

NST Response to the Review of the Implementation of the Church of England Safeguarding Training and Development Framework Report.

The [National Safeguarding Steering Group](#) has [received this independent report](#). The [Safeguarding Training and Development Practice Guidance](#) was published and formally introduced across the national Church in January 2016. In 2017, an internal review of the framework was completed in order to add clarity to the requirements contained within and a further review was scheduled for 2018. Prior to reviewing the framework for the second time, the National Safeguarding Team commissioned an independent associate, Eleanor Stobart, to conduct an independent review to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the Training and Development Framework on safeguarding across the national Church (England).

In order to complete the review, questionnaires were sent out for completion by all dioceses, cathedrals, theological education institutions (TEIs) and religious communities. The questionnaire included a number of quantitative questions as well as seeking some qualitative information. Respondents were asked about the number of trainers (paid and voluntary) that were in their service, how many church officers have attended training and how many still require training. There were questions about the safeguarding arrangements between dioceses, cathedrals, religious communities and TEIs. Respondents were also asked to outline the barriers they faced in implementing the Framework as well as setting out what was working well. Respondents were asked about the impact of safeguarding training and whether training modules had been adapted or combined. In all 146 questionnaires were sent and 122 were returned (84%).

In addition to the questionnaires, a number of dioceses were identified in which to hold individual meetings and focus groups, selected on the basis of a range of diverse factors such as urban, rural, population size, and geography. The diocesan safeguarding advisor for each of the dioceses was asked to arrange a programme of meetings with a wide range of individuals from both the diocese and the local cathedral. The purpose of the meetings was to gather qualitative data that would complement and reinforce the information gathered from the questionnaires. The meetings also provided an opportunity to gain further information about other aspects of the safeguarding training e.g. preferences in mode of delivery, understanding of policy and the confidence of individuals to use the knowledge that they had gained. Questions were also asked about commitment to safeguarding, cultural change and whether there were any specific barriers to implementing the Framework.

Between July and September 2018, the project lead visited a total of nine dioceses.

In summary, the report identifies that there is no doubt that the introduction of the safeguarding Training and Development Framework has been a necessary part of standardising safeguarding across the national Church and that safeguarding training needs to continue. The review established that Church officers who have attended training are sure that the training has equipped them to confidently develop and maintain safe practice. The Church officers who participated in the review felt that they had a good understanding of

their safeguarding duties and responsibilities as set out in practice guidance. Anecdotal evidence gathered during the review shows that discussions between Church officers and Diocesan Safeguarding Advisors (DSAs) have increased and that there are good working relationships between DSAs and the statutory agencies. The consensus from participants in the review is that things are beginning to change. There is a greater focus on safeguarding. People are beginning to understand that it is something that affects children, young people and adults who are vulnerable. There is certainly a greater understanding that any adult can be vulnerable at certain times during their life e.g. following a bereavement, illness or family breakdown. There is also a better understanding that this is not always about sexual abuse, there are other types of abuse such as neglect, financial abuse or abuse of power. There is also the realisation that safeguarding training is not a one-off event and both the focus on safeguarding and the safeguarding training are here to stay.

Despite all this improvement however, those participating still considered that it would take many years, to change the culture of the Church. Participants felt that we are a long way from seeing a Church where men and women are equal, where there is less deference to those in power and where everyone's voice is heard and respected equally. Participants felt that until some of these changes are ingrained, safeguarding will remain on the periphery.

Five recommendations were identified as a result of the review undertaken. The National Safeguarding Steering Group has noted those recommendations. The National Safeguarding Team is already working towards their implementation.