**Diocese of Chester Past Cases Review 2 – Action Plan July 2022**

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|  | **RECOMMENDATION** | **ACTION** | **PERSON RESPONSIBLE** | **STATUS AT DECEMBER 23**  | **RAG**  |
| **1.** | **Conducting PCR2:** |  |  |  |  |
| **1.1** | **Safeguarding Audit** |  |  |  |  |
|  | 1.1.1 A safeguarding audit with the Safeguarding Team should be conducted within the parish’s settings. It was clear from lack of detail and documentary evidence on the parish returns that appropriate record keeping and management of confidential information was poor. | Currently purchasing Parish Safeguarding Dashboards – supports compliance and audit.Guidance and support needed for parishes re record keeping. | Assistant DSA DSA | Parish Safeguarding Delivery Plans being delivered to parishes as required while we await introduction of Parish Safeguarding Dashboards which was delayed due to staff shortages. Dashboard rollout now planned for 2024, contract entered with provider and Dashboards purchased. First Deanery ready for roll out. Transition of data to third party supplier Jan 2024.Included in training to PSOs in induction and Safeguarding Leadership Training from Aug 21. | AmberGreen |
| **1.2** | **File storage /GDPR** |  |  |  |  |
|  | 1.2.1 The Diocesan Safeguarding Team, Chester Cathedral, and Bishop’s House should review their policy on storage of safeguarding files in line with its Partnership Agreement with the Diocese of Chester. | Policy to be reviewed | Bishop’s Chaplain with DSA and CSO | Diocesan safeguarding files stored in accordance with standard security protocols & CofE retention guidance. Blue Clergy files stored in line with HoB guidelines. Cathedral policy reviewed. Introduction of MyConcern in 2024 for Diocese and Cathedral Safeguarding Teams with associated guidance will further assist GDPR compliance. | Green |
| 1.2.2 Duplicate safeguarding files held by Diocese of Chester, Chester Cathedral and Bishop’s House should be weeded, consolidated and a single storage point identified. | Interim arrangement to be put in place prior to online casework management system being available. | Bishop’s Chaplain with DSA and CSO | Blue Clergy files / Lay Minister files/ HR files and safeguarding files are separate filing systems carrying different information. As such, they need to be kept separate. DSA and CSA have now consolidated physical files and are aware where there are shared interests. *MyConcern* will address duplication of Cathedral and Diocesan safeguarding records when implemented in Chester in 2024.  | Green |
| 1.2.3 The digitalisation of Files would ensure accessibility and centralised storage. This should be considered.  | National safeguarding casework management system will be adopted at the earliest opportunity.  | Diocesan Secretary | National phase 1 roll out of MyConcern complete. Phase 2 delayed by NST staff turnover. Chester should now migrate data in Q1 of 2024. Work commended Aug 23 on paper files preparing them for data migration to MyConcern. | Amber |
| 1.2.4 Reader, Lay and Volunteer Files should be created centrally in order to ensure robust management systems are in place. | Online files for Readers, LLMs and volunteers to be created and kept up to date. CMS to be used to record safeguarding training and DBS dates. Compliance to be managed by the Ministry Team. | Director of Ministry | Creation of Reader and Pastoral Worker files and filing of existing paper records completed Jan 23 – paper “green files” initially held at Church House, but move to Bishops House completed Dec 23. Bishops’ Ministry Administrator (BMA) appointed and maintains files and manages process of ensuring DBS and safeguarding training in place at Licence renewal or granting of PTO.Data now held on CMS and maintained. Ongoing work on checking CMS against existing electronic records.New process for granting of PTO, licences, transfers and extensions now agreed between Ministry and BMA, with new forms (including checking of safeguarding training and DBS).  | Green |
| 1.2.5 A KCL (Known Case List) should be created. | KCL being created and will be maintained.  | Safeguarding Team  | KCL being maintained. Process of reviewing legacy cases and when appropriate closing cases underway. | Green |
| 1.2.6 Onward Management of Actions raised. The Diocese should follow the agreed sign off process via PCR Reference Group for all App D’s, including those still under investigation after completion of the file review phase. |  | Independent scrutiny by DSAP. Episcopal leadership. Diocesan Sec provides oversight of DSA.  | Staff shortages delayed process. New ADSA and Deputy DSA started summer 23 and PCR2 cases being actioned from Aug 23. Further ADSA and administrator recruited December 2023.DSAP Quality Assurance Group established December 2023 to begin process of reviewing PCR2 actions on cases highlighted in App Ds. | Amber |
| 1.2.7 PCR2 Recommendations and Implementation Process. It has been unclear to the Independent Reviewers on occasion as to line management and ownership of oversight and responsibility / accountability for these recommendations. As the lead for safeguarding, the Bishop will be responsible for ensuring the recommendations are embedded within practice in the Diocese, or a said individual nominated by him. | Clarity of ownership of recommendations included within this Action Plan. Diocesan Bishop maintains overall responsibility. | DSA and DSAP chairLead Bishop for Safeguarding. | Action Plan produced July 2022 and reviewed quarterly until Dec 23 by Directors and Core Team. Reports to go to SEG, DSAP and Bishops’ Council.  | Green |
| **2.** | **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN:** |  |  |  |  |
| **2.1** | **Sexual Offenders**  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 2.1.1 The Safeguarding Team is key to implementing risk management plans in respect of sexual offenders who wish to worship in a parish. The diocese must ensure that worshipping agreements in place for this purpose remain as living documents and are implemented under the governance of the Safeguarding Team. To ensure diarised timely reviews of safeguarding agreements are made in order to facilitate current risk management and to update changing circumstances and factors relevant to the ongoing risk. | ADSA has taken on responsibility for offender management & safeguarding agreements, reviewing arrangements in parishes and establishing a programme of regular review. | Asst. DSA | Church Safety Plans/Worshipping Agreements in place and reviewed by the team.There were 66 in place at the end of December 2023. Programme of review to take place in 2024 and to be overseen by DSAP QA Group.National MOU with police has established strong information exchange for managing risk. DST and CSO have attended NST Managing Risk for Offenders training programme. | Green |
