

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT CHAIR OF THE SAFEGUARDING ADVISORY GROUP TO CHAPTER

I January 2020 – 31 December 2020

CHAPTER MEETING: FEBRUARY 2021

Introduction and Outline of Report

This report has been prepared for Chapter by Peter Spindler, the independent chair of the Safeguarding Advisory Group (SAG) and provides assurance on how well the Cathedral is performing on the issue of 'safeguarding'. It draws upon data provided by Louise Wilcox, the Cathedral's Safeguarding Advisor (CSA). The following five sections detail how the Cathedral is working to ensure the wellbeing of vulnerable groups and strive for excellence in ensuring the safety of those who may be identified at risk of harm.

This is the fourth safeguarding annual report to be submitted to Chapter and is supported by the register of risks and the up to date action plan, both of which are attached as appendices to this report. Whilst much of the information will not be new to Chapter and the data is an amalgam of that already provided to them by the Cathedral's Safeguarding Lead (CSL), this is a report written for publication in the spirit of openness and transparency adopted by the Cathedral in its approach to safeguarding.

Safeguarding Governance Structures and Resources

The Cathedral has maintained its established safeguarding governance structure throughout a very challenging 2020. The pandemic has impacted significantly on life at the Cathedral which was initially forced to close in March and has subsequently adapted its admissions policy and accessibility for worship in accordance with government guidelines. I am however pleased to report that the momentum of safeguarding has been maintained with the SAG meeting on five occasions during 2020. Unfortunately, and in line with other financial and HR pressures, the CSA has been subject to a nine week period of furlough along with many other key members of staff whilst the Cathedral has been closed. Whilst this was not ideal, there have not been any identifiable lapses in the safeguarding provisions during this period of absence.

A new Safeguarding Lead Canon, the Precentor James Milne, was appointed in the spring and has worked closely with the CSL, currently the Registrar, who exercised general oversight of all safeguarding policy and its implementation across the Cathedral together with the ancillary buildings and grounds and shares oversight of relevant cases with its Choir School. They have been supported for most of the year by the CSA, the Diocese Safeguarding Advisor and me as independent chair of the SAG. I am pleased to report that the CSA's contract was formalised and her full-time position made permanent in October. This is a positive development and helps consolidate the professional safeguarding response adopted by the Cathedral. The only variation to this has been the very pragmatic step taken to work collaboratively with Westminster Abbey and share the CSA resource during the pandemic whilst demand is lower and to cover for maternity leave at the Abbey.

As mentioned above, the SAG met on five occasions, in February, April, July, September and December, the latter four of these were virtual meetings. Attendance has been strong and the debate engaging despite the context in which the group was operating. This process continues to provide a forum for the discussion of issues, sharing of best practice as well as scrutiny, test and challenge on safeguarding matters. The group has considered issues of policy and procedure such as the security of the choir practice room, safeguarding in a pandemic, Past Case Review 2 and the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) Investigation Report into the Anglican Church. The CSA is developing a bespoke response to the 47 issues that can be drawn from IICSA's 172 page report and these will be addressed during the coming year.

Policy and Procedures

The Cathedral's safeguarding processes are set out in the policy document '*Promoting a Safer Cathedral*'. This document was developed in its current format in 2014 and re-published in a revised and updated format in December 2017 having been adopted by Chapter earlier that month. It was modified slightly in 2018 and a more detailed revision was carried out in June 2019. There have been no further changes during 2020 although I anticipate revisiting these once the SCIE audit is completed later this year.

Summary of Safeguarding Activity in 2020

Safer Recruitment – These practices form part of a network of checks and balances which will minimise the possibility of appointing inappropriate individuals to work with those at risk of harm. The Safer Recruitment Policy takes account of the Church of England's policy framework which the National Safeguarding Team is currently re-writing and will be issued in the spring. The Head of HR has recently revised the grid of what training, selection process and vetting level each post holder is required to engage with prior to appointment. This is good practice and will be shared across the Cathedrals' network once finalised.

Vetting and Barring Checks – The Cathedral continues to use U-check for its Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks to verify the suitability of those applying to roles which involve working with people at risk of harm. The following data has been provided for the past year:

- 28 DBS applications were submitted, and
- 28 satisfactory certificates were issued.
- There were no "blemished" returns.
- No returns are outstanding.

