



Diocese of Bristol

Independent audit of diocesan safeguarding arrangements, Feb 2017 Summary of audit findings, considerations and diocesan action plan

The Social Care Institute for Excellence was awarded the contract to provide an independent audit of safeguarding arrangements in each diocese by the Church of England during 2016 and 2017.

The audit process includes a consideration of:

- Governance arrangements
- Case work related to allegations of abuse or serious safeguarding incidents
- Risk management
- Safer recruitment
- Complaints about the diocesan response to safeguarding alerts

The audit, which involved reviewing documentation as well as talking to key people and a parish focus group, took place in Bristol between the 7th and 9th February 2017.

A summary of the auditor's report is provided below. The full report is available on our website.

Summary of audit findings

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.

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.

Summary of considerations and diocesan action plan

The order of considerations below follows the order set out by the structure of the report rather than priority.

1. *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*

PROGRESS SINCE AUDIT:

- The consideration and controls in place were brought to the attention of the DBF's Audit Committee in April.
- Audit Committee agreed there was no conflict of interest for the Independent Chair and the controls were adequate.

COMPLETION DATE: Completed – April 2017

2. *Continue to attempt to recruit police, Children's Services and Adults' services representatives onto the DSSG*

PROGRESS SINCE AUDIT:

- Avon and Somerset Police have identified representation on the DSSG from June 2017.

FURTHER ACTION:

- Seek representation from other statutory agencies, i.e. Local Authority Children's and Adults' services.

COMPLETION DATE: September 2017

3. *Revisit the role and purpose of the Risk Management Group*

PROGRESS SINCE AUDIT:

- DSSG agreed that RMG should quality assure risk assessments undertaken by the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.
- DSSG Vice-Chair, DSA and Diocesan Secretary meeting to develop RMG Terms of Reference in May 2017.

FURTHER ACTION:

- Terms of reference to be agreed at June DSSG.

COMPLETION DATE: June 2017

4. Consider ways to further publicise the sample Parish safeguarding [policy] template in order that Parishes are aware of its existence and whether there is any need for additional templates

PROGRESS SINCE AUDIT:

- Parish templates and resources online highlighted in Safeguarding Update sent to all parishes in April 2017.

FURTHER ACTION:

- Templates to be highlighted at PSO forums that will be held during May and June 2017.
- Develop a simple recording template for parishes to adopt.
- Identify resources that parishes would find helpful.

COMPLETION DATE: July 2017

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

PROGRESS SINCE AUDIT:

- The Diocese has adopted the national guidance and all risk assessments, internal or external (commissioned), are undertaken in accordance with this guidance.
- All risk assessments commenced and/or completed since January 2017 have been undertaken in accordance with current national C of E guidance.

FURTHER ACTION:

- The Diocese will adopt the revised national guidance with respect to risk assessments when this is issued.
- A new risk assessment process and toolkit will be developed and adopted once the new guidance is issued.

COMPLETION DATE: December 2017

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

PROGRESS SINCE AUDIT:

- Three new agreements have been completed since the start of the year and all have a risk assessment.

FURTHER ACTION:

- All agreements that are in place and active will be reviewed over the next 12 months.
- Where there is not a current risk assessment this will be completed or reviewed and the agreement revised in order to reflect this.
- It is expected that all 20 active agreements in place across the Diocese will have been reviewed and updated by March 2018.

COMPLETION DATE: March 2018

- 7. *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.***

PROGRESS SINCE AUDIT:

- The Diocese keeps up to date records of all safeguarding agreements that are active. These are regularly reviewed by the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.
- The DSA reviewed these records in January 2017 and all individuals that pose a risk are allocated as an open case within the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.

FURTHER ACTION:

- Parishes and Incumbents will be reminded to inform the Diocesan Safeguarding Team of anyone who may pose a risk of harm and when a risk assessment or safeguarding agreement should be undertaken.

COMPLETION DATE: May 2017

- 8. *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.***

PROGRESS SINCE AUDIT:

- DSA to review the case file structure to ensure there is a basic information sheet and case note record are included within each open and new case file.

COMPLETION DATE: Completed – April 2017

- 9. *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***

PROGRESS SINCE AUDIT:

- By the end of March 2017, the rate of PSOs that have received the required standard of training has increased from 42% to 49%.
- A new training programme and plan has been developed and published to reflect the revised national framework
- All PSOs have been reminded about their mandatory training requirements in April 2017.

FURTHER ACTION:

- PSOs that require training will be contacted directly to inform them of the training requirements.
- 80% of PSOs will have received the required level of mandatory training by the end of 2017

COMPLETION DATE: December 2017

10. DSSG to robustly monitor and hold the diocese to account for the low numbers of PSOs trained and the Independent Chair to report progress to the Bishop.

PROGRESS SINCE AUDIT:

- All training provision and levels are reported on a quarterly basis to the DSSG.
- Increase to 49% noted and reported by DSSG Chair to the Bishop.

FURTHER ACTION:

- Specific note of reporting against 80% goal to be done at DSSG in June 2017, October 2017 and January 2018 and reported to the Bishop.

COMPLETION DATE: December 2017

11. 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.

PROGRESS SINCE AUDIT:

- This is standard practice for new concerns raised and in relation to open cases.

COMPLETION DATE: Completed

12. Link the Diocesan Whistleblowing policy and procedure to the safeguarding page on the website.

PROGRESS SINCE AUDIT:

- This link has been added to the safeguarding page of the website.

COMPLETION DATE: Completed – April 2017

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

PROGRESS SINCE AUDIT:

- See consideration 3.

COMPLETION DATE: June 2017

14. The Diocese to continue in its attempts to set up an authorised listening service, or something similar, for survivors of abuse

PROGRESS SINCE AUDIT:

- The DSA has reviewed the action previously taken to recruit and develop Authorised Listener service.

- The DSA has meet with two individuals previously recruited to provide an Authorised Listener service
- A plan is in development to outline how the service will operate which will include ensuring that Authorised Listeners are adequately resourced and trained in the role.

FURTHER ACTION:

- The Diocese will ensure that there is information available and provided to victims and survivors of abuse both on the diocesan website and as and when requested by a survivor or victim of abuse.

COMPLETION DATE: September 2017