| 2.1.2 Development of a national list should be considered of unlicenced staff or parishioners where there is evidence that they may pose a safeguarding risk as they seek to work, volunteer or worship within the wider Church of England. | If this is put in place Chester Diocese will contribute information. | NST |  | N/A |
| 2.1.3 The Diocese needs to formalise practices within Prison Chaplaincy roles, and with Statutory Agencies to establish accurate move on plans in respect of the release of Imprisoned clergy members. This will ensure that appropriate risk management can be resumed on release. Should intelligence suggest that the subject is moving out of area, the relevant area should be informed, in view of the high likelihood the individual will wish to resume worshipping on release. | Establish closer working relationships with Prison and Probation  | Safeguarding Team | DSA has engaged with Prison Chaplaincy, but key agency here is Probation. We now have a Probation rep on DSAP and are working more closely with prison and Probation. Lead Prison Chaplain now on SEG.Partnership agreed with NW Probation service to evaluate released offenders seeking worship. Recruitment process ongoing.National MOU with police has established strong information exchange for managing risk. DSA has liaised with North West dioceses and other faith/ denomination groups to ensure accountable and proportionate information exchange. | Green |
| 2.1.4 The Safeguarding Team must maintain established links with offender managers to ensure a proactive approach to offenders and their management is maintained, to identify any indications they may wish to worship, and to enable them to do so while keeping the congregation at large safe. | Maintain links with offender managers | Safeguarding Team | We now have a good network with offender managers and are taking multi-agency approach.  | Green |
| 2.1.5 Bespoke Sexual Offender Training packages come at a cost to the Diocese, and training cannot always be resourced internally from an overstretched Safeguarding Team. The Diocese may need to consider outsourcing this work to sex offender specialists. | To be explored and costed. | Safeguarding Team | Support and advice provided to parishes where sexual offenders worship by Safeguarding Team and team resource increased.No obvious requirement for bespoke sexual offender management training now that team fully staffed and given expertise of team members.There is also joint Diocese and Probation pilot planned re access to worship for sexual offenders and volunteer leaders will receive appropriate training. | Green  |
| 2.1.6 Recommendation for DSA oversight and management of ALL Safeguarding agreements held by the diocese and the Cathedral. | MOU to be amended accordingly.  | Cathedral Dean, Diocesan Secretary and Lead Bishop for SafeguardingAsst DSA &CSO to coordinate and share relevant information | MoU replaced by Partnership Agreement. Continuing to follow information sharing agreements and national guidance. Regular meetings in place between CSO and ADSA and oversight being provided.All Safeguarding Agreements at the Cathedral are overseen by the DSA (and always have been). | GreenGreen |
| **2.2** | **Youth Workers** |  |  |  |  |
|  | 2.2.1 Continued vigilance required in the safer recruitment and monitoring of youth workers, paid or volunteers. Continued and improved mechanisms to ensure safeguarding training and other relevant training in their role, so they understand boundaries and how to maintain these. | Review training offer to c and yp leaders.  | Director of Outreach and Youth, Children and Families Missioner. | Report provided by YCF Missioner to SEG and Directors’ Meeting. YCF Missioner subsequently resigned to take up another job.Role description for new YCF Missioner adjusted to focus more clearly on ensuring training requirements of c and yp leaders is met. New YCF Missioner in post from Oct 23. | Amber |
| 2.2.2 The implementation of appraisals and oversight to enable closer scrutiny and monitoring of their work and behaviour, and to ensure any necessary support and training gaps are addressed. | Guidance to be issued to incumbents. | HR Committee and Director of HR | General guidance provided to parishes on the Employment Guidance pages of the website via the Just Employment document. A reminder sent to incumbents and parishes via the ebulletin. | Green |
| **2.3** | **Choir Leaders or Organists / Musical / Other volunteer roles** |  |  |  |  |
|  | 2.3.1 We have evidenced that child and adult abuse can be perpetrated against children and adults by this sector in sufficient numbers to state that the roles can become blurred creating access to the vulnerable. We advocate voluntary locally requested DBS where there is any likelihood that the role profile could become blurred. Parish reps need to be alive to the changing role profiles and the need for DBS checks to be progressed. | DBS checks can only be undertaken wrt specific roles and duties.  |  |  | N/A |
| Advice re blurring of roles to be provided to PSOs in induction training and ongoing support sessions. | Safeguarding Team | Covered in training and followed up in meetings in parishes and Safeguarding Development Plans. | Green |
| **3.** | **SAFEGUARDING ADULTS:** |  |  |  |  |
| **3.1** | **Inappropriate Relationships** |  |  |  |  |
|  | 3.1.1 Those within the church who are likely to come into contact with children need to have a clear understanding of professional boundaries that are to be maintained in order that inappropriate behaviour does not develop. This is particularly important in respect of those who are themselves in the early stages of maturing, and who may be working with children who are not that dissimilar in age, such as some younger youth workers. We recommend awareness raising in respect of guidance as to ‘what is an inappropriate relationship’. Training inputs must ensure that these breaches are recognised, and that interventions can occur which take into consideration the safeguarding issues arising. There should be clear understanding around supporting survivors. This should include using other professional agencies and organisations and continuing with the signposting to the voluntary sector resources. | Review training for c and yp leaders. Consider mandatory induction training. | Director of Outreach with Youth, Children and Families Missioner | Report provided by YCF Missioner to SEG and Directors Meeting. YCF Missioner subsequently resigned to take up another job.Role description for new YCF Missioner adjusted to focus more clearly on ensuring training requirements of c and yp leaders is met. New YCF Missioner in post from Oct 23 and has begun to address this area of work. | Red |
| 3.1.2 The Diocese should continue to provide up to date information on the Diocesan website for people and places survivors and parish safeguarding leads can contact for help and information or to report safeguarding concerns. | Regularly review and refresh safeguarding pages of Diocesan website. | Safeguarding Team and Director of Comms. | Website updated as required. Safeguarding Communication Strategy being produced.  | Green |
