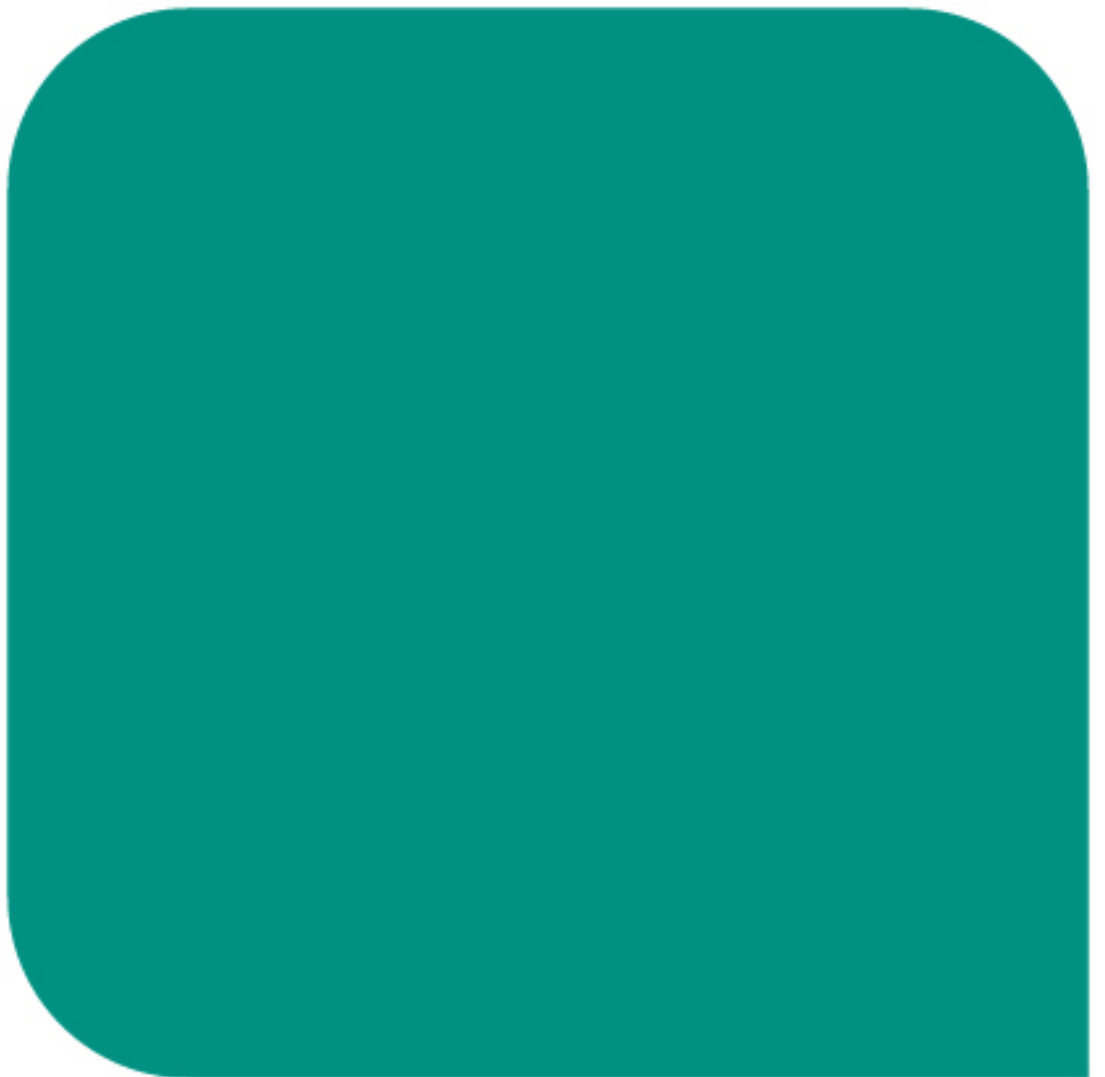




social care  
institute for excellence

# **Rochester Cathedral independent safeguarding audit (September 2019)**



The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) improves the lives of people who use care services by sharing knowledge about what works.

We are a leading improvement support agency and an independent charity working with adults', families' and children's care and support services across the UK. We also work closely with related services such as health care and housing.

We improve the quality of care and support services for adults and children by:

- identifying and sharing knowledge about what works and what's new
- supporting people who plan, commission, deliver and use services to put that knowledge into practice
- informing, influencing and inspiring the direction of future practice and policy.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 THE AUDIT PROGRAMME

The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) is conducting an independent audit of the safeguarding arrangements of the cathedrals of the Church of England. This programme of work will see all the Church of England's cathedrals audited between late 2018 and early 2021. It represents an important opportunity to support improvement in safeguarding.

All cathedrals are unique, and differ in significant ways from a diocese. SCIE has drawn on its experience of auditing all 42 Church of England dioceses, and adapted it, using discussions and preliminary meetings with different cathedral chapters, to design an audit methodology fit for cathedrals. We have sought to balance cathedrals' diversity with the need for adequate consistency across the audits, to make the audits comparable, but sufficiently bespoke to support progress in effective and timely safeguarding practice in each separate cathedral.

## 1.2 ABOUT SCIE

The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) improves the lives of people who use care services by sharing knowledge about what works. We are a leading improvement support agency and an independent charity working with adults', families' and children's care and support services across the UK. We also work closely with related services such as health care and housing.

Safeguarding is one of our areas of expertise, for both adults and children. We have completed an independent safeguarding audit of diocesan arrangements across the Church of England as well as supporting safeguarding in other faith contexts. We are also committed to co-producing our work with people with lived experience of receiving services.

## 1.3 THE AUDIT PROCESS

### 1.3.1 SCIE Learning Together and our approach to audit

SCIE has pioneered a particular approach to conducting case reviews and audits in child and adult safeguarding that is collaborative in nature. It is called **Learning Together** and has proved valuable in the adults' and children's safeguarding fields. It built on work in the engineering and health sectors that has shown that improvement is more likely if remedies target the underlying causes of difficulties, and so use audits and reviews to generate that kind of understanding. So Learning Together involves exploring and sharing understanding of both the causes of problems and the reasons why things go well.

### 1.3.2 Key principles informing the audit

Drawing on SCIE's Learning Together model, the following principles underpin the approach we take to the audits:

- Working collaboratively: the audits done ‘with you, not to you’
- Highlighting areas of good practice as well as problematic issues
- Focusing on understanding the reasons behind inevitable problems in safeguarding
- No surprises: being open and transparent about our focus, methods and findings so nothing comes out of the blue
- Distinguishing between unique local challenges and underlying issues that impact on all or many cathedrals

### 1.3.3 Supporting improvements

The overarching aim of each audit is to support safeguarding improvements. To this end our goal is to understand the safeguarding progress of each cathedral to date. We set out to move from understanding how things work in each cathedral, to evaluating how well they are working. This includes exploring the reasons behind identified strengths and weaknesses. Our conclusions, will pose questions for the cathedral leadership to consider in attempting to tackle the underlying causes of deficiencies.

SCIE methodology does not conclude findings with recommendations. We instead give the Cathedral questions to consider in relation to the findings, as they decide how best to tackle the issue at hand. This approach is part of the SCIE Learning Together audit methodology. The approach requires those with local knowledge and responsibility for progressing improvement work, to have a key role in deciding what exactly to do to address the findings and to be accountable for their decisions. It has the additional benefit of helping to foster ownership locally of the work to be done to improve safeguarding.

### 1.3.4 The process

The process will involve reviewing documentation as well as talking to key people, including focus groups. Further details are provided in the [Appendices](#).

The site visit will be either three days or 2.5 days. Cathedrals have been selected for the three-day audit to provide a broad base, or on the scale of an operation and/or where concerns may have been raised in the past for cathedral or diocese.

## 1.4 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

This report is divided into:

- Introduction
- The findings of the audit presented per theme
- Questions for the Cathedral to consider are listed, where relevant, at the end of each Findings section
- Conclusions of the auditors’ findings: what is working well and areas for further development
- An appendix sets out the audit process and any limitations to this audit

## **2 CONTEXT**

### **2.1 CONTEXT OF THE CATHEDRAL AND DIOCESE**

Rochester Cathedral sits in the south west corner of the medieval walled city of Rochester, close to Rochester Castle.

The Cathedral, founded in 604 AD, is the second oldest of England's cathedrals. The present building dates back to the work of the French monk, Gundulf, in 1080. It serves as the central focus of the Christian worship and mission in the Diocese of Rochester.

As well as functioning as a working cathedral, it opens its doors as a tourist attraction, community and education centre 365 days each year. Its exceptional architecture, archaeology and collections mean that over 150,000 people make visits each year. It is the most visited free-to-enter attraction in the south east of England.

Extensive consultation with the community has identified a great strength of feeling and affection for the Cathedral. Local people value it as a community space and as part of their heritage.

### **2.2 CONTEXTUAL FEATURES RELEVANT TO SAFEGUARDING**

Rochester Cathedral is located in an area of north Kent which is relatively densely populated, but where overall incomes as well as job opportunities are lower than in other parts of Kent. More than 20 per cent of the children in the local area live in poverty.

The Cathedral has worked hard to build on its reputation as an ancient heritage site of high national importance to develop its commercial activities. This is to keep the Cathedral free of charge to all who wish to visit, to secure sufficient funding to look after the fabric of the building and also to develop its sustainability and financial resilience to extend and grow its mission.

The Chapter consulted widely before publishing its Development Plan 2018–22, which sets out the five key areas of primary focus and 'provide a springboard for future development'. Ensuring that the Cathedral is a safe space for everyone, especially for children, young people and vulnerable adults, is an explicit and integral aspect of the plan.

All the boy choristers and a number of the girl choristers attend the King's School, which is sited adjacent to the Cathedral. The School and the Cathedral are working to align their procedures and practices to ensure consistency for the children. This is more challenging to achieve for those girls who attend schools elsewhere.

A previous assistant director of music at the Cathedral was jailed in 2014 for a sexual offence against a child. The latter matter had precipitated a visitation by the Bishop of Rochester, focused on safeguarding, which had led to a report and a number of recommendations for the Cathedral in March 2016. These were in the



process of being implemented when the Cathedral's Director of Music was arrested in November 2017 for a sexual offence against a child which occurred in his previous post at Ely Cathedral. In September 2018 he was re-arrested for further offences at Ely and for offences during his time at Rochester. He was convicted and sentenced to imprisonment in August 2019, a few weeks before the audit began. He had, meanwhile, resigned his post, and after an interim Director of Music had been in place for the academic year 2018/19, the newly appointed Director of Music took up her post in early September 2019. These events have inevitably had an enormous impact on the entire Cathedral community which will likely continue for some time.

The leadership of Rochester Cathedral has changed almost entirely since the Bishop's Visitation. The current Dean was appointed in June 2016. The Dean was the former Canon Pastor at the Cathedral and served a period as Acting Dean before his formal appointment as Dean. The two Commissioners' Canons (the Canon Precentor and the Canon for Mission and Growth) were appointed in 2017, as was the Chapter Clerk, who functions as the Cathedral's Executive Director.

