

Safeguarding Annual Report 2023-2024

In September this year the National Safeguarding Team published a set of Safeguarding Standards and Quality Assurance Framework covering the 5 most important dimensions of the church's safeguarding work:

- Culture, Leadership and Capacity
- Prevention
- Recognising, Assessing and Managing Risk
- Victims and Survivors
- Learning, Supervision and Support.

Salisbury Diocese have adopted these standards as a framework for defining and measuring the effectiveness of safeguarding across the diocese, so the annual report and priorities for 2024 will follow this structure.

CULTURE, LEADERSHIP AND CAPACITY

National Safeguarding Standard: Church bodies have safe and healthy cultures, effective leadership, resourcing and scrutiny arrangements necessary to deliver high-quality safeguarding practices and outcomes.

External Safeguarding Audit - The Archbishops Council have commissioned an external company (INEQE) to conduct safeguarding audits of all Diocese and Cathedrals as a response to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) recommendation for greater levels of scrutiny. Salisbury Diocese and Cathedral is the first diocese nationally to be audited and this will take place on 8-12th January 2024.

Salisbury Diocese are approaching the audit with a willingness to engage in the process with openness and transparency and to take on board all learning outcomes. Once the report is published, the safeguarding team along with Diocesan senior leaders will review the recommendations and consider an action plan.

The preparations requested by INEQE ahead of the audit have involved an extraordinary amount of work for the safeguarding team above and beyond their ordinary workload so has been a significant undertaking since October. It is unknown at the time of writing this if the recommendations made may lead to a review of resourcing within the team.

Training Resource - The Diocesan Safeguarding Trainer has moved to new pastures working for a different organisation. This provides a timely opportunity to review delivery of safeguarding training within this diocese to meet the needs of the current National Learning and Development Framework. We are looking to move towards a model where freelance trainers are commissioned to deliver the National training curriculum.

Capacity - Partly due to preparing for the safeguarding audit and also launching the safeguarding dashboards, the capacity of the safeguarding team is currently stretched. It is recognised going into 2024 that there needs to be an increase in capacity particularly within the role currently done by the Safeguarding Support Officer who provides administrative support for the team, DBS support and engagement with parishes. We are currently completing an application for funding to increase capacity in this area.

2024 Leadership Priorities

Safeguarding audit – to engage with the external audit and respond to the recommendations with a timely action plan.

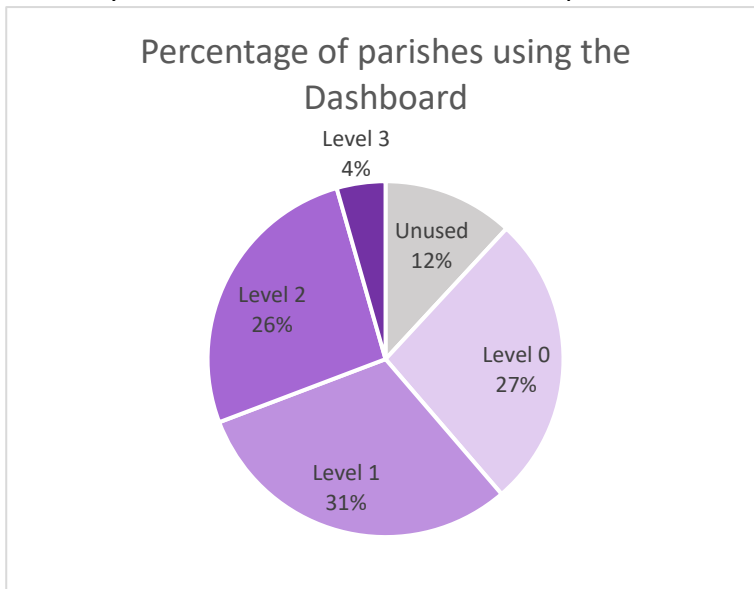
Trauma-informed awareness – raising awareness amongst leaders of a trauma-informed approach to ministry leading to safer and healthier cultures.

Capacity – to focus on PSO recruitment and retention and to consider appropriate levels of resourcing within the Safeguarding Team to enable them to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities.

PREVENTION

National Safeguarding Standard - Church bodies have in place a planned range of measures which together are effective in preventing abuse in their context.

Safeguarding Dashboard – Autumn 2023 saw the launch of the Safeguarding Dashboard within Salisbury Diocese. This is an online tool for parishes which explains their safeguarding



responsibilities and provides links to relevant resources.

When parishes first 'adopt' their Dashboard they start at Level 0 and are then able to tick off various points and turn them green and start to work up to Level 3.