| **3.2** | **Domestic Abuse** |  |  |  |  |
|  | 3.2.1 Increased recognition of the vulnerability of Clergy spouses involved in domestic abuse and the requirement for appropriate and targeted support, including practical support such as housing and signposting to financial support. Ensuring early referral to appropriate agencies such as LADO, Police and voluntary sector support. | Bishops, Archdeacons, Cathedral Dean and Director of HR to complete Domestic Abuse Awareness training module. Refer DA concerns to safeguarding team who in turn will refer to appropriate agencies.  | Bishop’s Chaplain to monitorSenior clergy, HR Director and Safeguarding Team | Training modules completed 2022. Renewal due 2025.Inter-departmental engagement with Ministry Team to develop partnership approach and process with HR.Details of suitable voluntary agencies (national and local) collated to support delivery. | GreenGreen |
| 3.2.2 Signposting and referral to other voluntary agencies such as an Independent Domestic Abuse Adviser or courses such as the Freedom course. | Signpost and refer to specialist DA advisers and courses when appropriate. | Safeguarding Team | DA pathway document is used and shared with victims.  | Green |
| 3.2.3 Where appropriate to continue to work in partnership with Victim Support and witness support agencies in relation to court attendance or hearings. | Work in partnership with victim and witness support agencies as appropriate. | Safeguarding Team | This is managed by the police. We engage if approached & will provide additional support. | Green |
| 3.2.4 Improved recognition of domestic abuse as abuse and how cases should be managed. | Continue to promote DA Awareness module and enforce engagement. | Senior clergy & Safeguarding Team | Nov 22 - promoted 16 days of activism to end gender-based violence.Clergy and PCCs written to by Lead Bishop re training modules (including D.A. Awareness module) in Jan 2022 and 2023. Rise in general reporting of DA which reflected uptake in DA training.DA module to be delivered to all PCC/church wardens/pastoral workers in 2024All DA cases are recorded specifically as DA and monitored with parishes. Supporting roadmap developed & supplied to persons supporting and victims of DA. | Green |
| **3.3** | **Bullying** |  |  |  |  |
|  | 3.3.1 Ensuring this term is understood, used, recorded, and managed appropriately. Due consideration should be given to each case bespokely to identify if the safeguarding threshold has been breached. To ensure that allegations of bullying are recognised and reported through the appropriate HR channels and dealt with quickly and according to best practice. | Diocesan Guidance and Anti Bullying and Harassment Policy to be produced. | Archdeacon of Macclesfield with support from HR Director and HR Committee  | Policy drafted and discussed at SEG. Further work needed and this sits with DSA and Director of HR. Paper to return to SEG in March 2024. | Amber |
| 3.3.2 The Diocese should ensure it is making best use of restorative justice or mediation between the parties where appropriate, and that the issues are not merely resolved by moving one or the other party, if clear inappropriate behaviour in one of those parties had been evidenced. This can perpetuate the behaviour within future roles. | Diocesan Mediation Service to be expanded & deployed as required. External specialist mediation services to be used when appropriate. | Director of Outreach | Diocesan Mediation Service continues, but lead retired from parish role & will now only play limited part in the service (training & casework). New avenues for providing mediation are being explored. Mediation is offered and will be resourced as required. | Amber |
| **3.4** | **Foreign Nationals who are given PTO in the Diocese** |  |  |  |  |
|  | 3.4.1 Continue to implement the mentorship support and ensure appropriate induction and training to reduce the impact of different cultural approaches. | Mentor programme to be reviewed and further developed. | Director of Ministry and Bishop’s Chaplain | Training and support need of foreign nationals varies greatly, requiring assessment on a case by case basis. Triage to be built into process of licensing and deployment. For those moving into PTO ordained ministry, triage and referral to be built into process of granting PTO (including identification of designated persons).Mentor support for new incumbents currently being reframed, alongside action learning sets and provision of pastoral supervision. New process for induction of clergy new to diocese introduced and integrated with IME2 programme from Sep 22. Ongoing training needs to be identified via MDR process.  | Amber |
| **3.5** | **Stalking and Harassment** |  |  |  |  |
|  | 3.5.1 When Clergy members suffer the effects of stalking or harassment they can be profoundly and adversely affected. Stalking and Harassment should be taken seriously within the Diocese with appropriate recording and referral to statutory agencies. Where there is potential for an over reliance on a clergy member by a parishioner, or a concern re any Harassment issue, relevant intervention should be facilitated, and an exit strategy implemented to withdraw the relevant aggrieved party from the individual concerned. | Guidance notes for clergy to be drawn up.  | Archdeacons and Safeguarding Team | Guidance note available from safeguarding team to enquirers. Recommendation that this could also be inserted into Bishops’ Guidelines at a future date.Use of an App being reviewed to increase clergy safety.Harassment also to be covered in the policy (3.3.1). | Amber |
| 3.5.2 Early identification and robust intervention and management is critical. | 3.5.5 to aid this. | Archdeacons | Archdeacons working closely with Safeguarding Team to plan and deliver interventions as appropriate. | Green |
| 3.5.3 Ensuring there is a plan/strategy in place to support either the member of the Clergy and their family or the parishioner to remove them from the area/direct contact. | Bespoke strategy/plan as required | Archdeacons and Safeguarding Team | Dynamic risk assessment as required delivered by Safeguarding Team | Green |
| 3.5.4 Involving the Police when appropriate and necessary. An early visit or harassment warning etc can aid prevention or de-escalation at an early stage. | It is our current practice that Police be involved whenever appropriate. | Safeguarding Team | It is our current practice that Police be involved whenever appropriate. | Green |