## **2.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE SAFEGUARDING STRUCTURE**

The House of Bishops' Practice Guidance *Key Roles and Responsibilities of Church Office Holders and Bodies* (2017) makes it clear that the role of the Dean is to provide leadership concerning safeguarding, and to encourage everyone to 'Promote a Safer Church'. In Rochester, whilst the Dean provides the overall leadership for safeguarding, the Canon for Mission and Growth (who has recently left) was given lead responsibility for safeguarding within Chapter, and a lay member chairs the Cathedral Safeguarding Group (CSG). A new Canon is to be appointed, and will have safeguarding responsibilities as an integral part of their role and responsibilities.

The Dean attends the Bishop's Safeguarding Advisory Panel, which is independently chaired and has the responsibility, on behalf of the Bishop, for holding both the Diocese and the Cathedral to account for its safeguarding arrangements. The Chapter Clerk attends the Diocesan Safeguarding Executive Committee, which is a more operational group.

All three of these groups are comparatively new in their current form, and are still developing their roles and ways of operating.

## **2.4 WHO WAS SEEN IN THIS AUDIT**

The audit involved reading key documentation and talking with people either individually or in focus groups. Conversations were held with the Dean, the Canon Precentor, the Chapter Clerk (who was the audit liaison person), the Cathedral's Safeguarding Officer (who holds the same role in the Diocese), the Principal of the King's Preparatory School and a range of employed and voluntary lay and ordained people with a safeguarding role in the Cathedral. Focus groups included staff, volunteers, choristers, choir chaperones, lay clerks, and parents of children who sing in the Cathedral choirs. A telephone conversation was held with the Bishop of Rochester. A more complete list is in the appendix.

No individual came forward to speak with auditors who had previously disclosed abuse, shared concerns, or expected help from the Cathedral to keep safe for any reason. However, one individual who had experienced abuse within their family was very positive about the support they had received from the Cathedral Safeguarding Officer and others.

The audit was well planned and organised with very good attendance and engagement by parents of children involved in the life of the Cathedral, volunteers and staff members.

More details of the audit process are given in the Appendix.

#### **2.4.1 Any limitations to audit**

The auditors were not able to arrange access to the single Clergy Blue File which was relevant to the audit.

The auditors did not speak with anyone directly involved with children in the Cathedral other than choristers. Relevant information was sought in the days following the site visit.

## 3 FINDINGS – PRACTICE

### 3.1 SAFE ACTIVITIES AND WORKING PRACTICES

Church of England policy is that the care and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults involved in Church activities is the responsibility of the whole Church. Everyone who participates in the life of the Church has a role to play in promoting a safer Church for all.

As part of its commitment to reaching out beyond the Cathedral community, Rochester Cathedral welcomes family groups, school children and students of all ages, abilities, cultural and religious backgrounds. It offers a range of opportunities, both formal and informal, to enhance their experience and understanding of the Cathedral.

In Rochester, the auditors found that a great deal of thought and care has been given to ensuring that the Cathedral is open, safe and welcoming to all. Where problems have arisen or shortcomings been identified, rapid and effective action has been taken to address them. Access arrangements are clearly indicated on the Cathedral's website, as are services and events aimed at specific groups, such as those with dementia.

#### 3.1.1 Children

This section is about children who come to the Cathedral in various capacities other than as choir members. Choirs are referred to in the next section.

##### *Description*

Children and young people come to Rochester Cathedral as members of the congregation, on school and other organised visits (such as family learning days), as servers, as attendees at the Sunday Club, and as visitors.

The Education Officers and their team of volunteers organise and oversee visits by schools. School visits account for the majority of children coming to the Cathedral as part of an organised visit, with 12,000–14,000 visiting each year during term time. The Cathedral itself is used as 'the classroom', and the team work to make visits a highly interactive learning experience. The school staff remain responsible for safeguarding at all times, including having an appropriate staff/adult to child ratio, whilst Cathedral staff and volunteers are clear that their role is to facilitate the visits. The Education Officers, who are both former teachers, provide information about safeguarding and other relevant matters to the schools, including information to inform their risk assessment. This documentation has recently been reviewed.

Visiting groups are expected to book in advance and sign in and out. Care is taken by the Education Officer, in conjunction with the Head Verger, to ensure that there are not more groups or visitors than can safely be managed in the building, and some who have not made advance arrangements have been refused entry if safeguarding requirements are not met. The education team has worked to build a positive relationship with international summer schools in the area as well as tour management companies, so that all have a positive and safe experience.

The introduction of 'Artifax' software has been a significant assistance in managing safely and efficiently this aspect of activity within the Cathedral.

There are two young people under 18 who are servers in the Cathedral, as well as one vulnerable adult. They are supervised by the head server or his deputy, both of whom are DBS-checked and have completed safeguarding training up to level C2. The other adult servers in the team are recruited and trained in accordance with protocols that apply to all other volunteers at the Cathedral.

Either the Head or Deputy Server (or both) is on duty when the children servers are present, and their parents are also present in the service. When the vulnerable adult server (who is over 18) is on duty, their mother and/or the Head Server accompany them in the server team.

The Sunday Club meets every Sunday morning during term time, at 10.30am in the Ithamar Chapel and includes children from birth onwards. In 2018 it had over 40 active regular members, an average weekly attendance of 15–25 children, and contact with over 30 families. Both regular and less frequent attenders are expected to register their children, and provide important information about any special needs a child might have, any known allergies, etc. Children are split into three different age groups, with sessions run by a team of volunteers who are all DBS-checked. The session ends with the children being escorted to Communion, after which they sit with their parents until the end of the service.

Parents of children under 10 years of age are expected to stay on the Cathedral premises. In exceptional circumstances where parents need to leave the Cathedral they are required to discuss and agree this beforehand with the Sunday Club leader on duty.

The role of the children's representative includes an expectation that they will represent children and their views on CSG. There is a similar expectation of the representatives for vulnerable adults. It is not clear how they are enabled to achieve this aspiration.

### *Analysis*

The auditors were impressed with the mutual respect and close working between the education team, the vergers and the volunteer welcomers which results in the Cathedral being managed as safely as possible for children and young people. This systematic and thorough approach would be further strengthened by the addition of practice guidance regarding lost children. Whilst everyone spoken to was able to articulate what they would do if concerned that a child had become separated from their parent or carer, there was not a consistency of approach nor a designated safe space for a child to be cared for until reunited with their parent.

There are notices prominently displayed throughout the Cathedral about not taking photographs of children and it is actively discouraged by the verger team, the Education Officer, staff and volunteers throughout the building. The Cathedral's website makes it clear that no photographs are permitted during services and rehearsals.

Arrangements and practice guidance in respect of the Sunday Club appear to be consistent with good safeguarding practice, although the auditors did not have an opportunity to discuss this with volunteers from the Sunday Club.

Practice regarding the child servers also appears to be robust. Auditors understand that there is a plan to develop a written protocol for child servers. There is an action point on the CSG agenda to codify before the end of the year a written protocol for under-18 servers which will include practice guidance in respect of issues such as robing (the servers robe in the small sacristy off the South Quire Transept, and have been asked to keep the door open). This would be a helpful development.

#### **Questions for the Cathedral to consider**

- Would the introduction of a procedure in respect of lost children be a useful addition to the Cathedral's safeguarding policy and procedures?
- How might the representatives for children and vulnerable adults be supported and enabled to obtain the views and feelings of those they represent?

### **3.1.2 Choirs**

#### *Description*

Rochester Cathedral has both a boys' choir and a girls' choir; each of which can have up to 20 members. Boys join aged eight and stay until the end of year 8 (aged 12/13). All the boys attend the King's Prep School as day pupils. The boys' choir rehearse in school before lessons commence on four weekday mornings (Wednesday excepted) at 7.35am, and sing evensong following a rehearsal after school in the Cathedral on three weekday evenings. The boys also rehearse and sing three services on alternate Sundays.

Girls join the girls' choir aged 10, and usually leave aged 15. Some of the girls also attend the King's Prep School (up to year 8) or King's Senior school (year 9 and above); several attend other schools in the area. All live at home with their families. The girls have a lighter schedule than the boys; they rehearse and sing evensong in the Cathedral on Mondays and Fridays. They alternate with the boys' choir in singing services on a Sunday.

Both choirs regularly sing services with the adult choir, which has recently been restructured to include six principal lay clerks (five had been appointed at the time of the audit), all of whom are DBS-checked, and a pool of 20–25 deputy lay clerks, who are not required to have DBS clearance.

In addition to the weekly pattern of services, there are various annual services and events at the Cathedral at which the choirs will sing.

The Director of Music and the Assistant Director of Music work closely with the Headmaster of King's Preparatory School to ensure that they have a consistent approach to safeguarding and behaviour management, and that parents as well as children have a clear understanding of how their children are safeguarded and looked after.

Picking-up and dropping-off arrangements are very clearly specified. The boys are dropped off at school each morning by their parents, and picked up from the Cathedral after Evensong on days when they sing. Girls not at King's are dropped off by their parents at the Cathedral before evening rehearsal, and then picked up by their parents from the Cathedral after the end of Evensong. There are similarly clear arrangements on a Sunday. Some older girls, with permission, come and go by themselves. Choristers walk the short distance between the Prep School and the Cathedral, accompanied and supervised by music department staff.

Choir parents meet with the Canon Precentor, the Director of Music and the Principal of the King's Prep School at the beginning of each term. The focus of these meetings is the schedule for the coming term and any issues or questions parents may wish to raise. The Choir Handbook is a comprehensive document in which safeguarding is very prominent. Procedures and expectations are clearly explained and lessons from previous incidents incorporated. The Handbook includes a consent form for information sharing and also the taking and use of photographs.

Choir chaperones are all volunteers, and many are also choir parents. They have a (very recently updated) role profile which makes clear that their role is one of supervision and support; they are not responsible for the management and discipline of choristers. They supervise the choristers for rehearsals, services, events and trips when they are not under the supervision of the King's Prep School staff on school premises and are responsible for signing choristers in and signing them out into the care of their parents. All now receive an induction which includes 'shadowing'.

There is a proposal in place to strengthen chaperone arrangements further by recruiting to the newly established position of Chorister Tutor, who would be a member of staff at the King's School. This will be in addition to the current system of volunteer chaperones. The focus of the role is promoting the wellbeing and safeguarding of the choristers at Rochester Cathedral. The post-holder will have responsibility for the chaperone rota and ensuring the chaperoning of all rehearsals, services, events, performances and trips.

In addition to the boys' and girls' choirs, there is a children's choir which was launched in the autumn term of 2015 as part of the Cathedral's outreach to local schools. This choir largely operates separately from the Cathedral Choir, although they do joint performances from time to time. The Director of the Children's Choir is line managed by the Director of Music. The choir is free to join for any boy or girl, aged 7–13, who lives in the Medway area, and rehearses weekly during the evening. The conductor is DBS-checked and has completed safeguarding training to level C2. The choir gives a concert each term and sings at occasional services in the Cathedral. Chaperones, who are recruited and trained following similar protocols as for chorister chaperones, are present at every rehearsal and concert.

### *Analysis*

All Cathedral choirs raise a number of potential safeguarding issues. Young children, sometimes away from home, working towards a highly prized goal all add to the potential for choristers to be groomed by people in positions of trust within the choir context. Additionally, the demands of regular public performance can be in tension with child welfare requirements and expectations.

The recent history of Rochester Cathedral's music department has meant that this is the area which has had the most attention with respect to safeguarding procedures and practice. As a result, there is a comprehensive range of procedures and practice guidance which are thought through and consistently implemented. These cover such areas as signing in and out and chaperoning. Trips and tours are now arranged with reference to the King's School Educational Visits Policy and the old Cathedral Tours Policy is now obsolete.

