safeguarding. It is on the diocesan website, but there is no link from the safeguarding pages.

(Reference: part 1 of S. 11 audit: Provide a complaints procedure which can be used by those who wish to complain about the handling of safeguarding issues. Also part 4: There is an easily accessible complaints procedure including reference to the Clergy Disciplinary Measures and whistleblowing procedures.)

Considerations for the Diocese

Link the diocesan whistleblowing policy and procedure to the safeguarding page on the website.

2.10 QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES

The Diocese makes an annual return to the National Safeguarding Team. The case worker is supervised by the DSA, and the DSA is to have external professional supervision, both of which are forms of quality assurance.

The Risk Management sub-group (RMG) of the DSSG had intended to check all risk assessments undertaken. The function and purpose of this group is currently being reviewed, but the auditors did feel it could have a future quality assurance role in regard to risk assessments, due to the concerns raised by this audit. For example, the sub-group could undertake an occasional dip sample audit of risk assessments to satisfy itself that they are being done to standard. The Diocese has informed the auditors that a proposed purpose of the RMG is to undertake quarterly spot checks of risk assessments.

Considerations for the Diocese

Consider the role of the Risk Management sub-group to potentially undertake a quality assurance role for risk assessments.

2.11 MONITORING OF SAFEGUARDING IN PARISHES AS PART OF ARCHDEACON'S RESPONSIBILITIES

One Archdeacon covers the Diocese of Bristol. She undertakes annual Visitations on an area deanery basis. The Articles of Enquiry, that include questions about safeguarding and Safer Recruitment, are sent out in advance of the Visitations for completion. The Archdeacon undertakes these Visitations alongside the area deans, and any concerns are fed back to the DSA, but also monitored by the Archdeacon.

The auditors were told by the Focus Group and the Archdeacon that alongside the annual Visitations, parish audits are also undertaken on an annual basis, led by the DSA, and completed by the PSO.

2.12 RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

The Diocese has made several attempts in recent years to set up an Authorised Listening Service, but has not been successful. They are very aware that this is a gap. Members of the Focus Group said that if they know of someone struggling with their past experiences that they would suggest local support services.

Considerations for the Diocese

The Diocese to continue in its attempts to set up an Authorised Listening Service, or something similar, for survivors of abuse and in the interim provide alternative support services when required.

2.13 INFORMATION SHARING

It is clear from the audits of case files and feedback from external agencies that relevant information sharing is undertaken between Diocese and statutory agencies. The DSA has explained that there are standing arrangements/guidance for the sharing of information between statutory services and voluntary sector/faith groups which would apply to the Church.

2.14 LINKS WITH NATIONAL SAFEGUARDING TEAM

The Independent Chair of the DSSG is currently a member of the regional Chairs Network and is Chair of the Christian Forum for Safeguarding (CFS) that meets ecumenically at a national level including representation from the National Safeguarding Adviser for the Church of England. The Independent Chair maintains regular contact with the Church of England National Safeguarding Team and has attended both annual meetings set up for Independent Chairs nationally at Lambeth Palace in 2015 and 2016.

In addition, the Independent Chair of the DSSG had until recently chaired the regional ecumenical forum (SWESF) that meets quarterly for all safeguarding advisers in the South West region and the former and current DSA is also a member of this regional group.

Although the DSA is new in post, he was previously a member of the DSSG, so is aware of the direction of travel, and the work of the National Safeguarding Team.

2.15 NATIONAL SYSTEMIC SAFEGUARDING ISSUES

Members of the Focus Group said that they found the number of new procedures being published by the national team somewhat overwhelming. The diocesan feedback was that the delays in the production of national policy undermines the confidence of parishes in the Diocese's arrangements.

There are some perceived weaknesses in the training materials, which leads to a temptation to make adaptations: this could risk consistency.

It would be helpful to have greater clarity and training on the role and expectations of the 'diocesan safeguarding lead', so as to maximise the safety of safeguarding arrangements and the day-to-day accountability of the DSA.

3 CONCLUSION

This section provides the headline findings from the audit, drawing out positives and the areas for improvement. The detail behind these conclusions are in the Findings in section 2.

3.1 WHAT'S GOING WELL

- The Bishop takes responsibility for the diocesan safeguarding agenda and is keen for there to be ongoing improvement.
- There is confidence from within the Diocese regarding the Diocesan Secretary and his commitment in driving forward safeguarding.
- The Diocesan Secretary has expressed confidence in the skills and knowledge of the safeguarding team (including the arrival of a Training and Development Officer).
- The Diocese has supported and enabled an expansion in resources for safeguarding since 2013.
- The Diocese has used the 2013 Barnardo's report to make improvements in many areas of safeguarding work.
- The safeguarding team and the Diocesan secretary are aware of the areas needing further improvement.
- The Parish Self Audits show an increasing understanding of the need for safeguarding to be at the core of local church life, and parishes have found the process very useful.
- Safeguarding pocket guides have been noted as being a useful tool to disseminate information.
- Feedback from the Parish Focus Group about the good quality of training that is delivered.
- PSO Forums set up by the previous DSA were identified as being of great value and mutually supportive.
- Prompt responses are being made to safeguarding enquiries and referrals made to the safeguarding team.
- Accessible and plain English policies and procedures, which are available online.

3.2 AREAS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

- Whilst it is clear that a significant amount of work has been undertaken in putting all material regarding individual cases together electronically, this work needs to continue onwards to enable clear and accessible case files exist for each case.
- Each case file needs to have clearly standardised sections, one of which should be for case notes which record all activity undertaken.
- Risk assessments need to be undertaken in line with national guidance (Risk

Assessment for Individuals who may Pose Risk to Children or Adults (2015)), taking into account that this guidance is in the process of being updated.

- The quality and effectiveness of safeguarding agreements need to be reviewed, to ensure they are based on an up-to-date and fit-for-purpose risk assessment.
- External membership of the DSSG to continue to be pursued.
- More reliable and consistent support to survivors to be pursued.

APPENDIX: REVIEW PROCESS

DATA COLLECTION

Information provided to auditors

- Safeguarding policies, procedures and guidance used by the Diocese
- Safeguarding Training Programme
- 2014 and 2015 Diocesan Annual reports on safeguarding for Bishop's Council
- 2013 Barnardo's Report
- 2014 and 2015 Annual self-assessment
- Job descriptions for the DSA, case worker and Training and Development Officer
- Terms of Reference for the Diocesan Safeguarding Steering Group
- Minutes of the last three meetings of the DSSG
- Diocesan structure chart

Participation of members of the Diocese

- Two Parish Safeguarding Officers
- Youth Leader
- Rural Schools Worker
- Incumbent
- Parish Administrator

The audit: what records / files were examined?

- Fifteen case files in total: 12 concerning children and three concerning vulnerable adults.
- Eight Blue Clergy files

3.2.1 Limitations of audit

Due to time constraints it was not possible to audit any recruitment files for lay officers or volunteers.