| 3.5.5 Training to recognise stalking and harassment and management strategies. Provision of support or signposting to appropriate support for victims/survivors whether members of the Clergy or not. This also applies to offenders who may present with adverse behaviours due to their own vulnerabilities or their inability to understand and recognise personal boundaries. | Training resource to be identified and delivered for Archdeacons, DSA and Director of HR.  | Safeguarding Team& Director of Ministry | Ministry team worked with safeguarding team to deliver pilot training course on safer pastoral practice/ boundaries etc. with Pastoral Workers, Readers, clergy and other church officers. First pilot training event run in April 23, reviewing in light of feedback received. Plan to continue.Trainer identified re stalking and harassment and bespoke course scope commissioned for review by DSA. | Amber |
| 3.5.6 Clergy wellbeing should be brought to the forefront of the Senior Managements priorities. | Regular agenda item at People and Place Meeting. Individual concerns also raised at this meeting. | Bishop’s Chaplain.Clergy Wellbeing Group. | People and Places meeting introduced in 2022 and is working well to ensure clergy wellbeing issues are highlighted and addressed. Wellbeing Group continue to monitor the trends and general concerns. | Green |
| **3.6** | **Clergy Stress Levels** |  |  |  |  |
|  | 3.6.1 There was evidence that individuals within parish based ministry often suffered from stress and work-based anxiety. Long hours, a lack of work / life balance, over exposure to stressful situations and high emotional reliance by the Parishioners is a key factor in Clergy Stress. Clergy wellbeing should be brought to the forefront of the Senior Managements priorities. | To continue to promote Employee Assistance Programme, Diocesan Counselling service, Bishops’ Pastoral Chaplains, Clergy Support Trust etc. | Senior Clergy & HRClergy Wellbeing Group | Part of ongoing wellbeing work; HR director promotes Employee Assistance Programme. Safeguarding Lead Bishop promotes CST regularly via twitter/X. Bishops’ Pastoral Chaplains now used regularly. Good take-up of diocesan counselling & Inter-Diocesan Counselling services. Pastoral supervision pilot training completed, with supervisors now working with supervisees, prior to assessment in July 23.Wellbeing group reviewed Diocesan website and signposting of support resources. IME2 role description includes clearer focus on targeted support for clergy in first incumbencies and moving into new posts. | Green |
| **3.7** | **Financial Abuse/ Financial Exploitation of the Vulnerable**  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 3.7.1 The diocese needs to adopt a policy around the receiving of monetary gifts/ benefacting of wills to clergy members. Transparency needs to be adopted when parishioners are minded to bequest large sums to vicars to ensure said vicars are not of a mind to exploit such individuals in their final months of life. This practice should be built into safeguarding training as, essentially, unacceptable. Clergy, acting in a capacity of servant leaders, should not financially gain from their parishioners. | Bishop’s Guidelines regarding receipt of monetary gifts/ legacies to be written and publicised.Advice to be given to PCCs re declaration of gifts.  | Director of HR, Bishop’s Chaplain and bishops. | Guidance drafted and reviewed by HR Committee and SEG. Approved by Bishop’s Council in Oct 22.Guidance communicated to clergy and parishes via the ebulletin. | GreenGreen |
| **3.8** | **Spiritual Abuse/ Deliverance Ministry** |  |  |  |  |
|  | 3.8.1 The diocese should ensure robust, specialist policies are in place in respect of Deliverance Ministry to ensure the Mental Health Vulnerabilities of the subject, and the exposure of the minister are appropriately (and professionally in the case of the subject) catered for. There should be robust monitoring at strategic level in all Deliverance Ministry to prevent Spiritual Abuse occurring, in particular as the ’subjects’ are by very nature extremely vulnerable. | Deliverance policies to be reviewed. | Deliverance Team Convenor in conjunction with Safeguarding team | Discussion took place at SEG who were reassured re national and local guidance. National Guidance reviewed and reissued. Liaison ongoing between DSA and Deliverance Team. DST attend Deliverance team meetings.Proposal that guidance be included in future Bishops’ Guidelines.Deliverance training package prepared. Training to be delivered in 2024. | Green |
| **4.** | **VICTIMS/SURVIVORS:** |  |  |  |  |
| **4.1** | **Victims/survivors** |  |  |  |  |
|  | 4.1.1Refresh the Survivor Care Strategy and maintain the budget for therapeutic support for survivors. | Strategy to be approved by Bishop’s Council and reviewed regularly. | Diocesan Secretary | Strategy approved at DSAP, SEG and BC in Oct 22. Budget maintained.NST and survivors produced new accessible guide to Responding Well that is available for us to use. | Green |
| 4.1.2 Diocese to ensure that whilst maintaining recently achieved good standards of care for survivors this is not at the expense of the wellbeing of the DSA or other nominated staff, alongside extremely busy roles. We recommend that some of this support is outsourced to relevant support agencies or delegated to those with more capacity to conduct the role.  | Consideration to be given to appointing Regional Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA).Victims/survivors to be signposted to *Safe Spaces.* Directory of external specialist support agencies to be drawn up. | NSTSafeguarding TeamSafeguarding Team | Discussed at NW Bishop’s meeting but no appetite to progress this in advance of NST regional reorganisation. Mapping ongoing of local IDVA and ISVA services across the Diocese. New *Safe Spaces* provider 09/01/23 – details on website updated. Individuals signposted as appropriate.Directory drawn up and included in Survivor Care Strategy. New resources being added to Directory. | AmberGreenGreen |
| **5.** | **LINKS WITH STATUTORY AGENCIES:** |  |  |  |  |
| **5.1** | **Sector Ministry Chaplaincy** |  |  |  |  |
|  | 5.1.1 Improved links and Joint supervisory oversight is required in respect of Licensed Chaplaincy Positions. There is currently a clear gap between the governance of those clergy members employed external to the diocese in other sectors e.g., NHS / universities etc, and the Diocesan governance. In relation to the management of, and response to safeguarding and discipline concerns that arise outside of performance issues, the Diocese has on occasion remained in the dark. During, but in particular on return to ministry within the diocese, there should be a formal handover and information sharing between relevant agencies, as the review has identified that those clearly posing a risk have been re-admitted to the diocese roles due to the lack of knowledge of the Diocese of the safeguarding incidents that have arisen in the previous role. | Protocol to be put in place re links and joint oversight of sector ministry chaplains and also formal handover where applicable. | Archdeacon of Chester and Bishop’s Chaplain | This is also an action being considered at national level.Protocol now in place.Ongoing work with developing new chaplains network; discussion of how chaplains could be offered resources under the new MDR system. | Green |