The shared responsibility for safeguarding and close working between King's Prep School and the Cathedral is very good and has resulted in some thoughtful changes which have benefitted the boys, in particular. The decision to move the morning rehearsal for the boys' choir to take place in school has been very positive for the boys and their parents, and means that this part of the day is more safely managed and less stressful for the boys. The recently revised process for systematic signing in and out of choristers, and the introduction of a means of recording incidents and concerns, were observed by the auditors to be working well.

Physical limitations within the Cathedral itself, including rehearsal spaces and access to toilets, are recognised and are being managed, and further measures which can be taken to limit public interaction with the choristers immediately before Evensong have been identified. Plans are under development to address these physical limitations properly once resources are available.

The weekly meeting between the Director of Music and the Principal is a good innovation and ensures that there is systematic oversight of the wellbeing of every child, including through scrutiny of the chaperones' notes. At present, there are no formal notes kept of these weekly meetings; both participants keep their own notes. In the view of the auditors, it would be good practice to formalise these in order that there is a clearer record which can be reviewed if needed. The system would also be more transparent from the perspective of parents and provide the basis for more focused discussion where needed.

Plans for the next stage in the development of the choirs are thoughtful and comprehensive and demonstrate continuing joint commitment by the Cathedral leadership and the King's Preparatory School to the safety and wellbeing of the choir children.

### *The children*

Choristers from both boys' and girls' choirs were very clear that 'we go to choir because we want to sing.... we learn so much ....such an amazing experience' and that 'we're tired sometimes but we never dread it..... you get through by doing it together'. They were conscious of being part of a very special community, and that 'friends in choir are friends for life'. They enjoy the trips that are organised, both local and abroad. They appreciated having a 'really nice caring buddy' when they first start as a probationer, who can help them understand what is required of them. All said they felt safe and well looked after as choristers, with plenty of adults around them to talk with.

They commented also on how hectic their lives are at times, that adults around them 'need to understand tired' and how they are conscious that they 'miss a lot of stuff'

through being so committed to the choir. For the girls who do not attend the King's School, this is a particular issue. The girls, however, feel that they are well able to speak out – 'we make sure they know our ideas!' – but the boys spoken with by the auditors indicated that they feel less able to influence what is happening. This may be a reflection of their younger age but is something to be aware of.

The choristers explained that it was important to them that '*rehearsals should be fun*'. In discussion, one of the things that had a negative impact was poor behaviour and discipline. They did acknowledge that this was more of an issue in the boys' choirs, and said that at times '*none of us behave very well*'. Whilst the auditors understand that much has been done to address this, and that the responsibility for management of discipline and behaviour is widely understood to sit with the Cathedral staff (when the children are not in school), this is still an area of concern for children, parents and chaperones.

Decisive steps have been taken in the last two years to address what was experienced by some to be a culture of bullying and favouritism in the boys' choir, in particular, and the role of Head Chorister has been discontinued in favour of awarding the title of 'Dean's Chorister' to all choristers in their final year. This was a disappointment to some of the boys who had been aspiring to the position of Head Chorister, and was not supported by all parents. Whilst the children broadly agreed with the change, they did not fully understand the reasons for it, commenting that 'they came up with so many reasons to stop it we don't know which was true'. In the view of the auditors, this was a positive move which was undertaken for the right reasons, but more could perhaps have been done to explain and minimise the impact on those who were most affected by the change.

### *Choir parents*

Parents who spoke with the auditors were conscious of both the opportunities for their children and the commitment needed from them to support the engagement of them in the Cathedral choir. They described how they had to arrange themselves and the lives of their families to enable this. Parents also need to be able to trust the Cathedral to keep their child(ren) safe and not put them at risk.

Parents were positive about the changes in the King's Prep School, which they perceive as becoming more child focused, describing how the new leadership is communicating better with them, and working better with the Cathedral to harmonise systems, and identify and fill gaps. They were broadly supportive of the proposed joint appointment of a chorister tutor.

Parents spoken with by the auditors expressed a range of views about the relationship and communications between the Cathedral and themselves. For parents whose children have joined the choir relatively recently, they describe their relationships with Cathedral staff as friendly and professional but appropriately formal – similar to what they would also expect of the relationship with their child's school – with communication that is open, timely and efficient.

Parents whose children have been involved with the Cathedral through the difficult last few years express a range of different views. The conviction recently of the former Director of Music, whom some knew personally, has been deeply traumatic



and has, in the view of the auditors, left a legacy of confused feelings including the possible loss of confidence of some parents in their own judgement. They have also had to cope with the loss of a system which some experienced as warm, close and supportive and the rapid change to a far more 'professionalised' culture which some experience as overly formal – 'we used to be a team'. They feel that communication and support from the Cathedral has not been as good as they felt it should be. Some parents would welcome opportunities for greater dialogue with the music department on a less formal basis than the termly business meetings: 'we want to be talked with as equals'.

The auditors are of the view that the steps taken to address the very collusive culture which existed previously within and around the music department have been necessary and appropriate. Nevertheless, support of and communication with parents who have themselves been deeply affected by the knowledge of the offences of the former Director of Music will continue to require sensitivity and effort for some time to come.

The auditors are aware that, in the various communications from the Chapter to choir parents to update them in relation to the police investigation, opportunities for accessing support internally and externally were highlighted and reiterated, and some parents have taken opportunities to speak with school staff and/or Cathedral clergy. There is also recognition by Chapter that the culture that existed previously at times lacked appropriate boundaries between Cathedral staff and chorister families and risked opportunities for manipulative behaviour or grooming. They are also determined to work to ensure that this is not repeated (e.g. the job descriptions for both Director of Music and Assistant Director of Music specified 'demonstrable awareness of (and the ability to maintain) appropriate professional boundaries' as an essential competency). However, Chapter also acknowledges the need for providing ongoing support to those who need it.

### *Chaperones*

Chaperones spoken with were clear that their role is to help to ensure that the choristers are 'happy and safe'. They reflected that procedures have been clarified and tightened considerably over the past couple of years, training has been useful in preparing them for their role, and they were very complimentary about the role of the Cathedral's Safeguarding Group (CSG) and the Cathedral Safeguarding Officer (CSO) in leading this change. They told the auditors that the introduction of a meeting at the beginning of the present school term with the Director of Music and the Canon Precentor was a good development and would like this to be a regular occurrence.

Given the recent history in the music department, it was notable that the chaperones did not mention the scrutiny of the Director of Music and others as part of their role. The auditors would suggest that steps are taken to ensure that the chaperones are clear that this is part of their function.

Both parents and chaperones expressed concern about the management of poor behaviour in the boys' choir.

In the opinion of the auditors, the proposal for recruiting a chorister tutor will be a

welcome next step for the Cathedral in its commitment to caring for the choristers and keeping them safe, and should particularly address problems during the tea-time period (described by one volunteer chaperone as ‘meltdown time’).

### *Lay clerks*

The restructuring and reappointment process of the adult choir has been a conscious and well thought out response to the events of previous years, with the aim of achieving a significant change to a more healthy culture which is focused on creating a safe environment for everyone. The recently recruited principal lay clerks clearly understand and support this and feel that the Cathedral is ‘doing the right thing’. They recognise the need for a clear code of conduct and understand that they should operate as role models for the child choristers both musically and behaviourally, but maintain an appropriate distance from them. One described this as achieving ‘a balance between being a friend and a teacher’.

The choristers view the adult choir members (lay clerks) as ‘just singers’ who they don’t really know. Choristers who had been part of the choirs for some years were conscious that this has changed in recent years, and commented that ‘if we know them and trust them then it would be another person to go to’. The lay clerks, meanwhile, are very clear of their responsibilities should they have concerns about a child.

Some choir parents had queries about the role of the lay clerks in relation to their children, and felt that this is an area which would benefit from further guidance.

#### **Questions for the Cathedral to consider**

- What steps might the Cathedral implement jointly with the King’s Prep school to ensure that their arrangements for information sharing and recording in respect of choristers are compliant with data protection requirements and standards of best practice?
- How might the Cathedral work together with parents, children and school to promote a consistent approach to balancing the needs of children to ‘let off steam’ whilst promoting high standards of behaviour?
- How might the Cathedral develop further its relationship with choir parents to ensure that they are all working together to promote the safety and best interests of the choir children as well as achieve high musical standards?
- How might the Cathedral assure itself that the experiences and views of the choristers are regularly sought, understood and responded to?

## **3.2 VULNERABLE ADULTS**

### *Description*

The Cathedral is an open and welcoming place which is free for all to enter for around 12 hours each day. Its location within the town centre makes it very accessible to all, and among those who take advantage of this are many adults who have additional vulnerabilities and are, or may be at risk of, abuse and neglect,

including self-neglect and self-harm. This includes people in need of pastoral support, people who are homeless, and those who have care and support needs arising from mental health problems, learning disabilities, or other cognitive impairments such as dementia. A number of the 350+ people in volunteer roles within the Cathedral fall into this category by virtue, for example, of increasing frailty as they age. Many roles involve working in areas of the Cathedral which are not always in plain sight. Panic alarms and radios are available for use by both staff and volunteers.

The vergers are aware of individuals with particular needs and behaviours who come to the Cathedral from time to time. They maintain a book which contains details of these individuals and associated risks.

The Cathedral's commitment to becoming more financially sustainable means that it is working hard to increase the numbers of people who visit and use the Cathedral. This will inevitably bring its own demands and risks, including in relation to safeguarding, which have to be planned for. For example, the Knife Angel sculpture attracted 16,000 visitors in its first two weeks on display in the Cathedral garden. In recognition of its symbolic stand against violence and aggression, the Chapter anticipated that demand by visitors for support and prayer may be particularly high during this period and ensured that extra chaplains would be available for the duration of the exhibit.

The Canon for Mission and Growth, as part of her role, had an interest in safeguarding of vulnerable adults. A Chaplain is always available during the week to offer pastoral ministry to those who request it.

The Cathedral's action plan includes 'seeking the views of potentially vulnerable adults on protecting their interests and communication' – a consultation document has been drafted to this end. Two (voluntary) representatives for vulnerable adults have been appointed as part of the Cathedral's team. Their role is to provide an additional resource for vulnerable adults and their families, when attending the Cathedral, to raise awareness of the needs of vulnerable adults, to challenge policy and practice as necessary and to ensure the views of vulnerable adults are considered in appropriate forums. One is working with the lead chaplain to raise awareness of the needs of people with dementia.

Anna Chaplaincy is a new role across Christian churches, aimed at supporting older people, and has been promoted in Rochester Diocese by the Bishop since late 2016. In April 2019, Rochester made the first cathedral-based appointment of an 'Anna Chaplain' to help the Chapter to work towards the Cathedral being recognised as a Dementia Friendly venue. Regular 'dementia friendly' services are held in the Cathedral, which also hosted a day of action and activity around dementia in May 2019 involving local Christian, health and community groups.

### *Analysis*

The safeguarding training undertaken by the Cathedral staff and volunteers has resulted in a significant raising of awareness about vulnerable adults, demonstrated through relatively high numbers of 'safeguarding incidents' being reported to the Cathedral Safeguarding Officer. Whilst the majority of these are not safeguarding

matters as such, they are helpful in raising awareness of the range of issues that are managed and responded to throughout the Cathedral. The next stage of development will be to help staff and volunteers recognise when issues are and are not related to safeguarding.

