

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

1 January 2019 – 31 December 2019

CHAPTER MEETING: FEBRUARY 2020

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 recently appointed 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 third 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 and thereby demonstrates the openness and transparency of the Cathedral in its approach to safeguarding.

Safeguarding Governance Structures and Resources

The Cathedral has continued to adapt and enhance its safeguarding governance structure throughout 2019. On behalf of Chapter, the Safeguarding Lead Canon was Tricia Hillas who 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 a part-time safeguarding co-ordinator, the Business Strategy and Governance Officer (BSG)), the Diocese Safeguarding Advisor and me as independent chair of the SAG

The ongoing effort to develop a safeguarding culture has continued to improve with the appointment in November of a professionally qualified social worker as a full time CSA. She has a strong background in both the public and faith sectors and has replaced David Pate who I want to thank for his professionalism and commitment in laying the firm foundations for Louise to build upon. At present the CSA is on a six month contract and I would urge Chapter to consider keeping this role filled into 2021 to ensure any recommendations from the audit, due to take place in November 2020, are implemented.

The SAG met on four occasions, in January, April, July and October, providing 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 such as the response to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) in respect of the Diocese of Chichester; the Church of England National Safeguarding Information Sharing Agreement; the summary

of the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) Cathedrals' Audits and taken feedback from the National Safeguarding Summit which I attended on behalf of the Cathedral. The SAG has been supported by the Safeguarding Working Group which met on an ad-hoc basis to consider issues such as the review of the risk register and supporting the schools and learning department.

Policy and Procedures

The Cathedral safeguarding processes are set out in the policy document '*Promoting a Safer Cathedral*'. This document was developed in its current format in 2014 and was 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, the following subject areas have been addressed as part of this process:

- Revised definition of a safeguarding incident based on advice from the National Safeguarding Team.
- New definitions of unaccompanied children in the Cathedral.
- A better understanding of the Seal of Confession in relation to safeguarding.
- Enhanced procedures for outreach work by the music department with clearer defined roles.
- A revised notification chart is now included in the appendices.
- A more joined up approach with the choir and music department has been agreed with an improved risk assessment process.
- A new photographic policy has been developed and is being closely monitored as it has been a source of contention for some staff while they adjust to the new procedures and strive to ensure no safeguarding issues arise from inappropriate images being captured.

Summary of Safeguarding Activity in 2019

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 HR department continues to ensure that the Cathedral adheres to the national *Practice Guidance: Risk Assessment for Individuals who may Pose a Risk to Children or Adults*. The Safer Recruitment Policy takes account of the Church of England's policy framework.

Vetting and Barring Checks – The Cathedral has been using 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:

- 65 DBS applications were submitted, and
- 64 satisfactory certificates were issued.
- There were no "blemished" returns.
- One return remains outstanding

No safeguarding plans or risk assessments have been required as part of this framework. Additionally, there has been some debate at SAG on the need to vet the vicars choral at a higher level than DBS are prepared to accept and the Cathedral has tried hard to ensure their role is properly understood by others with the aim of raising the vetting level but currently only basic checks are carried out. This will be subject to ongoing review and monitoring by the SAG.

Training - The in house Training and Development Officer works with internal and external colleagues to plan the implementation of the safeguarding training courses provided by the National Safeguarding Team (NST). She has been well supported by the CSC/CSA for specific inputs and they have been very flexible with their working arrangements, for example coming in at weekends to meet with volunteers and other flexible workers.

Keeping all staff and volunteers up to date with their training remains a challenge, however I am pleased to report that good progress is being made and the backlog reducing. In the last reporting year (2018) there were 186 C0/I courses outstanding, this has now reduced to 131 with almost half have dates to attend. The C2 course for leaders reduced from 22 to 13 awaiting completion, eight of whom have places booked. Ongoing work is still required by heads of department to ensure their teams are fully up to date and progress will continue to be scrutinised by the SAG throughout 2020.

The following table provides a detailed breakdown of the safeguarding training delivered in 2019 and what remains outstanding:

Training	Total Completed 2019	Total to be completed
C0/I Foundation - Required for anyone who has safeguarding responsibilities or has contact with children or vulnerable adults	198	131 (incl. 59 who are booked onto upcoming courses)
C2 - Training Course for people who are in regular contact with children or vulnerable people	32	13 (incl. 8 who are booked onto upcoming courses)
C3 - Foundation and Leadership Module (safe keeping parishes)	4	7 (incl. 6 who are booked onto upcoming courses)
Specialist - Training Course in response and communication to incidents -2hr 30mins SCaN training (incl response to Bomb threat) front of house -1 hr bomb threat training -Improving Communicating with Children and young people	52 44 6 2	Vergers (6) are outstanding but will have completed by end of January. They will complete the 2.5hr course.
C4 - Management Training provided by NCI	4	6 (all are 6 booked onto upcoming courses)
Safer Recruitment - for recruitment panels for positions working with children and young people	5	31 (dates have been allocated)

It should be recognised that there will always be a churn with staff and volunteers so there will inevitably be a waiting list for training. I am however pleased to report that the Cathedral has decided that C0/I training is to be a mandatory requirement of passing probation.