No safeguarding plans or risk assessments have been required as part of the safer-recruitment framework.

Training – The national Church of England training framework has undergone significant review in the last year. Courses C0 and C1 are now delivered online; C2 has been expanded and comprises two sessions, additional reading and short written scenarios. C4 has been increased so is now a three session course with learning in between. To underpin the online learning of C0 and C1, the Cathedral requires participants to attend a Zoom session with the CSA after completion of the on-line training, offering the space to discuss their learning and raise any observations or queries. The C3 training has been amalgamated into C2 and the original course disbanded.

In addition to the mandatory national training, the Cathedral provides localised safeguarding training to all pastoral volunteers. The CSA is also exploring the provision of joint, bespoke training for both the Cathedral staff and colleagues from Westminster Abbey. The in house Training and Development Officer (TDO) worked hard during the first eight months to plan the implementation of the safeguarding training courses. She has been well supported by the CSA who has now taken the lead for all safeguarding training after the departure of the TDO in August.

Keeping all staff and volunteers up to date with their training remains a challenge, however I am pleased to report that excellent progress has been made and almost all staff and volunteers were up-to-date with their training by the end of 2020. The move to virtual learning appears to have been a smooth transition. Refresher courses started their new cycle in November 2020 and will continue throughout 2021.

In the last reporting year (2019) there were 131 C0/I courses outstanding, the reduction to 6 is highly commendable. The C2 course for leaders reduced from 13 to 2 awaiting completion. The following table provides a detailed breakdown of the safeguarding training delivered in 2020 and what remains outstanding:

Training	Total Completed 2020	Total to be completed
C0/I Foundation - Required for anyone who has safeguarding responsibilities or has contact with children or vulnerable adults	C0 – 120	6
	C1 - 98	0
C2 - Training Course for people who are in regular contact with children or vulnerable people	14	2 (new joiners)
C3 - Foundation and Leadership Module (safe keeping parishes)	4	1 (course now disbanded)
Specialist - Training Course in response and communication to incidents		
<i>Bomb threat) front of house</i>	28	0
<i>-Violence against women and girls</i>	8	0
<i>-Improving Communicating with Children and young people</i>	8	0
C4 - Management Training provided by NCI	9	4

Safer Recruitment - for recruitment panels for positions working with children and young people	8	14 (courses were cancelled due to pandemic)
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Incident/Concern Reporting – The identification of possible safeguarding incidents, concerns or issues and bringing them formally to notice is a good indicator of the safeguarding culture of an organisation. The Cathedral actively encourages people to speak out when they don't feel comfortable about a situation. Incident/concern reports are submitted by proforma to the CSA for assessment and notification to the safeguarding lead for action. With England being in lockdown for many weeks in 2020 we cannot make a meaningful comparison of reports with previous years. Inevitably, there has been a decrease in reporting this year from 58 potential safeguarding incidents in 2019 to 38 in 2020. These reports can be broken down as follows:

- 29 reports related to adults - 15 were mental health concerns and 14 were adults who were presenting as vulnerable
- 9 concerned children – many on visits and becoming separated from their guardians
- 12 of these incidents were significant and required referral to statutory services
- 2 cases were referred to the Diocese for their oversight and consideration

No safeguarding management plans were required as a result of these incidents. The Dean has maintained his robust stance on this issue having decided that the Cathedral is not an appropriate place for people on plans to be managed, referring them back instead to their home parish for ongoing support. The CSA continues to work with the Virgers and Chaplains to identify a number of regular attendees at the Cathedral who are believed to be vulnerable or have mental health issues. It is concerning that the number of serious mental health presentations has increased from September, after the first lockdown. Indeed by sharing information with other similar institutions in London the CSA has been able to identify two people visiting the Cathedral who may be at risk of harm who also attend other religious settings.

Past Case Review 2 - The Cathedral has fully engaged with the national programme known as Past Case Review 2. The overall purpose of the review is to identify both good practice and institutional failings in relation to how allegations of abuse have been handled, and to provide recommendations to the Church of England that will lead to improvements in its response to allegations of abuse and in its overall safeguarding working practices, thereby ensuring a safer environment for all. This has involved re-visiting personnel files, Chapter Papers and Deans' Papers held at St Paul's to identify any safeguarding past cause for concern involving the clergy or church officers and sharing those with the Diocese for independent review by safeguarding practitioners. To date, the Cathedral has submitted 15 of its past cases for consideration and one of these cases has required a core group to be formed.