Everyone spoken with by the auditors expressed confidence in the vergers, and their ability to keep people safe. The knowledge of the verger team about vulnerable individuals who come into the Cathedral regularly, including those who potentially cause a concern or even a risk to others, is good. But it is doubtful whether maintaining a book of names and descriptions without reference to data protection regulations is appropriate, particularly as this is not overseen by anyone who might be in a position to assist the vergers in assessing risk or vulnerability and developing a suitable management plan. Some care is needed to develop approaches that achieve an effective balance between being open to all whilst keeping people safe.

The awareness of the needs of vulnerable adults across the Cathedral is very good overall. The contribution of the two representatives for vulnerable adults has been very positive, and the plans to develop consultation arrangements and increase awareness in specific areas, such as domestic abuse, are very commendable.

Volunteers are an essential part of the Cathedral's community. For the volunteers themselves, it is a significant and highly important part of their lives. Whilst very well aware of the ageing profile of the Cathedral's volunteers, there is as yet no specific plan for managing and responding to this inevitability in a structured and compassionate way. This will become increasingly necessary to assist in identifying and preparing for incidents and situations that will require a thought-through response.

#### **Questions for the Cathedral to consider**

- How might the Cathedral best plan for the increasing vulnerability of its volunteers to promote the safety and wellbeing of the volunteers themselves alongside the requirements of the Cathedral itself?
- How might the vergers and other relevant staff and volunteers be supported to assess and respond to potential risks and vulnerabilities of regular visitors to the Cathedral, and achieve an appropriate balance between being open to all whilst maintaining a safe environment?

### **3.2.1 Bell ringing**

#### *Description*

The Cathedral has a team of 10 adult bell ringers, and one ringer who is under 18. The latter is the child of one of the existing team of adult ringers.

The Tower Captain and three of the team who are involved in teaching are all in receipt of a DBS check. All members of the team are required to undertake C0 and C1 safeguarding training. The two who have not yet done their training are not able to ring at the Cathedral until this has been completed. The captain and one other have also undertaken C2 training. There is good awareness of the process to follow

in the event of a safeguarding concern arising, and confidence expressed in the volunteer manager and the Cathedral Safeguarding Officer to respond appropriately.

The Tower Captain meets regularly with the Head Verger to review health and safety matters, and there is a strong relationship between the verger team and the bell ringers. Access to the bell tower is restricted; only the Head Verger and two members of the bell-ringing team have keys. A register is kept of all who are present in the tower on any occasion. A minimum of two ringers are required in the tower, one of whom must have been DBS checked, and planned maintenance times are notified in advance to the vergers.

The policy and procedures regarding visiting ringers have recently been revised to strengthen safeguarding arrangements. Every effort is made to get the names of visitors in advance, and there is an expectation that anyone who is the subject of a Safeguarding Agreement is declared. There is also a standard regarding the ratio of adults and teenagers. There have been occasions when visitors have been refused permission to ring at Rochester Cathedral because of safeguarding concerns.

The Tower Captain meets regularly with the Volunteer Manager, who ensures that the bell-ringing team is well linked with other groups of volunteers within the Cathedral. The AGM is attended by a Chapter member (the Canon for Mission and Growth), which supports the communication and link between the tower and the rest of the Cathedral.

There are plans for the bell tower to become a centre of excellence for ringing, as part of the Cathedral's aim of engaging more with local communities. This will require an expansion of teaching and training, within the context of the Cathedral's safeguarding policy and procedures.

### *Analysis*

Safeguarding arrangements in the bell tower appear to be robust overall, and awareness is high. Some limited resistance to undertaking safeguarding training has been managed appropriately, and there is recognition of the need to plan for safeguarding within the proposed development to become a centre of excellence. The close relationship between the bell ringers and the vergers is a strength, and communication with the Chapter and the wider Cathedral community is strong. Procedures for managing visiting ringers have been thought through with particular reference to safeguarding.

It is unclear whether the procedures and practice guidance which have been developed within the bell tower are integrated with those of the wider Cathedral and held in a central and accessible location where they are widely available.

The tower team is a closely knit group, with a strong collective identity. This is a source of strength but can also be vulnerability, on occasions giving rise to safeguarding issues. Some thought and planning could usefully be undertaken to anticipate future needs in this area, as part of the Cathedral's approach to considering the needs of vulnerable adults, including volunteers.

### Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How might the procedures and practice guidance in the bell tower be aligned with those in the wider Cathedral?

### 3.2.2 Precincts and buildings

#### *Description*

Rochester Cathedral occupies a prominent site in the middle of Rochester, just off the High Street and adjacent to the Castle. It is surrounded by an extensive precinct, comprising a range of buildings, some of which are owned by the Cathedral and some privately owned. Kings School (which is attended by all the boy choristers and a number of the girl choristers also) is on a site adjacent to the Cathedral, and choristers can walk from one building to another within a few minutes.

The precinct is open to the public at all times. Although some of the roads within the precinct are also public, and can be busy at certain times of day, there is not a significant volume of through traffic.

The Cathedral is open Monday–Friday 07.30–18.00, Saturday 08.30–17.00 and Sunday 07.30–17.00. There are also regular evening events. The Head Verger and his team are on duty at all times whilst the Cathedral is open; volunteer welcomers are on duty in twos between 10.00 and 16.00 (core heritage hours). CCTV cameras have been installed around the inside of the Cathedral and are monitored by the vergers, although there is no live monitoring of the images.

The Cathedral welcomes an increasing number of visitors each year – rising in recent years to over 100,000 in 2018 and 104,000 by early September 2019.

The Cathedral's success in attracting external funding to enable development of key areas and aspects of the Cathedral, such as the library, crypt and café area, has been accompanied by recognition of the need to ensure that visitors, children, staff and volunteers are all kept safe.

#### *Analysis*

The vergers are very aware of the risks inherent in managing a large, accessible space which is open to all. It is a disadvantage that the CCTV cannot be monitored at all times, and that coverage is not yet available for many of the external areas around the Cathedral.

Awareness of safety procedures is good, regular fire evacuation practices are held, and there is close working between the vergers and the teams of welcomers and education officers, in particular. The policy on lone working is well understood and applied, although the hours before and after the core heritage opening hours of 10.00–16.00, when only the vergers are on duty, is a time of increased 'vulnerability'.

The auditors were impressed with the thoughtful and coordinated approach to ensuring that the buildings and precincts are safe spaces, including when major

events involving thousands of people are being planned. Obvious limitations such as the access to toilets are understood and are being addressed.

#### **Questions for the Cathedral to consider**

- There are no questions in this section.

### **3.3 CASEWORK (INCLUDING INFORMATION SHARING)**

When safeguarding concerns are raised, a timely response is needed to make sense of the situation, assess any risk and decide if any action needs to be taken, including whether statutory services need to be informed. In a Cathedral context, this includes helping to distinguish whether there are safeguarding elements to the circumstances of people receiving pastoral support.

All casework is carried out on behalf of the Cathedral by the CSO. There are well understood processes for reporting concerns (via a Safeguarding Incident Form). The Head of Administration holds the role of safeguarding administrator and has worked with the CSO to develop and implement a system for maintaining confidential records.

Eighteen case files were reviewed by the auditors, covering a range of circumstances.

#### **3.3.1 Quality of recording practice**

All files seen were in paper format; most had been reviewed recently and many had a short summary by the CSO of the case and its outcome. They are securely kept, with access restricted to the CSO and the safeguarding administrator.

All files (with one exception) showed evidence of a broad understanding across the Cathedral of the need to be vigilant, and to report promptly. There was evidence that the mechanism for reporting is well understood, and that there are effective links between the pastoral side and the CSO. Where relevant, files are clearly cross referenced.

The contents of files were variable. Whilst some were comprehensive, well ordered, and organised into sections, others consisted of several pages of printed emails, often reproduced more than once. A better classification system which distinguishes between safeguarding/complaints/pastoral issues etc would be a useful next step.

#### **3.3.2 Effectiveness of responses to vulnerable people or anyone in crisis**

Staff and volunteers are clearly alert to people in the Cathedral who may be vulnerable, and raised their concerns appropriately. Work by the CSO appears timely, and advice and judgements are broadly sound. Good liaison is evident between CSO and other organisations and agencies where appropriate. Responses were generally proportionate and appropriate.

It is unclear from the files whether there is clarity by the CSO and others about the thresholds for engagement with the relevant statutory agencies in respect of

vulnerable adults. Neither is there evidence of systematic engagement with mental health and adult social care services. Whilst accepting that the majority of referrals to the CSO may be well below thresholds for statutory services, it is not clear whether individuals may be or should be known to services and that in these circumstances, how the Cathedral could become part of a more comprehensive and coordinated response.

### **3.3.3 Effectiveness of risk assessments, safeguarding agreements and the risk management plan**

Safeguarding Agreements are a key mechanism to support offenders who wish to attend church, to do so safely. They should be underpinned by a risk assessment that details the risks posed by a worshipper, the measures in place to manage those risks, and therefore the reasons for the Safeguarding Agreement. Having a clear rationale for any restrictions helps people enforce the agreements with the level of diligence appropriate for Safeguarding Agreements. Clarity about the risks that a Safeguarding Agreement is intended to address, also allows for a robust reviewing process, which allows Safeguarding Agreements to be strengthened where needed, or indeed terminated if appropriate.

Three of the cases files seen related to persons potentially connected with the Cathedral who may pose a risk to others. Whilst two were appropriately assessed as not needing a Safeguarding Agreement at the time, one became the subject of a Safeguarding Agreement. However, the risk assessment which should underpin such an agreement was not on the file and it was unclear whether such an assessment had been undertaken. This is an area of practice that needs addressing.

### **3.3.4 Quality of engagement with the people who disclose abuse, share concerns of unsafe people or practice, or ask for help to keep safe for any reason including use of any targeted resources e.g. Authorised Listeners.**

An important part of the audit is speaking to people who had come forward to disclose abuse, share concerns, or expected help from the Cathedral to keep safe for any reason, to find out how timely, compassionate and effective they had found responses and support provided by the Cathedral. Although Rochester Cathedral made every effort to identify people in advance who may like to speak with the auditors, and publicising the audit via the Cathedral website so that people could contact SCIE, none came forward. Subsequently, one person chose to share their experiences of childhood abuse with the auditors, and was complimentary about the response and support they have received from a number of the Cathedral staff.

### **3.3.5 Information sharing practice**

Case files evidenced a number of examples where information has been thoughtfully assessed and subsequently shared within the cathedral, and/ or with external organisations or individuals, in order to ensure the safety or support of someone who might be vulnerable.

There was also evidence of appropriate information sharing by the CSO with local authority child care staff and designated officers (LADOs) regarding people who may



pose a risk to others, and also with colleagues from other dioceses.

Aside from the case files, auditors became aware of instances where personal information, including a photograph on one occasion, were being kept and shared. Whilst having no reason to be concerned about why this is happening, it suggests a need for increasing awareness across the Cathedral of data protection considerations and the consequent standards for information sharing which need to be understood and applied.

#### **Questions for the Cathedral to consider**

- What steps need to be taken to strengthen the assessment and management of people who are or who may need to become subject of a Safeguarding Agreement?
- How might the case file system be organised to distinguish clearly between safeguarding concerns and other issues such as complaints and pastoral issues?
- How might the Cathedral raise awareness of data protection requirements to ensure that information sharing and recording practices are transparent and fully compliant?

