

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

I January 2018 – 31 December 2018

CHAPTER MEETING: FEBRUARY 2019

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 the recently appointed Safeguarding Co-ordinator and summarises the work undertaken by the Cathedral to safeguard the vulnerable throughout 2018. The following six 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 at risk of harm. This is the second 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.

Safeguarding Governance Structures and Resources

The Cathedral has continued to adapt and enhance its safeguarding governance structure throughout 2018. On behalf of Chapter, the Safeguarding Lead Canon (the Precentor Michael Hampel) exercised general oversight of all safeguarding policy and its implementation across the Cathedral and its Choir School together with the ancillary buildings and grounds until his departure in the Autumn. However, he relinquished the role of Cathedral Safeguarding Officer (CSO) to the Registrar in the early part of the year leading to a clearer demarcation of roles and responsibilities.

The continued effort to develop a safeguarding culture has been significantly improved with the appointment of two new members of staff. The Business Strategy and Governance Officer (BSGO) has been robust in her management of the various meetings and business processes and is proving invaluable in getting a grip of the governance issues. Secondly, the part-time Safeguarding Co-ordinator (CSC) appointed in September has made good progress in establishing and embedding the safeguarding systems and processes. Both have senior level experience in tackling abuse and will be a real asset to the Cathedral.

The SAG met on three occasions, in January, May and October, providing a forum for the discussion of issues, sharing of best practice as well as scrutiny, test and challenge on safeguarding matters. Meetings have been well attended and the discussions lively. The CSO now provides a report in a standardised format on key areas of performance and the group has revised the safeguarding incident reporting process to allow for better management and understanding of issues that may arise within the Cathedral confines. The group has considered issues such as the report by Sir Roger Singleton on past cases and the newly revised Safeguarding Policy and Procedures from the Diocese of London.

The Safeguarding Working Group (SWG) which supports the SAG by progressing some of the more detailed action points arising from the main meeting met in March, July and November. With this structured approach, we have been able to maintain a steady rhythm throughout 2018 and, in 2019 plan to improve this further by holding four SAG meetings with a themed agenda already prepared and circulated to members by the BSGO.

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 to include the new roles and responsibilities detailed above and is due for further revision in 2019 to take account of developments and learning at a national level.

One of the most significant developments in 2018 has been the comprehensive review of every role performed by staff and volunteers at the Cathedral. A safeguarding matrix has been produced detailing what recruitment process, training requirement and vetting status applies to each individual. This is an impressive piece of work. Additionally, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator attended a GDPR conference at the leading safeguarding law firm Farrer and Co and has subsequently reviewed and implemented a Data Protection Act/GDPR compliant reporting and file handling process.

Summary of Safeguarding Activity in 2018

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 vulnerable groups. Only one application caused concern and was dealt with using a risk based approach.

Vetting and Barring Checks – The Cathedral has been using the Disclosure and Barring Service for background checking for roles which involve working with the vulnerable and moved to a new provider, UCheck, in the late summer. 37 applications were submitted in 2018, and 36 satisfactory certificates were issued.

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) and is now supported by the CSC for specific inputs.

Whilst it remains a challenge to keep all staff and volunteers up to date with their training, I am able to report that progress is being made and the backlog reducing; in the last reporting year (2017) there were 250 C0/1 courses outstanding, this has now reduced to 210 and the C2 course for leaders reduced from 40 to 22 awaiting completion. More work is however required by heads of department to ensure their teams are fully up to date and progress will be scrutinised by the SAG throughout 2019.

Incident Reporting – An updated and revised Safeguarding Incident Report Form was implemented in consultation with the SAG during 2018. It is fair to say that this process has yet to be firmly embedded in the psyche of the Cathedral and timely reporting and recording of incidents has not increased as much as anticipated. That said, in total 12 potential safeguarding incidents were formally reported to the CSO last year compared with three during 2017. There was an even split between vulnerable adults and children. There is now a process in place to capture and share the learning from these incidents. The CSO and CSC are both aware that earlier in the year some incidents were identified and dealt with but colleagues had to be chased for reports demonstrating staff had yet to fully grasp the need to record and formally share the detail. This matter will need continued focus in 2019.