Multi Agency Working - The CSA has worked hard to build relationships with other statutory and non-statutory partners throughout 2020. The Cathedral is now making more referrals than ever re the concerns it has identified about those coming to notice. In 2020, nearly a third of incident reports were shared with social services. The CSA has also become a member of the City of London Multi-Agency Practitioners Forum which meets quarterly to share best practice, trends and develop training initiatives.

London Regional Adult Safeguarding Forum – This was initiated by St Paul’s in 2019 and involves colleagues from Westminster Abbey and Southwark Cathedral sharing best practice and examining the links between spiritual and pastoral care with safeguarding. It has not been able to meet during 2020 but there are plans to reconvene early in 2021. This is a useful forum to develop safeguarding responses in a faith context and I would encourage the Cathedral to make regular use of it.

Cathedral Safeguarding Practitioners’ Network – St Paul’s remains an active member of the Cathedrals Safeguarding Network which met at Westminster Abbey in February and has had three subsequent Zoom meetings in 2020. These provide a forum for sharing good practice amongst Cathedral Safeguarding Advisors and offers an opportunity to discuss issues, presentations and challenges as well as providing important networking and support.

Hackney Children’s Choir – A review of the outreach work, including the Hackney Children’s and senior choirs was undertaken by the Cathedral in 2018 and a revised and improved risk management process was initiated in 2019 together with enhanced procedures. These have been complemented in 2020 by a virtual learning policy which informs the way the Choir practises during periods of Covid-restrictions.

Core Groups – The Cathedral currently attends two long running national core groups and is represented at one further group currently managed by the diocese as part of the PCR2 process.

Working with the Diocese – I am pleased to report that the Cathedral has managed to formalise the ongoing safeguarding partnership arrangements with the Diocese of London. A Service Level Agreement (SLA) has been signed by the CSL and the head of safeguarding for the Diocese. Work is underway to develop an Information Sharing Agreement between Cathedral and the City of London Police. The National Safeguarding Team are re-writing the Information-Sharing Protocol between Cathedrals and Dioceses and the SLA will be amended as appropriate once that document has been distributed.

The Truth Project – In last year’s report I notified you that the Cathedral had engaged the Truth Project, established by IICSA to support the Chair of the Guild of Companions. He in turn disseminated information about the Project to Guild Members. The Cathedral has subsequently received some reports of concern about past behaviour which have passed to the Diocese as appropriate and subject to on-going review.

Risk Register

The SAG has continued to manage a detailed 12 point risk register following the Cathedral’s standard format for the management of risk (see Appx A). One new risk was added in 2020 re the pandemic response. The register is linked to the Action Plan and allows for cross referencing of issues between the two documents. One risk remains as red and nine are amber. I am satisfied that all identified risks are being addressed appropriately.

Safeguarding Action Plan

The Action Plan (see Appx B) is designed to drive the business of safeguarding at the Cathedral; it maintains a list of longer term activities underway and is additional to the routine actions arising from the SAG meetings. 31 substantive actions in total have been generated and 24 of these have been completed. The remaining seven are all being progressed and set for completion in 2021.

Key to developing this action plan further will be the audit of the Cathedral's safeguarding arrangements due to be carried out by SCIE in November 2021. It is unfortunate that the original audit, initially scheduled for late 2019, has had to be deferred twice. It is important that the Cathedral uses the coming months to self-audit or peer review its systems and processes to ensure they are best placed to enter the formal audit phase already understanding any potential challenges or weaknesses in its safeguarding framework.

Concluding Remarks

I am pleased to report that the Cathedral's approach to safeguarding has continued to improve and evolve despite the challenges posed by the pandemic in 2020. There is a clear commitment from those I engage with to learn more about the subject and enhance the Cathedral's response to ensure those most at risk of harm are safe to attend and worship at St Paul's. There remain opportunities to build on the existing safeguarding arrangements throughout 2021 and I look forward to the SCIE audit findings later this year.

Peter Spindler
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Safeguarding Advisory Group
January 2021