### **3.4 CDM**

One CDM complaint was seen by auditors. This originated from a member of the Cathedral staff in relation to the conduct of a member of Chapter. It was fully investigated and resulted in no further action. This was appropriate given the circumstances of the case.

#### **Questions for the Cathedral to consider**

- There are no questions in this section.

### **3.5 TRAINING**

Safeguarding training is an important mechanism for establishing safeguarding awareness and confidence throughout the Cathedral. It requires good quality content, based on up-to-date evidence, with relevant case studies, engaging and relevant to the audience. It also requires strategic planning to identify priority groups for training, details of the training needs/requirements of people in different roles, and an implementation plan that tracks what training has been provided, who attended and who still needs to attend or requires refresher sessions.

#### *Description*

Training is seen as an essential part of the responsibilities of the Cathedral towards its staff and volunteers, as well as critical to the success of its mission.

Provision of safeguarding training and development at all levels, adhering strictly to the Church of England Training and Development Practice Guidance and using the

training programme rolled out by the National Safeguarding Team, is an important element of the Cathedral's safeguarding action plan.

All safeguarding training for Cathedral staff and volunteers is either provided nationally (e.g. the electronic C0 and C1 training) or locally by the CSO and his diocesan colleagues. Cathedral staff and volunteers have access to diocesan training when this is available.

The CSO assisted in reviewing every role and assigning to it the appropriate level of safeguarding training. The Head of Administration oversees a system which keeps track of all training undertaken and due via spreadsheet.

The Chapter, together with the CSO, see the next stage in training as focusing on domestic abuse.

### *Analysis*

Good progress has been made in implementing the Cathedral's training strategy and policy. The Chapter has given clear messages about the importance of everyone engaging with safeguarding training, and CSG has actively monitored progress, which has reinforced its importance. Staff and volunteers say that they find the training useful. Early evidence of impact is the rise in the reporting of 'safeguarding incidents', which demonstrate increased awareness of the needs of vulnerable adults, in particular.

The auditors heard a number of examples where volunteers had not been permitted to continue in their role until they completed their training, which demonstrates that the messages of the Cathedral leadership about the importance of training have been understood and acted on.

There is recognition that the next round of training, which is likely to be in the form of 'refresher' training, could usefully be more tailored to the particular Cathedral context, making use of scenarios which have been or could be encountered. This may help to enhance the understanding and responses to vulnerable adults, in particular. Some thought about how the impact of such training will be measured would be useful. The commitment to raising awareness of the impact of domestic abuse is excellent.

The Cathedral congregation is kept regularly informed about safeguarding through a variety of means, including printed newsletters and the regular meetings of the Cathedral Forum. At present, they are not offered access to safeguarding awareness training, although those members of the congregation who are also volunteers will have undertaken C0 and C1 training as appropriate.

#### **Questions for the Cathedral to consider**

- How might the Cathedral work with the CSO and the Diocese to ensure the quality and relevance of the various levels of safeguarding training and assess its impact?
- Would an offer of safeguarding training to the congregation assist the Cathedral in developing its safeguarding culture?

## 3.6 SAFER RECRUITMENT

### *Description*

Responsibility for recruitment of Cathedral staff and volunteers sits ultimately with the Chapter Clerk. HR services are commissioned from the Royal Bank of Scotland Mentor. There is currently nobody within the Cathedral's staff team who has a professional HR qualification. Clergy are recruited via the Diocese, where relevant records are held.

The recruitment policy has been reviewed and updated, and is compliant with the House of Bishops Practice Guidance (July 2016). Consistent use of the principles and practice of Safer Recruitment for both staff and volunteers is a key element of the Cathedral's safeguarding action plan. Progress is monitored closely by the Cathedral Safeguarding Group.

DBS checks are overseen by the Head of Administration/Safeguarding Administrator, who keeps a record on a spreadsheet of when updates are due. Work is in progress to ensure all DBS checks are up to date. In the event of notification of a blemished DBS certificate, this matter is assessed by the Diocesan Safeguarding Executive Committee who will give advice on whether the appointment should be made. The Bishop's Office is responsible for the Safe Recruitment process of clergy, including DBS, and the relevant records are retained in the Bishop's Office.

There has been a systematic approach to reviewing and updating role descriptions and assessing which roles require DBS checks.

An individual paper file is kept for each staff member and volunteer.

The Chapter is aware that there are still occasions when recruitment of a staff member or volunteer is not fully compliant with the Safer Recruitment process and are working to address this.

### *Analysis*

Safe Recruitment of staff and volunteers is an essential element of a safeguarding culture, reinforced by a systematic approach to induction. The Chapter recognises that poor recruitment practices in parts of the Cathedral have been part of the culture in the very recent past and a contributing factor in the ensuing difficulties. This has led to a determination that high standards should be adhered to at all times.

Auditors found a clear understanding of the principles of Safer Recruitment among managers, staff and volunteers, and many examples of how this is operating in practice.

Nine (paper) HR files were reviewed by the auditors, relating both to staff and volunteer recruitment. All were well kept and easy to follow, and each had a useful checklist of essential information on the front cover (relating to DBS checks, references, training). Not all files seen were complete, however, and generally did not contain a role description, which meant that it was not easy to tell whether a particular post required a DBS check, a particular level of safeguarding training, etc.

Of concern to the auditors was a very recent example of a new appointee to a particularly sensitive post being permitted to start before the enhanced DBS clearance was received, albeit following a risk assessment. There were other examples of less than full compliance with agreed procedures.

All the systems relating to staff and volunteers are paper based, which means that administration is time consuming and systematic oversight is difficult. An electronic single central record, such as that used in schools, would provide significant benefits in terms of efficiency, and enable all the different records relating to individuals – recruitment, induction, DBS, training, etc. – to be integrated. This would in turn enable more systematic oversight of compliance with procedures and best practice.

Through his management of the administrators, the Chapter Clerk is able to keep a close oversight of the efficiency and effectiveness of the Safer Recruitment process. It is a disadvantage in the view of the auditors for there to be no ‘on-the-spot’ HR expertise readily available. Whilst what is commissioned is presumably of good quality, it is helpful for organisations to have a degree of expertise in-house so that there is close attention at all times to good HR practice. This is particularly necessary in the initial stages of difficulties emerging, and very important in managing disciplinary matters.

#### **Questions for the Cathedral to consider**

- What steps can be taken to ensure that all recruitment and record-keeping practices meet the standards specified within the national and Cathedral-specific policy and practice guidance regarding Safer Recruitment, and enable systematic monitoring?
- How might the Cathedral improve its access to HR expertise?

## 4 FINDINGS – ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORTS

### 4.1 POLICY, PROCEDURES AND GUIDANCE

All parts of the Church of England must adopt or take account of the House of Bishops' Policy Statement (2017) Promoting a Safer Church within their own safeguarding policy. The Policy Statement must actively underpin all safeguarding work within the Church and the drive to improve safeguarding practice.

This has been supplemented by practice guidance *Key Roles and Responsibilities of Church Office Holders and Bodies* (2017) which sets out more explicitly than before the safeguarding expectations for cathedrals.

Additional policies and practice guidance are developed in response to need, such as *Responding to Safeguarding Concerns or Allegations that relate to Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults practice guidance* (2018) and, most recently, *Training and development practice guidance* (2019). These provide an increasingly strong framework within which to work, but bring their own challenges in terms of training and embedding locally.

#### *Description*

In Rochester Cathedral there has historically been an absence of safeguarding policies and practice guidance in place and consistently applied. The Chapter recognised quickly that a strong framework of policies and procedures is an essential element of a strong safeguarding system and ensured that the Cathedral's safeguarding action plan (developed in July 2018) gives the adoption of appropriate policies, procedures and guidance suitable prominence.

Encouraged by the Cathedral Safeguarding Group, the Chapter took the decision 18 months ago to adopt the diocesan safeguarding policies, in order to ensure full alignment both locally and with the national House of Bishops Guidance, which the Diocese in turn adopts in full. As new policies and practice guidance are issued, these are considered and adopted by the Chapter on the recommendation of the Cathedral Safeguarding Group.

In addition, there have been a large number of Cathedral-specific policies and procedures developed over the past year. These include safeguarding training, policies and procedures relating to the recruitment, probation and induction of staff and volunteers, complaints and whistleblowing. The staff handbook has been updated and a new handbook for volunteers developed.

A comprehensive range of policies, procedures and practice guidance relating to the choirs and the boy and girl choristers have been developed and implemented in the past year. Some have been developed in response to increased awareness of safeguarding issues, such as visiting choirs.

Leaders of other areas of Cathedral activity, such as the vergers, the bell ringers and the education department have developed their own procedures and records in response to perceived need.

## *Analysis*

### National policies

These key national documents are adopted locally by both Diocese and Cathedral. The Cathedral website provides a direct link to the diocesan safeguarding pages, to promote this alignment and provide ease of access.

### Cathedral-specific policies

Although the national policies are directed at the entire Church of England, there are some gaps where local procedures are needed. This applies at all levels, from governance and oversight to detailed practice guidance.

The Cathedral Safeguarding Group has shown significant leadership in ensuring that gaps are filled and new areas of risk addressed. Thought has been given to how risks identified in the recent past can be addressed. Considerable time and effort have been spent over the past year in developing a range of new policies and procedures, with more in progress.

A systematic approach has been taken to ensure that changes are implemented and reinforced across related areas of activity. For example, the increasing prominence of safeguarding in HR practice has resulted not only in new procedures for recruitment, induction and training, but also an updating of the employee handbook and the introduction of a code of conduct. This in turn has highlighted that the same process is needed for volunteers.

Procedures for promoting the safety of choristers are particularly well developed, clearly communicated and consistently implemented.

Other areas, particularly around safer HR practice in relation to staff and volunteers (recruitment and DBS renewals), still need embedding. The Cathedral leadership is well aware of this continuing challenge.

There are some areas where gaps are still emerging which will need addressing through the development of procedures and practice guidance. These include how to respond when a child is lost, and what procedures are needed to promote the safety of child servers.

There does not appear to be a single place where all policies, procedures and practice guidance are available to staff, volunteers and others who may have an interest. The diocesan website only contains national and diocesan documents, and makes no reference at all on its safeguarding home page to the application of some or all of these to the Cathedral. This is confusing. At a stage where policies and procedures are being developed very rapidly in a number of different departments and settings, it may be useful to consider whether and how these might be collated into a single, accessible place so that consistency may be assured, duplication avoided, gaps identified, and version control managed.

## Information sharing protocols

Reference has been made to information sharing in the section above regarding choristers. Timely sharing of appropriate information is an important element of a safe system, and will become increasingly important for Rochester as its safeguarding awareness and practice develops. However, information sharing has to be balanced with an understanding of data protection legislation and practice in the context of safeguarding the individual. It would be beneficial for Cathedral and Diocese to look at this area together to develop a consistent and proportionate approach.

### **Questions for the Cathedral to consider**

- How might the Cathedral's policies and procedures be collected and made available in a single, accessible location so that they can be kept up to date, consistency can be assured, duplication avoided, gaps identified, and version control managed?

## **4.2 CATHEDRAL SAFEGUARDING ADVISOR AND THEIR SUPERVISION & MANAGEMENT**

### *Description*

The Cathedral has had its own safeguarding adviser (CSO) since December 2017, through an arrangement with the Diocese initiated by Chapter. The CSO also operates as a Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser in the Diocese of Rochester. In July 2019 he was appointed as Lead Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser and will manage the safeguarding team upon the retirement of the Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser in December 2019.