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 uses the “Uh-Oh” test and 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. I am very pleased to report that there has been a significant increase in reporting this year from 12 potential safeguarding incidents in 2018 to 58. This is due in the main to the awareness raising work of the safeguarding staff and improved training. These can be broken down as follows:

- 43 reports related to adults – primarily about their mental health
- 15 concerned children – many on school or choir visits or becoming separated from their guardians.
- None of these incidents were significant nor did they require referral to the Diocese for the formation of a Core Group.

The Cathedral is now building a strong evidence base from which it can identify risk and prioritise action to reduce the possibility of harm coming to visitors, worshippers or indeed its staff. The Schools’ and Family Learning Department is actively reviewing its policies to ensure visits are properly briefed and supervised by the body concerned.

No safeguarding management plans were prepared during 2019, indeed the Dean continues to take a 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. Additionally, the new CSA is working with the Virgers to identify a number of regular attendees at the Cathedral who are believed to be vulnerable or have mental health issues and don’t appear to have a home parish to be referred to. The current informal arrangements to safeguard their welfare whilst at the Cathedral may need to be formalised as awareness of this issue improves.

It would be remiss of me not to comment on the tragic loss of life of a young man who fell from the Whispering Gallery in April. This has led to a new initiative by the Cathedral in developing a Suicide Prevention Strategy in partnership with a range of other bodies. We can look forward to seeing the results of this in 2020. The Cathedral should be commended for its swift action in closing the gallery while the matter could be reviewed and also in July, bringing together professionals from the City of London, British Transport Police and academia for a workshop on the subject. This work remains on going and is complimented by a new London Regional Adult Safeguarding Forum, initiated by St Paul’s, inviting colleagues

from Westminster Abbey and Southwark Cathedral to share best practice around the links between spiritual and pastoral care, and safeguarding.

Multi Agency Working/Core Groups

Cathedral Safeguarding Practitioners' Network – In June, the Cathedral hosted a networking event for colleagues from all the Cathedrals in England and Westminster Abbey. They were joined by members of the National Safeguarding Team and it is pleasing to see the Cathedral's willingness to engage and learn from others experience.

Hackney Children's Choir – A review of the outreach work was undertaken by the Cathedral in 2018 and a revised and improved risk management process has been initiated in 2019 together with enhanced procedures.

Core Groups – The Cathedral remains a member of a wider national core group coordinating the response to reports of past abuse by former member of the music department. This has not had a significant impact on the Cathedral and it is hoped matters will be concluded early in 2020.

Working with the Diocese – There remains a need to formalise the ongoing safeguarding partnership arrangements with the Diocese of London. Some months ago, a Service Level Agreement (SLA) was drafted by the Cathedral for discussion with the Diocese safeguarding team but it has still yet to be signed. It is essential that agreement is reached on mutual working practices and what information needs to be shared and when. Nationally, work is underway to develop an Information Sharing Agreement between cathedrals and their diocese but this issue has remained an area of contention and does require resolving as soon as possible.

St Paul's has the benefit of its own qualified and experienced safeguarding advisor so is less reliant on the Diocese than other cathedrals might be however an SLA would be a useful mechanism to ensure both parties are meeting their respective obligations. Furthermore, there is likely to be an increased level of interaction with the Diocese in 2020 as the Church of England undertakes another in depth past case review and with the SCIE Audit of the Cathedral taking place in November.

Risk Register

The SAG has continued to manage a detailed 21-point risk register following the Cathedral's standard format for the management of risk (see Appx A). It is linked to the Action Plan and allows for cross referencing of issues between the two documents. Eleven risk are shown as red and seven are amber. Unfortunately, this register hasn't had the focus at the SAG that I would have liked as other matters have taken priority. I do however remain broadly satisfied that all identified risks are being addressed appropriately and this issue will be focussed on in more depth in 2020 with the help of the new Safeguarding Working Group chaired by the CSA.

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. The Plan was reformatted in 2018 by the BSGO and, to date, 31 substantive actions have been generated and 23 of these have been completed. The remaining eight are all being progressed with clearly defined leads and timescales set for completion in 2020.

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. It was unfortunate that the audit scheduled for late 2019 has had to be deferred due to the Cathedral's engagement with the Truth Project and a significant number of changes in key personnel at the time of the planned audit. SCIE's schedule is tight and it was mutually agreed that re-arranging the visit would ensure a more meaningful engagement.

Concluding Remarks

I am pleased to report that the Cathedral's approach to safeguarding has developed significantly during 2019 and there is good evidence from the activity described above that, at the very least, at senior levels there is a strong commitment to safeguarding. The exponential rise in the reporting of safeguarding issues or concerns is to be celebrated and highlights the good work of many of the frontline staff in bringing their concerns to the fore.

There is growing evidence of a cultural shift in attitudes and the new CSA has brought in a number of initiatives to improve communication and awareness. There is however some more work to be done to fully embed a safeguarding culture and ethos across the whole organisation, for example on issues such as the Cathedral's approach to engaging with regular worshippers believed to be vulnerable. A continued focus on training and awareness raising will ensure that all staff and volunteers play their role in creating a safer organisation. Additionally, the SCIE audit later this year is likely to identify other areas for improvement based on their national review of cathedrals.

I would like to conclude by thanking Canon Tricia for her support and engagement throughout 2019 and wish her all the best in her new role. I look forward to working with her successor in due course.

Peter Spindler
Independent Chair,
Safeguarding Advisory Group
January 2020