| **5.2** | **Information Sharing** |  |  |  |  |
|  | 5.2.1 Information sharing was highlighted as a specific barrier to effective multiagency working by the DSA/DSAP. The DSA has built up good working relationship with some statutory agencies and regular consultation and information sharing is ongoing where opinions are freely exchanged. The Police and Probation services as well as the prisons lacked consistency in response and on occasion hindered the Churches ability to adequately manage risk. DSAP membership has been sporadic. It is incumbent on statutory agencies to provide membership to the group in order that effective expedient information sharing can occur. This directly links to good safeguarding practice. | To continue to build effective partnerships with statutory agenciesTo secure Probation Service representation on DSAP | Safeguarding TeamDSAP | Police attend DSAP consistently. DSA furthering operational links. MOU with police forces now in place and effective. Good relationships with LADOs being established on a case by case basis. Range of professional backgrounds of safeguarding team members is bringing more extensive network of professional relationships with other agencies. Probation rep secured from Nov 22. | GreenGreen |
| **6** | **RISK MANAGEMENT:** |  |  |  |  |
| **6.1** | **Parish Safeguarding Officers** |  |  |  |  |
|  | 6.1.1 There is further work to do to strengthen the role and recognise the importance of the parish safeguarding officers by providing appropriate training and support. Continuous professional development is also a factor, and the diocese should encourage PSO’s to take responsibility for their own development as well as undertaking training provided by the diocese. | Menu of CPD options and reading list to be provided for PSOs and refreshed regularly. | Safeguarding Team | All attending induction course are provided with library of most important guidance docs. Broader reading list still to be drawn up and CPD options to be identified.PSO newsletter delayed but first edition sent out in April 23.Ongoing strengthening of PSO network, support and development. | Amber |
| **6.2** | **Training** |  |  |  |  |
|  | 6.2.1 Mandatory Safeguarding Training is vital to Safeguarding provision. The Diocese needs to consider the imposition of appropriate consequences of mandatory training not being undertaken within required timescales. | Licences not issued or renewed without evidence of up to date safeguarding training. Disciplinary action will be taken where appropriate.  | Directors and Bishop’s Chaplain to monitor compliance and ensure follow up  | From Jan 23 clergy applying for posts in this diocese will no longer be interviewed if safeguarding training is not up to date. Work ongoing to chase those whose training is not up to date. Some clergy have been ‘stepped back’ from ministry pending successful completion of overdue training and others have had PTO or licensing delayed.Building training review into MDR process to offer more proactive management of situation and to enable training to be undertake before it elapses. | Amber |
| 6.2.2 Inclusion of available training packages on dealing with sex offenders to be available. Continuing the delivery of Sex Offender Workshops. | Training to be sourced and delivered | Safeguarding Team | Staff turnover in Safeguarding Team impacted this. New appointments made and team capacity now increased from summer 23. The Safeguarding Learning and Development Framework is set by the NST, but local training can be provided in addition. Support and advice is provided to parishes where sexual offenders worship. DST and CSO have attended NST Managing Risk for Offenders training programme. No obvious requirement for bespoke sexual offender management training for clergy or PSOs now that safeguarding team fully staffed and can provide professional advice. There is also joint Diocese and Probation pilot planned re access to worship for sexual offenders.  | Green |
| **6.3** | **Record Keeping** |  |  |  |  |
|  | 6.3.1 This finding was predominant finding of the Independent Reviewers cannot stress enough the critical need to ensure that safeguarding issues are documented well with investigative chronologies and appropriate recording. Without this, safeguarding practice is incomplete, and the organisation is placed in a position of extreme vulnerability. | Additional administrative resource to be provided to Safeguarding Team. National Casework management System to be adopted as soon as it is available. | Diocesan SecretaryDiocesan Secretary | Budget approved for this new role in 2022. ADSA recruitment was prioritised over recruitment of administrator. Recruitment run autumn 2023 but unsuccessful. Rerunning January 2024.Safeguarding Team now documenting issues, actions, decisions fully.National phase 1 roll out of MyConcern complete. Phase 2 is to include the remaining dioceses inc Chester. We should migrate data in Q1 of 2024. Work commenced Aug 23 on paper files preparing them for data migration to MyConcern. | AmberAmber |
| 6.3.2 The recording of information and updates on safeguarding files (or a link to where the information is held) is vital when safeguarding issues are highlighted on paper or digitally. This is regardless of the setting. ‘If it isn’t documented, it didn’t happen’ summarises the position well. This ethos must run through all training in respect of safeguarding training. | Safeguarding Leadership and PSO training to be reviewed to ensure this point is underlined. | Diocesan Safeguarding Team & Cathedral Safeguarding Officer (CSO) | Contact sheet introduced and being used by safeguarding teams in Diocese and Cathedral. ‘Everything to be documented’ is covered in training. MyConcern will be introduced for Diocese and Cathedral in Q1 of 2024 and provide an online case management and recording system. | Green |
| 6.3.3 We recommend the implementation and training on best practice in relation to appropriate recording. It is vital to ensure basic formats are adhered to in recording of specific details and ensure correct terminology. Entries should be signed, and date stamped across church business. | Training to be sourced for the Bishop’s Chaplain and Safeguarding Team. | Diocesan Secretary | Courses on GDPR and also Church document on Blue file management sourced for Bishop’s Chaplain and BMA post.Training and protocols will be provided with National Case Management System (MyConcern) wrt safeguarding records. Safeguarding team paper records are now signed and date stamped. | Green |
