

Safeguarding Executive Summary Report

Hereford Diocese

Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	2
2. Headline data	3
3. Local safeguarding themes	4
3.1. Best Practice	4
3.2. Past Case Review 2 (PCR2) Preparation, Compliance and Scope.....	4
3.3. Filing and Administration.....	4
3.4. Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults.....	5
3.5. Offender Management	6
3.6. Survivor Care and Lived Experiences	7
3.7. Statutory Agencies	7
4. Implementation plan of local recommendations	8
4.1. Recommendations.....	8
4.2. Hereford Diocese.....	8
4.3. National Recommendations	8
5. Survivor Strategy	9
6. Explanation of the role of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel	9
7. Final Reflections – including progress to date/thanks	10
8. Thank you.....	10

1. Introduction

Our diocesan vision is to Proclaim Christ and Grow Disciples – Safeguarding is a vital part of ensuring our church and reflects the gospel that we proclaim. We want to be a community where everyone is safe and where we can share our stories with confidence in one another.

We support and encourage all people across our Diocese to share this missional and pastoral task. We recognise we can't do this on our own. Above all we need God's help through prayer. But we also need the help of critical friends to ensure all that we do is transparent and subject to proper scrutiny.

I am very grateful to the external reviewers who scrupulously looked through our records to ensure we had exercised best safeguarding practice. I am delighted they were able to affirm the significant progress the diocese has made in this area of our life. I am also hugely grateful for our safeguarding team and the professional and caring way in which they support us in ensuring best practice. I hope you find this report a valuable overview of the progress we continue to make in this area. We are determined to foster a culture that creates a safe space for all, protects the vulnerable, and ensures any disclosures of past harm are properly and professionally addressed.

Please pray for us that our diocese will be a model of good practice.

With best wishes,



+ Richard Hereford

Please visit www.hereford.anglican.org and follow us on social media to read more about our work

2. Headline data

Below is the detailed data relating to Hereford Diocese

Name	Total number of files reviewed			Total number of new cases or different /further action			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Hereford	Total number all other files reviewed	Total number of KCL files reviewed	Total number of ALL files reviewed	New safeguarding cases identified from Parish returns	New safeguarding cases identified from all other files	Total number of ALL new safeguarding cases	Different or further action required during review of KCL
	1574	55	1629	0	0	0	1

3. Local safeguarding themes

3.1. Best Practice

This section is written with kind permission of the Independent Reviewers (IR) who undertook the work to conduct the past case review 2 (PCR2) for Hereford Diocese in 2020.

3.2. Past Case Review 2 (PCR2) Preparation, Compliance and Scope

It was evident that the Diocese had put considerable effort and time into pre review preparation for the PCR2. It was fully compliant with all elements of PCR2 Policy and Practice Guidance.

The Diocese decided to re review all files in scope, including a repeat of all PCR1 files, and did not seek any exemptions. A signed return was received from all 382 parishes in compliance with the Bishops Letter. At the start of the review, the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer (DSO) was able to provide the Independent Reviewers (IR's) with a Known Case List (KCL)

PCR2 Policy and Guidance was circulated to all IRs at the point of commissioning and reviewers were supported with reference documents as needed.

The Diocese and Cathedral had clear guidance on the level of DBS (e.g. None, Standard, Enhanced) required for specific roles. The Diocese created proforma templates for completion by IR's. Use of the check list was exceptionally helpful to both the IR's and to the Diocese as it prompted a comprehensive assessment of risk and enabled IR's to provide a richer picture regarding administration and other processes relating to safeguarding within the Diocese

3.3. Filing and Administration

The IRs concluded that comprehensive secure filing system exists in the Diocese. In addition, a number of Identified Responsible Officers exist in the diocese, each having responsibility for management and security of specific file types. The Electronic databases held by the Secretaries detail the movement of files in and out of the diocese.

The Diocese of Hereford have adopted the 'Personal Files relating to Clergy – Policy for Bishops and their staff' as approved by the House of Bishops in May 2018. Identified Responsible Officers hold an electronic database of files held and provided IR's and a hard copy spread sheet of all the files held.

The Diocese employs a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Administration / Safeguarding Training Administrator to manage the DBS process and ensure attendance at mandated safeguarding training. PTO Certificates record the details of Safeguarding Training expiry dates and DBS expiry date along with the date the PTO expires. This is good practise and ensures that the recipient and the Diocese are clear about expiry dates and the processes around them.

On receipt of an initial, or renewal of a PTO certificate, included is the date of expiry of DBS certificate and the date of mandatory refresher safeguarding training. Although there is an automated system in place for such renewals this is good practise. It serves to encourage taking personal responsibility and being pro-active in keeping mandatory requirements valid.

A detailed parish correspondence filing scrutiny and weeding exercise has been carried out in relation to all Bishop's and Archdeacons parish correspondence prior to the PCR commencing any issues identified relevant to safeguarding were referred to the DSO.

