

Overview

The overall aim of this project is to manage and support the transition from the varying arrangements in dioceses to new arrangements which will deliver professional frameworks for supervision and strengthen the quality assurance role for the National Safeguarding Team, (NST), as well as enhancing the quality and consistency of the Church's safeguarding activity across the country.

The recommendations seek to ensure that responsibility and accountability for safeguarding matters lies with experienced safeguarding professionals, and to address the inconsistencies in the supervision and quality assurance arrangements.

Project Workstreams

To achieve these aims the project has been aligned to four interdependent workstreams:

Workstream 1: Change Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor role to an Officer role.

There has been variation with the Church around the distribution of safeguarding responsibilities and accountabilities, including the role of the bishop in this regard, and the overall supervision and quality assurance arrangements for the work of a safeguarding advisor.

The recommendation highlights the need to change the role from Safeguarding Advisors to Safeguarding Officer, who will have independent responsibility for and oversight of key safeguarding tasks, and whose work will be professionally supervised, and quality assured by the National Safeguarding Team (NST). The diocesan bishop will retain the responsibility for suspension of clergy and licensed lay ministers.

The recommendation only refers to diocesan arrangements, as the diocesan role is a statutory role which is prescribed in Church of England Canons and House of Bishops Regulations. However, where appropriate during the pilot project, we will offer the same professional supervision and other forms of support to the Cathedral Safeguarding Advisors/Officers as that provided to Diocesan Safeguarding Advisors.

Workstream 2: Piloting the regional and central safeguarding support models.

Proposals for a regional safeguarding model have been discussed over recent years with a range of different views being put forward. This project offers an opportunity to pilot the regional model as a means of supporting the delivery of IICSA recommendation 1. To understand the respective benefits and disadvantages of the regional support model, a central model of support will also be trialled for comparison. The most suitable model, or elements of each model, will be applied when the recommendation 1 changes are agreed and adopted nationally.

Additionally, the aim of the workstream is to explore further opportunities for regional activities such as joint commissioning, peer review, victim and survivor engagement, and group supervision, amongst others.

Workstream 3: National Safeguarding Standards, Quality Assurance framework and independent audits

Independent audits

We have concluded the final phase of the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) audit work and reports on cathedrals. The workstream is now working with stakeholders to procure a new audit provider. Each geographical diocese and cathedral will be jointly audited and it is anticipated that the all the audits will be concluded in 5 years. This will ensure this important area of work continues at appropriate intervals and addresses IICSA recommendation 8.

Quality assurance framework

To improve the safeguarding practice across the Church, we will develop the National Safeguarding Standards (currently in draft form) which will include ‘what good looks like’ indicators and implement a quality assurance framework to ensure these standards are met.

In summary the aim of this workstream is to define and build a collective understanding of what good safeguarding practice looks like in the standards, and to design a method to measure the extent to which a church body has met the standards through the quality assurance framework and independent audit.

Workstream 4: The safeguarding function and resourcing model

Presently, resources allocated to safeguarding work in dioceses and cathedrals are determined locally and vary considerably, contributing to inconsistencies in the breadth and quality of safeguarding services and responses. With increasing financial pressure on the Church following the pandemic, it is even more important that resource requirements are assessed and protected, to ensure that dioceses and cathedrals are suitably equipped to meet the safeguarding standards, to deliver high quality safeguarding practice, and ultimately to provide a more consistent experience and response for victims and survivors.

In summary the aim of this workstream is to develop a resourcing methodology that could assist dioceses and cathedrals to determine proportionate safeguarding resources for their individual setting.

Project timetable

Contact us

The delivery of this project is supported by a dedicated team who can be contacted on the project generic email:

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Source URL: <https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-programme/iicsa-1-and-8-regional-model-pilot>