| 6.3.4 We recommend that personal files are consolidated, and all duplicates removed, and a single (recommended electronic) filing system, with all information stored securely and in one place should be considered. This would enable themes to be more evident, reduce the risk of duplication or missing information, and would make accessibility easier regardless of geographic location. | Clergy Blue Files can only be in paper form & held securely at Bishop’s House. Safeguarding Records required at Church House where the team are based & access is appropriately restricted. Lay Ministry records to be created and available online from both Church House and Bishop’s House. | Bishop’s Chaplain, Diocesan Secretary and Director of Ministry as appropriate. | Blue Clergy files / Lay Minister files/ HR files and safeguarding files are separate filing systems carrying different information. As such, they need to be kept separate. Lay Minister (Reader and Pastoral Worker) files now created and moved to Bishop’s House.*MyConcern* will address duplication of Cathedral and Diocesan safeguarding records when implemented in Chester in 2024. CMS introduced in the Diocese in 2023 and contains basic information on all clergy, lay ministers and key office holders in the one online system. | Green |
| **6.4** | **GDPR Compliance** |  |  |  |  |
|  | 6.4.1 There was a concern with relation to GDPR compliance within many of the files whereby confidential information referring to an unrelated clergy member was contained within the body of an unredacted document stored within a personnel file belonging to a third party. This process must cease. | The practice of single subject emails and correspondence to be adopted. In exceptions, redaction to take place. | Bishop’s Chaplain and Diocesan Secretary to issue guidance | Where data relating to one individual is stored in a different person’s file, removal & redaction take place. However, it will take a long time to overcome previous bad practice. Appointment to new role at 6.3.4 will support this work. | Amber |
| **6.5** | **The management of filing** |  |  |  |  |
|  | 6.5.1 Security in general around file storage was good. We recommend clear booking in and out processes. | A clear booking out process exists for clergy files at Bishop’s House. Processes to be put in place at Church House and Cathedral for file access. | Diocesan Secretary, Cathedral Executive Director | Already in place at Bishop’s House and Church House. A booking out system has now been implemented at the Cathedral for manual files. MyConcern will resolve this issue in 2024 for electronic safeguarding records. | Green |
| **6.6** | **Safer Recruitment** |  |  |  |  |
|  | 6.6.1 Safer Recruitment Overall, the Diocese has demonstrated a strong commitment to Safer Recruiting protocols. | Maintain this commitment. | Director of HR, Bishop’s Chaplain, Lead Recruiters | Job adverts and application forms for clergy posts updated from Jan 23 to reflect this commitment. Continuing to maintain commitment and advise parishes. In 2024 we will be heavily promoting Safer Recruitment and People Management training to clergy and parishes. | Green |
| 6.6.2 All DBS checks need to be in date and submitted with complete and accurate information to ensure the appropriate level of risk identified. The Review identified where the subjects had minimised blemishes. | To increase the capacity at Bishop’s House and Church House to manage DBS checks well. | Diocesan Secretary, Director of HR, Bishop’s Chaplain  | Additional resource provided to Ministry Team re Lay ministers’ checks & records. Additional temp p/t post also created at Bishop’s House re PTO clergy DBS checks and records. New post created and filled in April 23 at Bishop’s House of a Bishops’ Ministry Advisor (BMA). All blemished DBS checks reviewed by Safeguarding Team. | Green |
| 6.6.3 The Independent Reviewers also have concerns around Volunteers, Lay and Readers as there does not appear to be any central managing system or oversight, many not DBS checked despite their roles often having spontaneous interaction with children and vulnerable people. DBS should be considered for those who have any form of public facing role if there is any possibility of role-blurring that would incorporate contact with children or vulnerable adults within their role. More scrutiny should be placed on this issue, and annual reviews to identify any changes to the remit and nature of the role. | Role of Warden of Readers/Lay Ministry to be reviewed.Central record of Readers and Pastoral Workers and other licensed ministers to be established and maintained. reviewed.  | Director of MinistryDirector of Ministry | Rescheduled to 2023 and Review Group drafted role descriptions for new separate posts of Bishop’s Advisor for Reader Ministry and Bishops Advisor for Pastoral Worker Ministry (both with explicit reference to safeguarding). Roles recruited to in summer 2023. Their first event for licensed lay ministers in Nov 23 included training input on safer pastoral practice.Discernment/selection process for lay ministers redesigned in 2023 - more rigorous interviews and more references. Before interview required to complete Basic Safeguarding Module and read Safer Church document; specifically asked about it at interview. If recommended, do Foundation and complete DBS pre training. During training complete Leadership and Domestic Abuse modules. Link made to SG team. DBS check renewed prior to licensing if not in date.See also under 6.6.2See under 1.2.4 | AmberGreen |
| 6.6.4 The Diocese should ensure that the recruitment process in respect of incoming individuals who have blemishes or who carry a degree of risk are managed appropriately, and these risks are without fail brought to the attention of the DSA for onward risk assessment and management. | Further advice & training to be provided to Lead Recruiters.  | Safeguarding Team | Diocesan HR are able to pick up on blemished DBS checks except where the update system is used. Website FAQs re DBS updated. Safer Recruitment module being promoted to parishes and will be heavily pushed in 2024. | Green |
| 6.6.5 Ensure all implementation from the Independent Safer Recruitment Review are in place. Safer recruitment protocols should be adhered to prior to any licence being permitted. Should a concern be raised, a full rationale should be recorded with regards to decision making.  | This is current practice. | Director of HRBishop’s Chaplain  | Continuing to implement for all employed and volunteer roles in the DBF and clergy appointments. | Green |
| 6.6.6 Ensure any Safe to receive reference is given fully informed – continue with established good practice of the afeguarding team reviewing the Clergy Blue file ahead of the CCSL being written. | This is current practice.Maintain this practice. | Bishop’s Chaplain | Ongoing Clear and accountable process in place | Green |
| **6.7** | **DBS** |  |  |  |  |