Following the review phase the information contained within the hard copy Master Record has been uploaded electronically to provide the Diocese with an electronic auditable record of the PCR2 findings.

The IR's concluded that the information required by this Known Case File certificate clearly demonstrated the DSO, Past Case Review Reference Group and wider Diocese's commitment to a thorough, transparent review process from which she and the Diocese could take appropriate learning and reflection.

Consistency of the review paperwork and process was beneficial to the IR's and the efficiency of the review.

3.4. Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

It is evident that the DSO has a detailed knowledge of the policies, legislation and processes at the core of her role within the Diocese.

The IRs were impressed that the current DSO, in post since November 2015, reviewed all KC's at the commencement of her employment. Although not a requirement in CoE practise nor within the DSO Job Description, this was good practise and ensured any historic risk was identified and mitigated and that survivors were supported.

The IR's did not identify any safeguarding concern from file scrutiny that was not already known to the DSO.

The DSO has committed to 5 yearly reviews of Known Case files so that new learning and any changes in Safeguarding statute or CoE policies can be applied, as appropriate. This commitment reinforces the DSO's and Diocese commitment to, and culture of, reflection and learning.

Both the Diocese and Hereford Cathedral website provides public facing information regarding those with Safeguarding responsibilities

The Diocese website provides clear safeguarding guidance, policy, points of contact, the process for reporting concerns and abuse, survivor support information including Safe Spaces and details of the PCR2 process.

Safeguarding training is mandated for all clergy and relevant (role appropriate) staff every three years. The quality of case management by the DSO was particularly robust. All KCL examined were of a high quality in respect of initial recording; following relevant lines of enquiry and ensuring support was offered to survivors. The IRs found that in all cases where safeguarding issues were identified, the response by the DSO was timely and in compliance with HoB (House of Bishops) / NST Guidance and policy.

The DSO's decision making rational was well recorded on case notes and investigations had a detailed synopsis which summarised the complete investigation from initial disclosure through to conclusion. In all the files reviewed the IRs did not identify any procedural concerns or risk that had not been appropriately identified and mitigated by the DSO.

There was clear compliance with HoB (House of Bishops) and National Safeguarding Team (NST) Guidance and policy (e.g. Promoting a Safer Church, Safer Recruitment, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 and the CARE ACT.)

The sharing of information was appropriate and proportionate in all of the cases reviewed.

The DSO also benefits from external and independent supervision from a former Head of Probation Service. This ensures that decision making by the DSO is scrutinised by an independent professional with experience of safeguarding from a different statutory agency perspectives.

The reviewers saw evidence of consistent completion and inclusion of the Confidential Declaration Form, certification of current enhanced DBS form (where it applied to the postholder) and the Clergy Current Status Letter ('safe to receive').

The process for incoming clergy is for the Bishop and the DSO to receive the CCSL as part of the selection process and prior to any formal interview. The Diocese also requires assurance that the current DSO of the home diocese has reviewed the blue Clergy File and confirmed there are no matters of risk or concern.

3.5. Offender Management

The offender management response in the Diocese was proportionate to the identified risk. The specified conditions were deemed to be fair, appropriate and manageable and in compliance with HoB guidance and policy.

The DSO ensures that an individual case a risk assessment is carried out in conjunction with the statutory agencies involved in that particular case.

Written agreements are drawn up detailing specific conditions that must be adhered to and signed by the subject and appropriate Diocese officers, including the DSO. The DSO has responsibility to

ensure that every agreement is reviewed on an annual basis , or sooner if proportionate to the risk presented.

Any breaches , or attempted breaches, or non-compliance is reported by the designated church officer to the DSO who then shares the information with the appropriate statutory agencies.

Independent reviewers were satisfied that risk identification, recording, prioritisation and management were consistent and robustly addressed. IR's saw reference to a Church of England approved and externally commissioned independent Type A risk assessment processes and saw evidence of the resultant risk management plan.

3.6. Survivor Care and Lived Experiences

The Diocese has a robust Survivors Strategy, which involves providing support and referral to local agencies in particular West Mercia Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre. This service includes access to counselling, the Independent Sexual Advice Service and a Children and Young People's Service.

The bespoke Survivor Care Strategy for the PCR2 was compliant with the PCR2 PPG guidance detailed in Section 6; The involvement of victims, survivors and those with lived experience of abuse.

The strategy and the Diocese public facing website provided details on the PCR2 process and specifically signposted readers to the NSPCC National Helpline .

The Diocese are committed to providing appropriate and quality support to survivors, with a budget allocated if required.

Within the PCR2 Survivor Care Strategy section 5 refers to Organisational Learning and Shaping the future. It was clear that the Diocese had given due consideration to the learning opportunity which may have been presented.

3.7. Statutory Agencies

There was clear evidence of engagement with statutory agencies, including in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children and the CARE Act.

Evidence was seen to support the timely, proportionate and necessary exchange of information between the DSO and appropriate external partners.

