



The Diocesan Safeguarding Oversight Group (DSOG) has oversight of, and scrutinises, the safeguarding strategy and arrangements in the diocese. DSOG meets quarterly and brings together representatives from the diocese, the cathedral and external agencies, including children & adult services, police, probation service, and Quetzal, a local charity for survivors of childhood abuse. DSOG is chaired by Adrienne Plunkett, a social worker with a background in Children's Services, as a practitioner and manager and experience of conducting Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews.

25 September 2024:

Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) Recommendations 1 & 8: DSOG heard from the National Safeguarding Team's IICSA 1 & 8 Project Team members, Kate Dench and Bev Bickley, regarding the introduction of Regional Safeguarding Leads (RSLs) and the change from Diocesan Safeguarding Advisors (DSA) to Diocesan Safeguarding Officers (DSO), as recommended by IICSA. These are major changes to the safeguarding arrangements; DSOs will have independent responsibility for, and oversight of, key safeguarding tasks, and their work will be professionally supervised and quality assured by the Regional Safeguarding Leads. The implementation date for the changes is between February – July next year.

Recruitment of ordinands: Sue Willetts, Diocesan Director of Ordinands, joined the meeting to talk about the mechanisms and safeguards in place during the process for the recruitment and training of priests, from the point of discernment through the stages that follow to ordination. Sue described the process as being designed to enable the person discerning their vocation to flourish, alongside the flourishing of all those they come into contact with on their journey. The importance of a robust recruitment process was highlighted, any concerns are raised with the DSA.

Minster Communities: Claire Bampton, Diocesan Programme Manager, reported on the progress of Minster Communities (MCs), and how the diocese is responding to changes in the landscape of the Church and diocese, including the need for more self-supporting clergy and lay ministers. She emphasised the continued importance of the role of the Safeguarding Coordinators in our worshipping communities, and how the creation of MCs should in time be an advantage to those Safeguarding Coordinators working in isolation, as supportive networks are formed across areas. Claire discussed how safeguarding responsibilities will be fulfilled in MCs, encouraging and building understanding among PCCs that safeguarding remains the responsibility of all and making use of the parish dashboards.

Safeguarding Coordinators: In recognition of the demands placed on Safeguarding Coordinators, a survey had been conducted of the challenges faced, the support offered and ideas for development. The diocesan safeguarding team is taking some of these ideas forward, e.g. buddying, forming clusters, developing a portal of key documents.

Survivor Care Strategy: Rachel Spiers, DSA, and Shabnam Popat, Quetzal, are working with a small group of survivors to coproduce the strategy. It is anticipated a draft will be presented to DSOG in December.

Cathedral Update: The Dean updated DSOG on the actions being taken to strengthen the safeguarding governance arrangements and the preparation for the INEQE audit

General Synod Update: Matters of interest included the response to the Jay Report, an update on the National Redress Scheme and the Soul Survivor inquiry.