|  | 6.7.1 DBS should be managed robustly and recorded on personal files. Recording of DBS and safeguarding training relevant dates should be entered clearly on a person’s personal file, as should reference to any disciplinary issues and an indication to the location of the relevant papers. | This practice is being adopted.  | Bishop’s Chaplain, HR Director, Director of Ministry | New f/t post created at Bishop’s House (Bishop’s Ministry Advisor) – to manage DBS and record keeping for lay ministers and retired clergy. Handover form Ministry Team to BMA completed.HR on target to achieve 3 yearly renewals for licensed clergy by January 2024. | Amber |
| Introduction of CMS allows for accessible online records of DBS dates. | Diocesan Secretary | CMS is now in place & being used in Chester Diocese. Safeguarding training records and DBS dates also now stored and accessible on CMS.Personal files (green files) now in place for lay ministers. Both Green Files and clergy Blue Files will contain details of relevant paperwork relating to any disciplinary procedures.  | Green |
| **6.8** | **CDM** |  |  |  |  |
|  | 6.8.1 The Independent Reviewers witnessed difficulties expressed by those managing working within the confines of the CDM process who felt constrained to be able to safeguard others via suspension of the individual facing investigation. This would seem to suggest that the CDM process may not be fit for purpose, in that it failed to allow them in many cases to safeguard others. Should this be the case, the National Team should review the process and legislation. | Action for the national church | Clergy Conduct Implementation Group to bring Clergy Conduct Measure proposals to General Synod. | CCM progressing through General Synod processes. | Amber |
| **6.9** | **Complaints Procedures** |  |  |  |  |
|  | 6.9.1 When dealing with complaint investigation, the requirement is for the Diocese to be alive to reviewing everything not just in the original complaint material, but all subsequent or prior correspondence or items of information to identify trends, common issues, concerns, and to ensure that safeguarding concerns are not masked or ignored. | Staff managing complaints to be made aware of this recommendation. |  | Archdeacons, Director of HR, Bishops, Dean, Diocesan Sec. all aware. The CSO has sight of all complaints in the Cathedral and Cathedral practice is in line with this recommendation. | Green |
| 6.9.2 This can relate for example to the situation whereby lots of emails are exchanged, but then the final official complaint only contains a summary of the main aspects or events. It is vital not to lose sight of periphery details and safeguarding concerns that may be embedded within the complaint material as there is a tendency to miss these additional safeguarding concerns.  | Staff managing complaints to be made aware of this recommendation. |  | Archdeacons, Director of HR, Bishops, Dean, Diocesan Sec. all aware. The CSO has sight of all complaints in the Cathedral. |  Green |
| 6.9.3 Complaint submission in written form - Ensuring complaints or safeguarding concerns which may come in the form of an informal call, or a letter rather than as part of the formal process are nevertheless given the same rigour of review, investigation, and management by sharing them with the safeguarding team. | To be highlighted in training and PSO support sessions | Safeguarding Team | This is happening.Is in leadership training module qs 4 session 1. Also included in PSO induction. | Green |
| 6.9.4 Simplifying the complaints procedure (CDM) and creating a safe environment in which people feel comfortable and confident in making a complaint. Lack of educational standard or literacy should not be a barrier to complaint making, and safeguarding issues cannot be ‘unseen’ or ‘unheard’ because of the lack of a formal complaint being received. Support should be offered to complete documentation where appropriate to ensure the complaint is raised. | Clergy Conduct Measure proposals to be brought to General Synod.It is our current practice to offer support to complainants. |  | CCM brought to July 2022 GS and progressing through GS processes.  | AmberGreen |
| 6.9.5 The DSA should be an integral part of all relevant safeguarding matters within the Diocese and in her absence or under delegation the Assistant DSA. | This is now our practice.  |  | DSA attends Directors meetings, DSAP, SEG. Member of safeguarding team attends all Core Groups. DSA meets regularly with Lead Bishop for Safeguarding. | Green |
| 6.9.6 The Cathedral will commission a full review of Case files that have not been reviewed by the Independent Reviewers on the commencement of the new CSO as part of her induction to role and in order for her to establish the Current Status of Cathedral Safeguarding. We recommend that this process should again be undertaken with Independence. | Review of files commissioned |  | Under way. Target adjusted to end of 2023 but will run into 2024. Independent review is conducted by CSAG QA members alongside CSO. A few recommendations have emerged from this process and CSO is following up. 70/120 files have been completed so far.  | Amber |
| **6.10** | **DSA Exclusion** |  |  |  |  |
|  | 6.10.1 Historically the DSA was excluded from some safeguarding case management. This is inappropriate. The current DSA had been in post since 2014. The DSA must be the central figure in safeguarding issues managed in the Diocese. | This is our current practice | Lead Bishop for Safeguarding to monitor this with DSA | DSA attends Directors’ meetings, DSAP, SEG. Member of safeguarding team attends all Core Groups. DSA meets regularly with Lead Bishop for Safeguarding and has access to Diocesan and Suffragan Bishops as required. Safeguarding Team work closely and collaboratively with Archdeacons. | Green |
| **6.11** | **DSA wellbeing** |  |  |  |  |
|  | 6.11.1 The IRs have been concerned regarding the workload this individual has maintained sole charge of over a protracted period of time in a large diocese. It has been recognised throughout this report that the work was conducted to a high standard. The Diocese may need to recognise this extraordinary effort, whilst at the same time identifying, as the IR’s have, that this individual is now in much need of some wellbeing support and a period of recuperation. | Recruit additional administrative support and an additional Assistant DSA DSA to be encouraged to access wellbeing support that is available | Diocesan SecretaryDirector of HRLead Bishop for Safeguarding | DSA went on long term sick leave and subsequently resigned. DSA replaced and new ADSA and Dep DSA recruited. Additional ADSA recruited December 2023 and additional administrative role created and being recruited to. Out of Hours Service contracted with 31:8 and used as required. Professional supervision and wellbeing support available for DSA. ADSAs supervised by DSA and offered option of professional supervision. | GreenGreen |