No safeguarding management plans were prepared during 2018, indeed the Dean has taken a robust stance on this issue and decided that the Cathedral is not an appropriate place for people on plans to be managed and will refer them back to their home parish for ongoing support.

In January, I undertook a review of the files held on past cases. Documentary material was available for 18 cases dating back to the early 1980s. Some involved high profile criminal prosecutions one of which is still subject to civil proceedings. A confidential report of my findings was provided to the CSO for her consideration and the 10 recommendations are being addressed by the CSC.

Multi Agency Working/Core Groups – In January 2018, the Cathedral referred two cases to the Diocese. The learning from the handling of these incidents has led to discussions on how the Cathedral can work more meaningfully with the Diocese in the future when addressing such concerns and work is still underway to formalise this through development of a triage system and preparation of a service level agreement.

Resourcing – The recruitment of the two new members staff detailed above has significantly improved resilience and provides meaningful support to the CSO. This will ensure a safeguarding culture and ethos is further developed at the Cathedral and Chapter should be praised for their commitment in resourcing this important part of the Cathedral's business.

Hackney Children's Choir – A significant review of the outreach work undertaken by the Cathedral was conducted in the summer with the support of the Diocese Safeguarding Officer leading to improvements in the risk assessment and management of these activities. This is an important aspect of safeguarding activity outside of the geographical confines of the Cathedral and its choir school and any further similar work in 2019 will require similar support from safeguarding professionals.

Risk Register

The SAG has continued to manage a detailed 20-point risk register following the Cathedral's standard format for the management of risk. It is linked to the Action Plan and allows for cross referencing of issues between the two documents. This process has benefitted from a particular focus by the BSGO who has revised and refreshed the register which is now

more coherent and provides a better reflection of the risks identified. Two risks have been removed (resourcing and incident reporting), three are shown as amber and the remainder are green.

Safeguarding Action Plan

The Action Plan 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 is now much more focussed. To date, 29 substantive actions have been generated and 18 of these have already been completed. The remaining 11 are all being progressed with clearly defined leads and timescales set for completion in 2019. Work has now started to develop a lost child policy for the Cathedral and progress will be monitored through the SAG. This process is a good indicator of how much work is underway by those leading on safeguarding at the Cathedral.

National Issues

The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) is continuing its work and in April published an interim report with 18 recommendations, none of which applied directly to the Church. In November a further request for information by IICSA was made to every Diocese via the National Safeguarding Team. At this stage, there is no evidence to suggest the Cathedral will feature significantly in this and it remains that no one related to the Cathedral has core participant status in the Inquiry.

In February 2018, Sir Roger Singleton provided a report to Synod on the adequacy of the Church of England's past case review. He made nine recommendations and these have been reviewed by the SAG as direct comment was made about Cathedrals. The BSGO produced a grid mapping the SPC response to each recommendation and no further action is required at this stage.

Concluding Remarks

I am pleased to report that the Cathedral's approach to safeguarding has gained momentum in 2018 and the level of activity in the second half of the year has improved commensurate with the staffing allocated to the subject. There is still work to be done to fully embed a safeguarding culture and ethos, reflected in part by gaps in training and the slower than expected take up by staff in identifying and reporting incidents of concern. It may be that the absence of an on-line reporting system has contributed to this. Nevertheless, it is clear that the Cathedral is striving to improve and is making good progress against the Action Plan and in mitigating risk to the vulnerable. Planning for the audit by the Social Care Institute for Excellence in November 2019 is well under way and we can look forward to learning from any observations they may make.

I would like to conclude by thanking Canon Michael Hampel for his dedication and commitment to safeguarding at the Cathedral and look forward to working with his successor in due course.

Peter Spindler
Independent Chair,
Safeguarding Advisory Group
January 2019