The arrangements for safeguarding support are set out in a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) dated December 2017. Variations to this agreement for the period 1 January–31 December 2019 (comprising increased hours for the CSO, with associated costs) are set out in a letter dated 12 March 2019 from the Diocesan Secretary to the Chapter Clerk. The MOA is comprehensive. It includes relevant services and activities which mirror those set out for a DSA in *Roles and Responsibilities*, and contains provision for annual review and renewal. It also includes a requirement for the CSO to engage in professional supervision and development.

The CSO is a very experienced former police officer in Kent Police who spent much of his working life specialising in safeguarding matters both as an investigator and a strategic lead. After retiring from the police he worked with the Kent Safeguarding Children Board and subsequently carried out some specialised work in relation to domestic abuse. He has extensive experience of delivering training on safeguarding and related matters. This qualifies him well for the CSO position.

The CSO is line managed in the Cathedral by the Chapter Clerk, and works closely with other leaders and managers across the Cathedral. He attends the Cathedral Safeguarding Group as well as the equivalent diocesan bodies.

The CSO does not currently have access to professional supervision, although he is in the process of arranging professional group supervision for the diocesan safeguarding team.

### *Analysis*

The CSO took up post in December 2017, within days of the suspension from duty of the former Director of Music. This and related safeguarding matters have provided the context for almost all of his work over the period he has been in post to date.

This challenging context has made what has been achieved by the CSO and the Cathedral Safeguarding Group (CSG) all the more commendable. The provision of safeguarding support is universally trusted and valued by staff and volunteers alike, and the CSO is a well known and respected figure across the Cathedral community. He works well with the Chapter, who value his opinion and advice.

The auditors make comments elsewhere on the quality of safeguarding advice and support, as evidenced from casework files.

The work associated with the suspension, charging and subsequent conviction of the former Director of Music has made considerable demands on the resources of both the CSO and the wider Cathedral leadership team. The amount of service commissioned by the Cathedral from the Diocese under the terms of the MOA has been increased this year to reflect this. Because of this particular context, it is difficult for the auditors to assess whether the MOA makes adequate provision to meet the requirements of the Cathedral in less demanding times. However, we are satisfied that mechanisms are in place to keep this under review, and that the commitment is there to make appropriate adjustments as necessary.

Supervision from the Chapter Clerk is conducted within the Cathedral's HR framework, and includes provision for an annual performance review. However, there are no professional supervision arrangements available to the CSO, and therefore no means of the Chapter Clerk being able to assess whether the quality of the CSO's work consistently meets high professional standards, nor to identify and arrange appropriate professional development opportunities. In the opinion of the auditors, professional supervision should be provided by a professional with social work qualifications and expertise, given the nature and context of safeguarding work. This would supplement the CSO's extensive experience as a police officer.

On a wider scale, the whole safeguarding governance structure across both Cathedral and Diocese appears to be overly dependent on the CSO/DSA, which is an area of potential risk for the Cathedral, not least in terms of resilience. This is commented on elsewhere in the report.

#### **Questions for the Cathedral to consider**

- What arrangements might the Cathedral make in conjunction with the Diocese to enable access to suitably skilled professional supervision and development for the CSO, and feedback on their performance in order to inform its internal management and appraisal arrangements?



### 4.3 RECORDING SYSTEMS AND IT SOLUTIONS

Having effective, safe and useable IT systems supports good recording and makes sure that information is secure, but accessible to those people with a legitimate need to see it.

Rochester Cathedral has both IT and paper-based systems. Those relating to recruitment, DBS checking, training of staff are paper based, and kept securely by the Head of Administration. Records relating to clergy are held in the Diocese. Records relating to volunteers are also paper based, and are kept by the Volunteer Manager. These individual paper records are supplemented by spreadsheets which record important information such as DBS checks, training completed and due, etc.

Safeguarding casework is kept separately and securely by the Head of Administration (safeguarding administrator). Access is restricted to herself and the Cathedral Safeguarding Officer.

The music department keeps records of information about choristers which is relevant to their safety and wellbeing, including medical details and contact numbers. Similar records are kept by the Sunday Club with respect to the children attending. The auditors did not see where these are kept, but understand they are kept securely. They are accessible only on a 'need-to-know' basis.

The auditors examined a sample of different paper files, including those held by the Cathedral (staff, volunteers, casework). Comments on the quality of casework and structure of files are made elsewhere in this report.

The Head of Administration and her small team have worked hard to develop good systems for collating and keeping sensitive and important information. They have done this without the aid of any specialist HR or casework management system to assist them. This means that maintaining the necessary oversight and management of the information, as well as the need to be proactive with important safeguarding matters such as ensuring DBS checks are kept up to date, is resource intensive.

#### **Questions for the Cathedral to consider**

- What steps might the Cathedral take to improve its current systems both to enable oversight and also release valuable capacity?

## 5 FINDINGS – LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

### 5.1 QUALITY ASSURANCE

A safe organisation needs constant feedback loops about what is going well and where there are difficulties in relation to safeguarding, and this should drive ongoing cycles of learning and improvement. Robust quality assurance enables an organisation to understand its strengths and weaknesses. Potential sources of data are numerous, including independent scrutiny. Quality assurance needs to be strategic and systematic to support accountability and shed light on how well things are working and where there are gaps or concerns. It also needs to reflect the voices of survivors and other vulnerable groups, in order to establish whether activity is having the desired effect.

Chapter is required (as specified in the Church of England *Key Roles and Responsibilities of Church Office Holders and Bodies Practice Guidance*, 2017) to review safeguarding progress annually, including an annual review of the Cathedral safeguarding policy, practices and procedures. To do this thoroughly, it requires evidence of activity and impact.

Safeguarding is an item on every Chapter agenda. Minutes demonstrate that the subject is considered and discussed fully at each meeting.

Although there is no formal quality assurance framework in place, the safeguarding action plan includes the development of quality assurance and audit as a separate objective, and the Cathedral has already put many elements of a good framework in place. These include the following:

- An annual report on safeguarding in the Cathedral from the Dean to the Bishop
- Regular review and updating of the Cathedral's safeguarding action plan by the CSG
- Regular report on safeguarding from the Chair of CSG to Chapter
- Regular review of information regarding take-up of safeguarding training by staff and volunteers
- Oversight by the Diocesan Safeguarding Executive Committee of decision-making regarding blemished DBS checks
- An Independent Review of Safeguarding Practices at Rochester Cathedral commissioned in July 2019
- Vigilant oversight by the Safeguarding Administrator of staff engagement with training, application of Safer Recruitment processes, DBS checks
- Rigorous oversight of the application of Cathedral procedures for Safer Recruitment processes and training in respect of volunteers by the Volunteer Manager
- A planned 'lessons learned' review following the recent safeguarding case involving the former Director of Music.

The Cathedral Safeguarding Group (CSG) is responsible for the delivery of the

Cathedral's safeguarding action plan, and regularly seeks and provides assurance on all aspects of its delivery through adopting a systematic approach, a common agenda and keen oversight of actions agreed. The Chair is particularly vigilant in this regard.

The Bishop's Safeguarding Advisory Panel also has a role in relation to the scrutiny and oversight of the Cathedral's safeguarding arrangements, and receives a report at every meeting on progress with its safeguarding action plan.

Oversight and assurance activity has to date been focused on achieving full compliance with existing and new policies and procedures, particularly those related to Safer Recruitment and training. Considering the position of the Cathedral only two years ago, this was both pragmatic and sensible. Having now achieved a good level of compliance overall, albeit with further work needed, the Cathedral might usefully consider how to move onto the next stage in assessing its progress, with the aim of understanding both the quality and consistency of its activity, and ultimately, its success in creating a safe, open and learning culture. This is likely to need review of the existing accountability framework within the Cathedral and in relation to the diocesan safeguarding structures, in order to reduce duplication and maximise the opportunities for constructive scrutiny and challenge.

#### **Questions for the Cathedral to consider**

- How might the Cathedral develop its quality assurance system in order to be satisfied that it is creating a safe, open and learning culture where compliance with policies and procedures is consistently good?

## **5.2 COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE SAFEGUARDING SERVICE**

A good complaints policy enables people to raise concerns, and to have timely and appropriate consideration of any problems. A strong policy is clear about who complaints should be made to, and how they can be escalated if necessary. Positive features include an independent element, and clarity that raising a safeguarding concern, and making a complaint about a safeguarding service, are two distinct things.

The Cathedral complaints policy is in draft. It defines a complaint as 'any expression of dissatisfaction, about aspects of our services, safeguarding, its operations, its mission and ministry'. It comprises a two-stage process, both stages being internal. It also refers to mediation at stage 1, which may not be appropriate in safeguarding matters. The clergy are the arbiters at stage 2. This is problematic if the complaint is about the clergy, although the procedure does allow for variation.

The Cathedral's safeguarding action plan does recognise the need for development of guidance in this area, but appears to be regarding complaints about the safeguarding service as similar to complaints about other aspects of the Cathedral's work and responsibilities.

It is debatable whether a general complaints procedure is appropriately applied to safeguarding matters. Matters of safeguarding concern should be raised in line with

agreed reporting processes. If the response gives cause for concern, that is very specific, and should be dealt with as a complaint about the safeguarding service itself. Given that the service of the Cathedral Safeguarding Officer is provided by agreement with the Diocese, it would make sense for there to be a common process between Cathedral and Diocese. However, the Diocese of Rochester *Complaints and Whistleblowing Guidance for the Protection and Safeguarding of Children and Adults at Risk of Abuse and/or Neglect Policy* does not deal with this issue, other than at parish level.

The auditors did not see nor were they advised about any complaints concerning the safeguarding service. However, the current arrangements for reporting safeguarding incidents may enable those with concerns to raise them formally, albeit not if their concerns related to those who are charged with receiving the incident forms (i.e. the CSO or the Canon in residence).

#### **Questions for the Cathedral to consider**

- How might the Cathedral and Diocese work together to produce guidance on making a complaint about the safeguarding service in the Cathedral? Can Rochester learn from other cathedrals with effective complaints procedures?
- How can people with a complaint about safeguarding best be informed of whom to approach?

### **5.3 WHISTLEBLOWING**

A whistleblowing policy has very recently been developed. It remains in draft form and is additional to the section in the employee handbook, which itself is in the process of revision. It is aimed at staff, though does mention volunteers, and is framed within the context of the Public Interest Disclosure Act. It contains reference to raising concerns with and seeking advice from outside bodies, but this is in the context of a general point rather than as a formal part of the process. It does specifically reference a different process for complaints regarding both the Dean and the Chapter Clerk (who are central figures in the investigation process), which is good.

There is no reference in the volunteer handbook (which is still in draft form) to whistleblowing or raising concerns.

Given the troubled history in the music department, and the disquiet expressed about the culture and practices in that department, the Chapter could usefully pay particular attention to developing a culture which is more receptive to potential whistleblowers, including provide information more prominently about how they might do this.

#### **Questions for the Cathedral to consider**

- How can the Cathedral best promote a culture which is receptive to potential whistleblowers and inform staff, volunteers and the wider Cathedral community of their rights and duties under 'whistleblowing' law?