| **6.12** | **Safeguarding Team Resilience and Capacity vital to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults**  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 6.12.1 Successful safeguarding in this Diocese is dependent on the capacity and resourcing capability of the Diocesan Safeguarding Team, and early recognition and referral into that team by those identifying safeguarding concerns. It is also dependant on a top-down strategic culture that recognises and embraces the priority of safeguarding. All issues relating to Safeguarding Children must be overseen by Diocesan Safeguarding Team. | Capacity of the Safeguarding Team to be increased & kept under review | Diocesan Secretary& Lead Bishop for Safeguarding | Team capacity built with new Dep DSA and ADSAs recruited plus additional trainer on contract. Out of hours service bought in as required from 31:8. Team of volunteer trainers and Support/Link workers recruited and trained.Recruitment of additional admin authorised Oct 22 for Jan 23 start but delayed as ADSA recruitment prioritised. Recruiting for admin role December 2023. | Green |
| Change of strategic culture to continue. | Lead Bishop for Safeguarding to monitor this with DSA | Significant evidence of culture change  | Green |
| **6.13** | **Mental Health** |  |  |  |  |
|  | 6.13.1 Continued development of a psychologically safe environment that enables and empowers members of the clergy and staff and church officers to speak out about their mental health, but also to know that support is available. | Continue to develop positive culture. | Director of HR, senior clergy |  | Amber |
| 6.13.2 Early recognition of stress, or the signs of stress, and other mental health concerns in members of the clergy and staff and church officers; understanding and recognition of the circumstances in which mental health can be affected (dealing with death, a trauma etc.). | Promote World Mental Health Day (10 Oct) & associated resources.Increase delivery of Mental Health First Aid & other MH training for clergy and staff. | Director of HR and CommsDirector of MinistryDirector of HR | World Mental Health Day promoted.TLT secured funding to deliver MH First Aid to clergy in 2022. HR arranged for further MH First Aid training in 2023. | GreenGreen |
| 6.13.3 Continue to ensure the Diocese act as a caring employer and look to best practice approaches to employee wellbeing and access to support services such as counselling. | Continue to promote Employee Assistance Programme, Diocesan Counselling service, Bishops’ Pastoral Chaplains, etc. | Director of HR, senior clergy | Employee Assistance Programme continues to be promoted by HR to clergy and staff.Bishops’ Pastoral Chaplains now established and being utilised. Good use of counselling services both in diocese and Inter Diocesan Counselling Service (IDCS). Diocese increased financial contribution to IDCS to secure ongoing service and account for increase in use. | Green |
| 6.13.4 Strategies and training for effective and supportive line management techniques. | Training to be provided for MDR reviewers and line managers | Director of MinistryDirector of HR  | Linked to ongoing review of MDR. New Bishop’s Adviser for Ministerial Development appointed December 2023, to implement new MDR scheme from 2024 onwards. Pastoral supervision programme now implemented and rolling out as resource for licensed clergy. | Amber |
| **7** | **CULTURE:** |  |  |  |  |
| **7.1**  | **Disclosures** |  |  |  |  |
|  | 7.1.1 Ensure the individual making the disclosure (the victim/ survivor) has access to specialist support in relation to the impact of the abuse they disclose.  | Contract with 31:8 Listening Service in place. Safe Spaces project signposted. Funding set aside for specialist support. Signpost to Interim Support Scheme.  | Diocesan SecretarySafeguarding Team | Contract with 31:8 Listening Service maintained. Safe Spaces project signposted. Funding set aside for specialist support. Signposting to Interim Support Scheme as appropriate. Support Persons now trained and awaiting deployment. | Green |
| Consideration to be given to appointment of regional ISVA. | NW Dioceses and NST | NW dioceses discussed but did not progress. This awaits roll out of regional approach to safeguarding oversight. Pilot underway. Mapping local IDVA and ISVA resources and referral routes. | Amber |
| 7.1.2 Ensure the environment in which a disclosure may be made is psychologically safe, this may be during the discernment process, at BAP or during their ministry. | To be included in national training modules and local training | Safeguarding Team & NST | Covered in diocesan safeguarding training. | Green |
| 7.1.3 Through training and advice continue to develop understanding about the handling and managing of disclosures, and particularly an understanding of confidentiality issues. | To be included in national training modules and local training | Safeguarding Team & NST | Covered in diocesan safeguarding training and reinforced in advice from safeguarding team. | Green |
| 7.1.4 Continued top-down support of the importance of safeguarding by the Diocesan Bishop and their senior leadership team. | Continual, repeated messaging  | Diocesan Bishop and senior leadership team | Multiple examples of repeated messaging from the bishops and other key leaders - e.g. foreword to PCR2 summary; podcast re PCR2; responses in Q&A at BC, synods and chapter meetings; introduction of annual Diocesan Safeguarding Service attended by all 3 bishops; letters from lead bishop to PCCs and clergy re expectations; promotion of Safeguarding Sunday; enforcement of training requirements. | Green |
| 7.1.5 Continue to provide support for those who are victims/survivors, including pastoral care and support, to ensure they are safe, and the impact of disclosures is managed. | Maintain this as a priority.Increase knowledge of local specialist support agencies.  | Safeguarding Team | Contract for 31:8 Listening Service maintained. Directory of support agencies compiled and added to as new resources identified. Referrals made to Safe Spaces and access to scheme signposted in communications - e.g. social media, website and individual correspondence. | Amber |
| Maintain adequate budget line.  | Diocesan Secretary | Budget maintained. | Green |
| **7.2**  | **Cathedral** |  |  |  |  |
|  | 7.2.1 Improve collaboration between the Cathedral and the Diocese in order to engage an inclusive working relationship with safeguarding at the heart of its practices. | Redraft MOU between Diocese and Cathedral. | Diocesan Secretary, Cathedral Dean, Lead Bishop for safeguarding | MoU replaced by Partnership Agreement. Continuing to follow information sharing agreements and national guidance. Diocese-Cathedral Safeguarding Partnership Framework sets out the shared working arrangements that are in place under the Partnership Agreement. | Green |
| Develop positive working relationship between CSO and DSA. | Regular meetings scheduled | Regular meetings in place between CSO and ADSA and oversight being provided. CSO now viewed as a valued member of the Diocesan Safeguarding Team and multiple examples of collaborative working. | Green |