

The outcomes of four pilot independent audits into safeguarding arrangements in the Church of England have been published today.

The dioceses of Blackburn, Durham, Portsmouth and Salisbury all volunteered to be part of the House of Bishops commissioned project to take a look at current safeguarding practice. The audits will now be rolled out across all other Church of England dioceses during 2016/17.

The independent audits were carried out by The Social Care Institute for Excellence, SCIE, a charity and leading improvement support agency specialising in safeguarding. SCIE has pioneered a particular collaborative approach to conducting case reviews and audits in child and adult safeguarding called Learning Together focusing on the reasons why things go well, the cause of any problems and solutions.

The audit process in each diocese involved examination of safeguarding leadership arrangements, local policies and practice guidance, the quality of casework, recruitment and training. The auditors also looked at the progress being made in reaching nationally agreed standards informed by central House of Bishops-approved policies.

The National Safeguarding Team has welcomed the pilot overview report and considerations for its future work.

The Bishop of Durham, Paul Butler, lead bishop on safeguarding said: "These audits are part of our commitment to making the Church a safer place for all, ensuring that all dioceses have the best possible practice in place. I commend the four dioceses, including my own, which came forward to be pilots as it is not easy to be the first under the spotlight. We all have lessons to learn. The audits show how each diocese can improve while also commending good practice that is already in place.

"Our policies and practice must start from the place of seeking the very best for all. This includes them being survivor-informed. SCIE's experience in safeguarding will help us to do that. We have published these pilot audits as we are committed to being open about where we have got it wrong and where we need to improve. The pilot process will also inform further improvements in the auditing process itself for the next round. The audits, both individually, and as a whole, will form an important part of our work as the National Inquiry gets underway.

We must always remember that safeguarding exists to enable the Church to ensure that the vast range of work with children, young people, the elderly, disabled and all people are the very best that they can be for everyone who wants to be involved."

Tony Hunter, SCIE chief executive said: "SCIE commends the Church of England for taking such a proactive approach to auditing their safeguarding policies and practice. It's so important that influential organisations - such as the Church - recognise their role in safeguarding children and adults. SCIE auditors were impressed by the openness of staff in the four pilot areas, and their willingness to share and learn. We look forward to continuing to work with the Church of England as we support rollout of their audit process across all dioceses."

Anyone who is affected by a safeguarding issue, particularly in light of today's reports, should feel free to come forward in confidence and they will be listened to. [Details of how to report concerns and find support can be found here](#)

Notes to editors

- [More information on SCIE](#)
- [Report on Blackburn Diocese audit](#)
- [Report on Durham Diocese audit](#)
- [Report on Portsmouth Diocese audit](#)
- [Report on Salisbury Diocese audit](#)
- [Pilot overview report](#)

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