## 5.4 CATHEDRAL SAFEGUARDING GROUP (FORMERLY THE SAFEGUARDING IMPLEMENTATION GROUP)

Based on the national guidance in *Roles and Responsibilities* for Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panels, any safeguarding panel should have a key role in bringing independence and safeguarding expertise to an oversight, scrutiny and challenge role, including contributing to a strategic plan. No specifics are provided in relation to cathedrals, with the apparent assumption being that cathedrals are part of diocesan structures.

### *Description*

In Rochester, the Cathedral has its own safeguarding group, but also links with two safeguarding groups in the Diocese – the Bishop’s Safeguarding Advisory Panel (BSAP) and the Diocesan Safeguarding Executive Committee (DSEC). BSAP has an independent chair with a strong professional background in safeguarding. The chair of DSEC is an archdeacon with a similarly relevant professional background. Both have been operational for around 18 months.

The Cathedral Safeguarding Group (CSG), formerly known as the Cathedral Safeguarding Implementation Group (SIG), was established in 2018 and a lay member of Chapter with suitable experience was asked by the Dean to be its chair. The role of the CSG is to oversee the implementation of the safeguarding action plan, and to hold managers to account for its delivery. The chair reports on progress to every meeting of Chapter, and holds Chapter to account for their leadership in relation to safeguarding.

The CSG’s membership includes the Dean and the two Chapter Canons as well as the Chapter Clerk, key operational managers, and the (voluntary) representatives for children and adults respectively. Both the Headmaster and the Chaplain to the King’s School (the latter is one of the school’s deputy designated safeguarding leads) have joined the CSG recently, which is a very positive development.

Reports on progress with the Cathedral’s safeguarding action plan are also made both to the BSAP (through the attendance of the Dean) and to the DSEC (through attendance by the Chapter Clerk) as well as to the Cathedral Chapter.

### *Analysis*

The wide membership and inclusion of senior figures gives the CSG full authority to make decisions and take action. It also enables constructive dialogue between clergy and operational staff.

CSG operates systematically, ensuring that progress with each element of the action plan is scrutinised. Actions agreed are carefully noted and followed up at the following meeting until completed. Progress with the plan is indicated by way of RAG ratings which are regularly reviewed. Minutes indicate careful consideration and attention to detail, as well as good awareness of issues regarding vulnerable adults. Plans for the implementation of training on domestic abuse are well advanced.

It is notable that the group has been considering recently how best to communicate

and consult with both children and vulnerable adults. Similar attention could usefully be given to how the CSG might access and learn from the perspectives of survivors of abuse.

The CSG has clearly been very effective in driving rapid progress and development of safeguarding awareness and practice across the Cathedral. It is well known and well regarded. One volunteer described the CSG as having made ‘a world of difference’.

Now that the initial stages of implementing the safeguarding action plan are complete, it is perhaps a good moment to review the plan and use this as the basis for setting out a vision of where the Cathedral wishes to get to over the next period in relation to safeguarding, and how it will measure success. This could be accompanied by developing the CSG into a body which is more about scrutiny and assurance than implementation. This has already been anticipated in its recent change of name from the Safeguarding Implementation Group to CSG, and might imply a revision of membership.

The presence of the Dean on the CSG arguably means that he is not in a position to hold the CSG and its chair to account for their performance, as he should do as part of his lead role. Similarly, attendance at BSAP on behalf of the Cathedral could usefully be by the chair of CSG rather than by the Dean himself. This would add an additional layer of accountability, perspective and feedback for the Dean in respect of safeguarding in the Cathedral.

The role of both BSAP and DSEC in relation to the Cathedral are underdeveloped at present, with the chairs of both BSAP and CSG being of the opinion that the scrutiny and oversight role of BSAP in relation to the Cathedral should be strengthened. This could be accompanied by more formal reporting by the BSAP chair to the Dean, to include an assessment of progress and areas for development (the BSAP chair is already required to report to the Bishop’s Council in relation to the Diocesan safeguarding arrangements).

**Questions for the Cathedral to consider:**

- What steps does the Cathedral need to take in order to strengthen the role of the CSG into one of scrutiny and assurance?
- How might the Cathedral work with the Diocese to review the current structures to ensure that they comprise a coherent and comprehensive system of governance and accountability in relation to safeguarding?

## **5.5 LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Safeguarding leadership falls in the first instance to the Dean, in that he leads on all aspects of life in the Cathedral. However, safeguarding leadership takes various forms – strategic, operational and theological/spiritual – with different people taking different roles. How these roles are understood, and how they fit together, can determine how well led the safeguarding function is.

### 5.5.1 Theological leadership

The remit for theological leadership in relation to safeguarding is clearly always with the clergy, and especially with the Dean of the Cathedral. This is extremely valuable in helping congregations and clergy to understand why safeguarding is a priority, and intrinsic to the beliefs of the Church of England. This aspect of the leadership role is the foundation for the culture of the Church and is critical in terms of making it a safer place for children and vulnerable adults.

On the safeguarding front page of the Cathedral's website is a personal message from the Dean on his commitment to ensuring that the Cathedral is a safe place for everyone, especially the most vulnerable. He has delivered sermons on the subject of safeguarding, including on the subject of the abuse of power by people in positions of authority. He has also been instrumental in setting a high bar for engagement of all clergy, staff and volunteers with safeguarding training and ensuring that this is complied with.

### 5.5.2 Strategic leadership

#### *Description*

The House of Bishops' *Roles and Responsibilities* practice guidance assigns different and overlapping roles to the Dean and the Chapter, with the former having a clear leadership role in relation to safeguarding, and Chapter having a strategic and oversight role in relation to the Church of England's *Promoting a Safer Church* safeguarding policy. This includes the requirement to have a Promoting a Safer Church action plan in place that sets out, in line with national and local priorities, how the policy is being put into action and is reviewed regularly.

The Chapter Clerk took up his full-time post in January 2017 and took the lead on behalf of the Chapter in producing a development plan for 2018–2022 which was widely consulted on and is aligned with its equivalent in the Diocese. The plan sets out five key areas of focus, creating a strong platform for future development. Ensuring that the Cathedral is a safe place for everyone, especially children, young people and vulnerable adults is an integral part of the overall vision.

Around the same time, in recognition of the need for the Cathedral to become a far more structured and tightly managed organisation, and to signal an end to the overly informal and unaccountable arrangements in the music department in particular, the Dean reviewed the internal managerial structures. This resulted in a distinct separation between the spiritual and strategic leadership of the clergy, and the operational management of the Cathedral and its staff and volunteers. This means that the Chapter Clerk directly manages all departmental heads, ensuring that good standards of practice – such as annual performance appraisal – are modelled and embedded across the Cathedral. The Chapter Canons have responsibility for specific areas, for example the Canon Precentor is responsible for music and liturgy, contributing his specialist knowledge and working closely with the Chapter Clerk and Director of Music.

The new role of Canon Chancellor, which replaces the Canon for Mission and Growth (which is in the process of being appointed to after the departure of the

previous post-holder last month), is designated as the Cathedral's strategic lead for safeguarding within Chapter. As the role is vacant at present, this position is unfilled, although in practice it remains shared amongst Chapter members.

The Dean represents the Cathedral on the BSAP and the Chapter Clerk sits on the DSEC. Both groups are useful in enabling the Cathedral to keep abreast of national and diocesan developments to ensure alignment, as well as offering a degree of external scrutiny and accountability.

The roles of representative for children and vulnerable adults, respectively, are held by volunteers, who take their responsibilities for championing the interests of these groups with the utmost seriousness and are members of the CSG.

The focus of the safeguarding action plan up until now has been on putting the basic foundations of good safeguarding practice into place – policies, procedures, training, etc – and this has been supported by a very strong emphasis on communication and visible reinforcement of key messages. For example, the introduction of a safeguarding card which is worn on a lanyard by all clergy, staff and volunteers together with their ID is a simple and effective way of providing basic information on who to contact about a concern, and also reminding everyone of their responsibility to 'recognise, respond, record and report'. Use of the Cathedral Forum and other existing groups, and the introduction of a safeguarding noticeboard in the Cathedral which includes a children's section are other examples. The plan has had a significant impact and much has been achieved.

### *Analysis*

As the person who has provided a degree of continuity at Chapter level for the past 15 years, initially as Canon Pastor, then as acting Dean before becoming Dean in 2016, the present Dean has been involved in managing and providing leadership through difficult times in which safeguarding issues have been particularly sharp. During that time, he describes himself as having moved from a position of 'encourager' to 'enforcer', taking an increasingly public role in speaking out on behalf of the most vulnerable, endeavouring to 'set the tone' for the Cathedral's safeguarding commitments. He has sought to learn and apply the lessons from relevant reports and enquiries, including the Bishop's Visitation of 2014/16, and the convictions of two members of the Cathedral's music department in 2014 and 2019 respectively.

The Dean has also taken a very active approach to his leadership of safeguarding, sitting on the CSG and BSAP, ensuring that safeguarding matters are discussed at every meeting of the Chapter, using the Cathedral Forum and other opportunities to keep the congregation updated on safeguarding matters, and making himself very available to all who might seek his advice, guidance and friendship – 'my door is always open'. This has partly been a reflection of his sense of personal responsibility, as well as recognition of the need for a significant change in culture and practice.

In light of the challenges that had to be faced and the changes that were needed, the Chapter has made some difficult decisions, not all of which were initially welcomed across the Cathedral, and some of which remain a subject of considerable debate.



However, the auditors found widespread support amongst leaders, staff, volunteers and congregants for the direction of travel, and an acceptance that changes have been necessary.

The role description of the Chapter Safeguarding lead is very light touch and generally operational. The level of personal involvement by the Dean, the role of the lay Chapter member in chairing CSG, and the particular approach of the previous Canon for Mission and Growth has meant that there has been a great deal of activity, but – in the opinion of the auditors – insufficient clarity of leadership and accountability. There are also some gaps in leadership and oversight at Chapter level. For example, although the operational work relating to the supervision and management of persons who may pose a risk to others is delegated to the CSO, there is no systematic oversight by a Chapter member. Likewise, the roles of representatives for children and vulnerable adults do not appear to be linked to Chapter, where there is a strong sense of collective accountability but nobody is assigned formal leadership responsibilities in relation to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

The auditors are of the view that the development of the Cathedral's safeguarding arrangements is at a stage when a rethink about structures and responsibilities may be beneficial, to ensure that these are as efficient and effective as possible. The Dean's very close involvement with the detail of all aspects of safeguarding work until now has been both understandable and commendable. Given the progress that has been made, it is the view of the auditors that there is now an opportunity for him to step back and allow his Chapter colleagues and operational managers to progress the work whilst he maintains oversight, assures himself of the quality and impact of what is happening, and holds them to account for this delivery.

The imminent appointment of a new Canon Chancellor, who will hold the strategic lead responsibility for safeguarding, can assist this process. However, continuing the current practice of the CSG being chaired by a lay member of Chapter would be positive, in the view of the auditors, as it adds another point of scrutiny and challenge, as well as providing continuity. Such a move would reinforce the collective strategic leadership role of Chapter as well.

An additional step in strengthening accountability could include separating out the lead responsibility at Chapter level for oversight of the management of offenders from those of the vulnerable, including arrangements for pastoral care. The Chapter Clerk is well placed to provide oversight of the Safer Recruitment, training and associated processes, however.