There is evidence of the DSO escalating a case of concern relating to a clergy member to a supervisor within West Mercia Police

There is a positive culture towards safeguarding and managing risk across the Diocese, with staff members and clergy seeking the advice of the DSO regarding matters where they identify a potential risk.

4. Implementation plan of local recommendations

The recommendations of our Independent Reviewers are laid out below and they draw from recognised national best practice.

4.1. Recommendations

4.2. Hereford Diocese

Weeding of records held within the Cathedral Library Archives should be completed to ensure compliance with GDPR.

Weeding should be completed for the very small number of Reader files which contained information that was not GDPR compliant e.g. DBS certificates.

That the Diocese consider use of the communications channel provided by the websites of member agencies of the Safeguarding Boards in Hereford as a way of sharing information with the public on appropriate subjects.

Hereford Cathedral should make information regarding the PCR2 process available to the public on the Cathedral website. This was published on 29/11/20 but should have happened before this date.

4.3. National Recommendations

That DSO's are provided with a comprehensive national initial training programme to equip them to deliver the role and ensure national consistency in delivery. This programme may consider inclusion of oversight of CDM process, survivor care, rules of evidence, investigation guidance, record keeping, information sharing and working with statutory agencies.

A national programme of Continuous Professional Development should be introduced for DSOs and A/DSOs, reflecting developments in the elements contained within the initial training programme and updates in policy and best practice.

Consideration should be given to the benefits of aligning the definition of a vulnerable adult in Section 6 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline 2016 with the definition contained within The Care Act 2014. This may benefit DSO's in obtaining support from statutory agencies including Local Authorities. All applicants for clergy or church officer roles should complete a Confidential Disclosure Form and expect to be subject of a DBS check. The Safer Recruitment policy provides an opportunity to enforce this policy.

To address the inconsistency that exists in the CCSL process, the receiving diocese should expect confirmation from the exporting diocese of the original Confidential Disclosure Form and DBS plus their response to any disclosures / blemishes including any risk assessments taken and the current safe to receive status.

Clergy case history should be subject of tracking through Crockfords and any career breaks should be properly accounted for in their Crockfords entry and in the subject's clergy file.

5. Survivor Strategy

The IR's were provided with two documented Survivors Strategies; one being the generic approach taken by the Diocese to supporting survivors of abuse and the second being a bespoke Survivor Care Strategy for PCR2 dated 27/3/20. The bespoke strategy follows the PCR2 PPG guidance detailed in Section 6, "The involvement of victims, survivors and those with lived experience of abuse."

It should be recognised that NHS England in 2018 published the document 'Strategic direction for sexual abuse and assault services', this strategy identifies that there is a need to provide improved enduring support for survivors. This strategy has yet to have local impact. The implication therefore is that at a local level, NHS England itself acknowledges a lack of enduring support for survivors of sexual abuse and assault.

Against that nationally accepted shortfall in enduring support for survivors the Diocese have a robust survivor strategy, which involves providing support and referral to local agencies in particular West Mercia Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre. This service includes access to counselling, the Independent Sexual Advice Service and a Children and Young People's Service.

The IR's are assured that, based on the documented Survivor Strategy, the Diocese are committed to providing appropriate and quality support to survivors, with a budget allocated if required.

6. Explanation of the role of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel

The diocese commenced its preparations for the Past Case Review in 2019. A Project Implementation Plan was presented to the Diocesan Safeguarding Working Group in December of 2019 detailing the planned review, including the setting up of a Project Reference Group (PRG) to oversee the review.

The PRG met for the first time on the 3rd February 2020. Its membership consisted of senior members of staff at the diocese, the Safeguarding Working Group's Independent chair, representatives from the Police and Local Authority as well as Representatives from survivor organisations. At its meeting on the 3rd February 2020, the PRG formally approved the appointment of 3 independent reviewers and a survivors strategy.

The review commenced but was halted due to the first national lockdown across England in March 2020 due to the emerging Covid pandemic. Despite this challenge, Hereford Diocese sought to safely and legally continue with its review, once the initial restrictions eased. The assessment concluded all file reviewing activity by November 2020. The PRG and Diocesan Safeguarding Working Group were kept up to date regarding progress of the review throughout by email. The PRG was formally amalgamated into the Diocesan Safeguarding Working Group for its meeting in December 2020 for the presentation of the reviewers report. The final report was fully accepted by the Safeguarding Working Group at that meeting, it was subsequently submitted and accepted by the National Project management Group early 2021.

7. Final Reflections – including progress to date/thanks

Hereford diocese completed a full and indepth Past Case Review. It received positive feedback from its reviewers with only one case raising some concern. Many elements of best practice were identified and have been shared. Recommendations for Hereford were identified and have all been acted upon. Recommendations were made for the National perspective and these have been shared and will be acted upon.

8. Thank you

The communities and churches of our diocese are full of people who give generously of their time, and we are hugely grateful for this support. The support of our safeguarding leads in our parishes, and we would not be able to meet the practical needs of creating safe churches