The company behind the Dashboards have commented positively on the speed at which parishes have started using the Dashboards. A special mention to the 19 parishes who have achieved Level 3¹.

¹ These Parishes have reached Level 3/3 - Farnham, Poole Missional Communities Bishop's Mission Order, St Aldhelm Purbeck, Canford Magna, Corfe Mullen, Verwood, Bemerton, Osborne, Sandford Orcas, Trent, Hilperton and Staverton, Semington, Calstone Wellington, Cherhill, Compton Bassett, Heddington, Yatesbury, Bishop's Cannings and Etchilhampton, Woodborough with Manningford Bohune.

There is no doubt that the introduction of this tool has improved safeguarding in the area of ‘prevention’ because a number of parishes have changed their practices as a result of it and put more robust prevention measures in place particularly regarding Safer Recruitment. We have received positive feedback from many safeguarding representatives (e.g. Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSO), Incumbents, Church Wardens) feeling they now have greater clarity about what is expected of them.

However, a number of parishes have found it very difficult to access this tool without feeling overwhelmed with the task. Some PSO’s have resigned resulting from the Dashboard introduction either because they feel that it is a box ticking exercise, or because of the online nature of the tool, or simply because too much is being asked of a volunteer. The safeguarding team have also been refining the language used (for example to ensure it is suitable for the Channel Islands as well as mainland England) and are looking to develop more specific resources.

The Safeguarding Team have encouraged that incumbents and PCC’s take ownership of their Dashboard rather than it solely being the responsibility of the PSO. This would be an outworking of the well-known phrase that ‘safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility’.

Here’s what people have said about the Dashboards this year:



Safeguarding Communications - The safeguarding team communicate with parishes and key safeguarding representative through various platforms including Parish Safeguarding Officer Workshops, emails, newsletters, attending events and meetings, and Grapevine (Diocesan wide email newsletter). These communications are a key vehicle for improvements being made within the area of ‘prevention’.

This year the team facilitated 8 Parish Safeguarding Officer Workshops in different locations across the Diocese giving people the opportunity to meet with other local safeguarding representatives and hear updates from the team. The feedback from these sessions was overwhelmingly positive and we will replicate this initiative again in 2024.

Due to other competing priorities and changing resources (such as the Safeguarding Team leader being on maternity leave) the safeguarding team recognise that regular written communication (i.e. the newsletter) has not been a key focus for the team, and this is something we look to improve during 2024.

2024 Prevention priorities:

Safeguarding Dashboards and Hubs -To increase levels of support for parishes as they adopt and use their Dashboard. To introduce Safeguarding Hubs, a system which is linked to the Dashboard and will allow parishes to effectively record the safeguarding records such as who has completed Safeguarding Training.

Safeguarding Communications – For the central team to produce regular, high-quality updates to resource safeguarding representatives across the diocese.

Engagement - Considering the needs, experiences and voices of children, vulnerable adults, and survivors when prevention planning.

RECOGNISING, ASSESSING AND MANAGING RISK

National Safeguarding Standard - Risk assessments, safety plans and associated processes are of a high quality and result in positive outcomes. The assessment and management of risk is underpinned by effective partnership.

My Concern - This year the safeguarding team have fully adopted a new National Casework Management System called 'My Concern' for recording and managing safeguarding concerns, cases and safeguarding agreements.

Here is a flavour of some of the casework the Safeguarding Team have been involved with during 2023:

- The Safeguarding Team responded to 512 calls and emails regarding safeguarding concerns and/or about best safeguarding practice.
- There were 14 new Core Groups processes that started as a result of concerns being raised about Church Officers (there are 16 Core Groups currently ongoing).
- At the end of 2023 there are 35 former offenders who have active safeguarding agreements to attend church, and 4 agreements are in progress but not yet active.

- 6 standard risk assessments have been completed and 1 independent risk assessment.
- 4 Charity Commission Serious Incident Reports have been completed.

My Concern allows the team to analyse trends and therefore more accurately respond to emerging needs. This can be used to plan future work and allocate resources more effectively in future.

Scrutiny – It seemed that there could be some significant learning regarding safeguarding processes out of one of the Core Groups running during 2023. An independent review was therefore commissioned and undertaken by an external consultant and the recommendations are currently being disseminated.

2024 Risk Priorities

My Concern System – to standardise recording of safeguarding concerns and advice calls/emails so analysis of data can be used to more effectively plan future work and allocate resources.

VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS

National Safeguarding Standard - Victims and survivors experience the timeliness and quality of Church bodies' responses to disclosures, and their subsequent support, as positively meeting their needs, including their search for justice and helping their healing process.

'I have found my contact with [the DSA] and [the ISVA] of the highest quality and I am very grateful for this.'

'Thank you for the notes of the Core Group. I do appreciate your thoughtfulness and sensitivity towards me.'

'I have been encouraged by our conversations... Bless you for all your hard work to safeguarding people... within the Church of England.'



Survivors' feedback

'You are so wonderfully easy to speak to and a very empathetic listener.'

'I am always so grateful for your communications – and just for knowing that you're there!'

'Hope you don't mind me sharing with you (Nina), but this felt like a safe space to do so.'

Providing support and signposting for victims and survivors has continued to be a priority during 2023. Salisbury Diocese continue to commission an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA), through FearFree (Domestic Abuse charity) for 2 days a week. This year Nina has qualified as a senior practitioner within FearFree and has begun a qualification to also become an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA). During 2023 Nina has helped support 19 new victims/survivors and continued to support those from previous years.

2024 Victims and Survivors Priorities

Survivor engagement – to develop not only victim and survivor support and signposting, but also survivor engagement to shape practice and policy.

LEARNING, SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT

National Safeguarding Standard: All those engaged in safeguarding-related activity in Church bodies receive the type and level of learning, professional development, support and supervision necessary to respond to safeguarding situations, victims and survivors, and respondents, effectively.

The Safeguarding Team have continued to provide learning opportunities for Church Officers across the Diocese:

	No. of courses	Participants
Leadership	41	343
PSO Induction	5	26
PSO Workshop	8	126
Domestic Abuse	4	67
Safer Recruitment	1	17
Train the Trainer	1	5

Feedback from participants from the Leadership Pathway:

'I have done many courses in the past but haven't previously attended one which considered culture in this way. I found this an extremely helpful approach.'

'The way the course was produced and delivered was excellent, superior to any course I've done previously.'

'The course has challenged my thinking and led me to embrace a proactive team approach to safeguarding.'

Clergy, those with Permission to Officiate and Licenced Lay Ministers are all required to attend the Leadership Pathway. In the past there have been a number of people who have not completed this mandatory training, so for example in October 2021, 17% of people in these roles had not completed the training and some of them were more than 6 months out of date. Through implementing a consistent process of training reminders, as of 4/1/24, 99% of people in these roles have completed this training.

2024 Learning Priorities

Supervision – for the safeguarding team leader to receive training and implement the 4x4x4 Supervision Model (Morrison 2005) within team supervision.

Safeguarding Training – To monitor effectiveness of using the freelance model for delivering training and adjust the model if necessary.

SAFEGUARDING



*Embedding safeguarding
at the heart of the church's
mission as we realise our
vision to be a safe space
for everyone*

Areas of work:

SURVIVORS AND VICTIMS

Listening to, engaging with, supporting, and learning from those with lived experience of abuse

PREVENTION

Creating resilient environments to prevent abuse from taking place

RESPONDING TO RISK

Identifying, assessing and working in partnership to manage known safeguarding risks

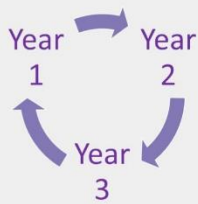
LEARNING, SUPERVISION & SUPPORT

Equipping Church Officers to respond effectively to safeguarding situations

CULTURE & LEADERSHIP

Creating safe and healthy cultures across Salisbury Diocese through effective leadership

Our focus for 2024:



Each year, two Safeguarding Standards are explored in greater depth on a three year cycle. In 2024 we are focussing on Prevention, and Culture & Leadership.

PREVENTION



Safeguarding Dashboards and Hubs - Equipping parishes to adopt these online platforms which clearly explain their safeguarding responsibilities, provide links to relevant resources and tools to manage safeguarding records.

Safeguarding Communications - Using a range of good material and methods to develop and promote effective safeguarding practice and policy across the diocese.

Engagement - Considering the needs, experiences and voices of children, vulnerable adults, and survivors when prevention planning.

CULTURE & LEADERSHIP

Safeguarding Audit - To Engage with an external safeguarding audit and respond to the recommendations with a timely action plan.

Trauma-informed awareness - Raising awareness amongst leaders of a trauma-informed* approach to ministry leading to safer and healthier cultures.

Capacity - Focussing on Parish Safeguarding Officer recruitment and retention, and ensuring appropriate levels of resourcing within the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.



*For more information regarding trauma-informed practice [click here](#)