### **5.5.3 Operational leadership and management**

Operational leadership and management of all staff, including the CSO, is the responsibility of the Chapter Clerk, who is a member of Chapter. He works closely with the Dean and Canons in their areas of responsibility, for example with the Canon Precentor in relation to the department of music and liturgy. Whilst there are mixed feelings about whether this is the right structure for everyone, and it remains a subject of debate, it is understood and supported across Chapter, and has been an important way of embedding a more professional and formal way of operating.

Through his management of the administrators, the Chapter Clerk is able to keep a close oversight of the efficiency and effectiveness of the Safer Recruitment process. It is a disadvantage in the view of the auditors for there to be no HR expertise readily available. This is commented on earlier in the report.

The CSO is a valued colleague and his advice is sought and acted on across the organisation. His involvement and advice in managing a sensitive complaint involving a staff member was appropriate, responded to promptly by Chapter, and a good outcome was achieved.

The very small numbers seen and heard about by the auditors of the approach to supporting survivors and the vulnerable were good and well received.

#### **5.5.4 Culture**

The most critical aspect of safeguarding relates to the culture within a cathedral and extent to which priority is placed on safeguarding individuals as opposed to protecting the reputation of the Church. Also integral is the ability of all members of the Church to 'think the unthinkable' about their friends and colleagues.

SCIE's experience auditing safeguarding in faith contexts more broadly, suggests that in areas where there is experience amongst senior clergy of previous serious abuse cases, a culture of openness and humility in approaching safeguarding issues can be stronger, along with a cultural move away from responses which give too much attention to reputational issues and the welfare of (alleged) perpetrators, as opposed to the welfare of victims and survivors.

The Dean, along with many others in the Cathedral community, has struggled to come to terms with accepting that offences have been committed against children and others over many years by people they have known well, worked alongside, and in some cases, have been personal friends. This led to a period when messages in relation to safeguarding, in particular the prioritisation at all times of those who are victim, survivors, and otherwise vulnerable, have not always been backed by visible and consistent action, whereas there was visible support offered to those who had offended. This has led to conflict within and beyond Chapter, and continues to have an impact.

More recently, there has been a clear recognition of the need to change the culture and attitudes towards safeguarding, and a far more determined focus on clear messaging to this effect. There are visible messages across the Cathedral, some of which have been described above, and safeguarding is now a standing item for discussion in individual and team meetings, public forums, in role descriptions, related information such as the employee handbook and on the Cathedral's website. The introduction of a code of conduct has also been timely.

The engagement of the Dean and others in the diocesan safeguarding arrangements, and the efforts made to involve external agencies in the Cathedral's own structures, are assisting in ensuring that the Cathedral becomes more open to learning from best practice elsewhere.

This is helping the whole community to move forward constructively and although

there remain some individuals who still need helping to come to terms with the recent past and how it has affected them, the Cathedral is well placed to make rapid progress in achieving its commitment of being a safe place for everyone.

#### **Questions for the Cathedral to consider**

- What changes could the Dean take to enable him to take a clearer leadership role, holding others to account, whilst feeling confident that the safeguarding agenda is being led effectively both strategically and operationally?
- What changes does Chapter need to make to roles at Chapter in order to ensure that there is clear strategic leadership of the different elements of safeguarding – ie operational (Safer Recruitment, training, DBS), promoting the safety of children, vulnerable adults and overseeing pastoral care, and the management of sexual offenders whilst ensuring continuing challenge by the CSG? What implications are there for the forthcoming appointment of the Canon for Mission and Growth?
- How might Chapter identify and support those groups and individuals who continue to need help in the aftermath of the recent conviction of the former Director of Music?
- What additional changes does Chapter need to make in order to promote further the embedding of an open, learning culture across the Cathedral community?

#### **5.5.5 Links with the National Safeguarding Team**

Links with the NST are generally made directly via the CSO.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

Safeguarding at Rochester Cathedral has many areas of strength, many of which the Dean, Chapter and staff identified in their self-assessment.

Chapter has overseen the development and delivery of a good safeguarding action plan, and has made progress in establishing a clear framework of leadership and accountability. Chapter is clear about the challenges it faces in moving to the next stage of ensuring that the Cathedral is a safe and supportive place for everyone.

Areas of strength include:

- Strong relationships between the King's Prep School and the music department, supported by good policies and working practices, to promote the safety and wellbeing of the choristers
- Delivering safeguarding training across the entire workforce of clergy, staff and volunteers
- Developing a strong and comprehensive framework of policies and procedures
- Good casework delivered and overseen by the widely known and respected Cathedral Safeguarding Officer
- Developing comprehensive recording systems
- Public and consistent leadership of safeguarding by the Dean, Canon Precentor and chair of the Cathedral Safeguarding Group in particular
- Systematic and strong leadership of the delivery of a comprehensive safeguarding action plan by the CSG which inspires confidence across the workforce
- A focused communication strategy which has promoted a strong and consistent message about safeguarding
- Positive connections with the diocesan safeguarding oversight groups.

The key areas for the Cathedral to address relate to:

- Clarifying governance and leadership arrangements within the Cathedral and together with the Diocese
- Strengthening its approach to the oversight and management of offenders and those who may pose a risk to others
- Developing a comprehensive quality assurance framework
- Continuing to review, update and promote procedures
- Embedding Safer Recruitment practices in all parts of the Cathedral
- Developing more efficient systems which make better use of the Cathedral's limited staffing capacity
- Working to ensure that the voices of victims, survivors and the vulnerable are heard and well understood.

Work in these areas will enable Rochester Cathedral to continue developing and embedding an effective and reliable safeguarding culture which both promotes the Cathedral vision and works for everyone.

## APPENDIX: REVIEW PROCESS

### DATA COLLECTION

#### Information provided to auditors

##### *Context and governance*

- Contextual statement
- Index document for materials
- Self assessment (August 2019)
- Rochester Cathedral Guidebook
- Rochester Cathedral Staff Chart (August 2019)
- Rochester Cathedral Constitution and statutes (9/2000 rev 7/2016)
- Rochester Cathedral Safeguarding Governance Structure (June 2018)
- Rochester Cathedral (September 2019)
- Rochester Cathedral Development Plan (2018–22)
- Annual report 2017
- Annual report (2018)
- Risk register (August 2018)
- Annual report on safeguarding to the Bishop (March 2019)
- Welcome leaflet
- Safeguarding self-audit (national) (Oct 2015)
- Rochester Cathedral Visitation (May 2015)
- Rochester Cathedral Visitation – Bishop's report to Chapter (March 2016)
- Chapters Response to the Bishop's Safeguarding report (May 2016)
- Response by Chapter to recommendations (May 2016)
- Independent Review of Safeguarding Practices at Rochester Cathedral (9/7/19)
- Rochester Cathedral Terms of Reference Chapter Safeguarding Lead
- Rochester Cathedral Safeguarding Meeting Governance Structure Chart
- Rochester Diocesan audit – SCIE (November 2017)

##### *Chapter*

- Chapter minutes and safeguarding report (11/3/2019, 29/4/19, 17/6/19)

##### *Cathedral Safeguarding Group*

- Safeguarding Implementation Group Terms of Reference (revised) (December 2018)
- Safeguarding action plan 2019–20 (4 July 2019)
- Rochester Cathedral Safeguarding Group Meeting Minutes (17 June 2019, 11 July 2019, 5 August 2019)

### *Bishop's Safeguarding Advisory Panel*

- Terms of reference (September 2018 (updated))
- MOU – BSAP chair (1/6/17-31/5/18)
- BSAP Notes of Meeting (25 September 2018, 10 December 2018, 18 March 2019)

### *Diocesan Safeguarding Executive Committee*

- Diocese of Rochester SEC Terms of Reference (Jan 2018)
- Diocese of Rochester Safeguarding Executive Committee Meeting Notes (28 March 2019, 16 May 2019, 2 July 2019)

### *Cathedral safeguarding advisor and team and their supervision & management*

- MOU safeguarding between Cathedral and Diocese (Dec 2017)
- Updated MOU (12/3/19)
- Biography Cathedral Safeguarding Officer

### *Policies, procedures and guidance*

- Rochester Cathedral Complaints Policy 3/6/19 (draft)
- Rochester Cathedral Staff Recruitment Policy 12/6/19 (draft)
- Rochester Cathedral vs 0.2 – Whistleblowing policy August 2019 (draft)
- Rochester Cathedral Draft – Safeguarding Training Policy (draft)
- Rochester Cathedral Code of Safer Working Practice 4/7/19 (draft)

### *Choir*

- Rochester Cathedral Choir Tours Policy (April 2015)
- Rochester Cathedral Chorister Handbook 2019–2020 (draft)
- Rochester Cathedral Procedure for the joint safeguarding of the Choristers (1/2/19)
- Rochester Cathedral Procedure for the Safeguarding of Girl Choristers not at Kings (01/02/2019)
- Rochester Cathedral Chorister Tutor – Application Pack (May 2019)
- Chorister Chaperone Role Profile

### *Safeguarding practice*

- Rochester Cathedral Safeguarding lanyard card
- Rochester Cathedral Safeguarding poster (June 2019)
- Rochester Cathedral Safeguarding Incident Report Form Version 2 (current)

### *Staff and volunteers*

- Rochester Cathedral Employee Handbook v15 (updated June 2019)
- Rochester Cathedral Volunteer Policy (1/8/19 (draft))

- Rochester Cathedral Volunteer Handbook(August 2019 (draft))
- Rochester Cathedral Volunteer Agreement (30/7/19 (draft))
- Rochester Cathedral Volunteer Application Form (30/7/19 (draft))
- Staff training (August 2019)
- Volunteer training (1 August 2019)
- Children's Representative Role Profile (draft)
- Vulnerable Adults Representative Role Profile (draft)

### **Participation of members of the Cathedral**

During the audit, a Learning Together session with key Chapter members and safeguarding staff was held at the start and end of the site visit, to discuss Rochester Cathedral's safeguarding self-assessment, and the auditors' initial impressions. The auditors were taken on a tour of relevant parts of the Cathedral and its associated buildings. The auditors also observed an evening rehearsal of the boys' choir, at which the boys' choir sang.

Conversations were held with:

- Dean
- Canon Precentor
- Chapter Clerk
- Chair of the Cathedral Safeguarding Group (who is also a lay member of Chapter)
- Head Teacher, King's Preparatory School
- Independent Chair of Bishop's Safeguarding Advisory Panel
- Director of Music
- Assistant Director of Music
- Principal lay clerks (x 2)
- Volunteer Manager
- Visitor Experience and Enterprise Manager
- Education Officer
- Cathedral Safeguarding Officer
- Dean's PA and Head of Administration
- Head Verger
- Bell Captain

Telephone conversations were held with:

- Bishop of Rochester
- former Canon for Mission and Growth
- Cathedral volunteer

Four focus groups, of between three and seven people, were held with:

- Chorister boys and girls

- Chorister parents, some of whom were also volunteer chaperones
- Volunteers from a range of different activity areas, all of whom are also members of the Cathedral congregation
- Choir chaperones

### **The audit: what records/files were examined?**

The auditors looked at 18 cases, three of which related to a person who may pose a risk to others, the majority of the remainder concerned vulnerable adults.

Nine HR files were reviewed for evidence of Safer Recruitment, six of which were for staff and three for volunteers.

No Clergy Blue Files were reviewed due to a problem with access, but auditors were made aware of the issues contained within the one file relevant to the audit.

### **Limitations of audit**

Nobody who had used the safeguarding service came forward for interview.