

Diocesan Self-Assessment Key Safeguarding Data 2018

Background

This report presents latest data taken from annual safeguarding returns for 2018, collected by dioceses and sent to the National Safeguarding Team.

Each diocese will have responded to the self-assessment questions based on information from their own parishes and other sources and should be viewed in this context.

The diocesan self-assessment process has been an evolving tool, and the results have been collated nationally since 2015. This report presents an annual update on the previous data collection and reporting activity.

Introduction

The Church of England consists of nearly 16,000 churches across the country: with around 1.12 million adults and children making up the regular worshipping community. This means it comes into contact with significant numbers of children, young people and adults and safeguarding them is a priority. The majority of safeguarding-related concerns or allegations relate to children or vulnerable adults who attend or who have contact with the Church and their lives within the community. In 2018, sixteen percent of all concerns (400 cases) involve allegations relating to clergy. There are currently around 20,000 active clergy including those licensed and with Permission to Officiate in the Church.

It will also include those who have been assessed, either by statutory agencies or by the Church, as likely to pose a risk to others. Such risks need to be managed in collaboration with statutory partners, led at diocesan level by professional Diocesan Safeguarding Advisors (DSA) to whom all concerns or allegations relating to church officers (lay or clergy, paid or unpaid) must be reported. Their role is to support the diocese in responding well to safeguarding concerns, working closely with parish safeguarding officers. DSAs also provide professional advice to promote the welfare of people in the Church community on a range of preventive activities for example DBS checks.

The data provides evidence of the importance of the Church's role in safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults in the community as well as increased awareness of safeguarding issues within the Church, in part due to an extensive national training programme introduced from 2016. More than half a million training places have been completed across dioceses since its introduction.

In any report about data of this nature, it is important to recognise that behind each statistic is a person. Safeguarding is about everyone's wellbeing and means the action the Church takes to promote a safer culture.

KEY HEADLINES

- OVERALL, THE NUMBER OF CONCERNS OR ALLEGATIONS REPORTED TO DIOCESES IN 2018 RELATING TO CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND VULNERABLE ADULTS IN THE CHURCH WAS 2,504
- OF THE 2,504 CONCERNS REPORTED IN 2018, 34% RELATE TO ALLEGATIONS IN RESPECT OF A CHURCH OFFICER
- 16% OF ALL CONCERNS REPORTED IN 2018 INVOLVE ALLEGATIONS RELATED TO CLERGY
- THE LARGEST NUMBER OF CONCERNS BY TYPE – 759 CASES – RELATE TO SEXUAL ABUSE: 30% OF THE TOTAL
- THERE WERE 915 CONCERNS OR ALLEGATIONS IN RELATION TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE in 2018
- 25% OF CONCERNS OR ALLEGATIONS IN 2018 REQUIRED REPORTING TO STATUTORY AUTHORITIES
- IN 2018, DIOCESES WERE MANAGING 1,120 SAFEGUARDING AGREEMENTS FOR PEOPLE WHO ATTEND A WORSHIPPING COMMUNITY AND MAY POSE A RISK TO OTHERS

Definitions

Concern - Safeguarding concerns are matters relating to an individual and reported to the DSA for guidance or action; this may or may not result in a referral to statutory agencies. The reporting of concerns may not in itself represent a safeguarding problem that requires intervention, dioceses will determine what are safeguarding matters that they need to act upon and what can be referred on for example complaints about behaviour.

Safeguarding agreement - a written agreement used to establish clear boundaries and expected behaviour for those who may pose a risk to others and want to attend church services and activities. These are often used with those who have been convicted of an offence and want to attend church, and have been referred to the diocese by police, local authority or probation services.

Church Officer - anyone appointed/elected by or on behalf of the Church to an office, post or role, whether they are ordained or lay, paid or unpaid.

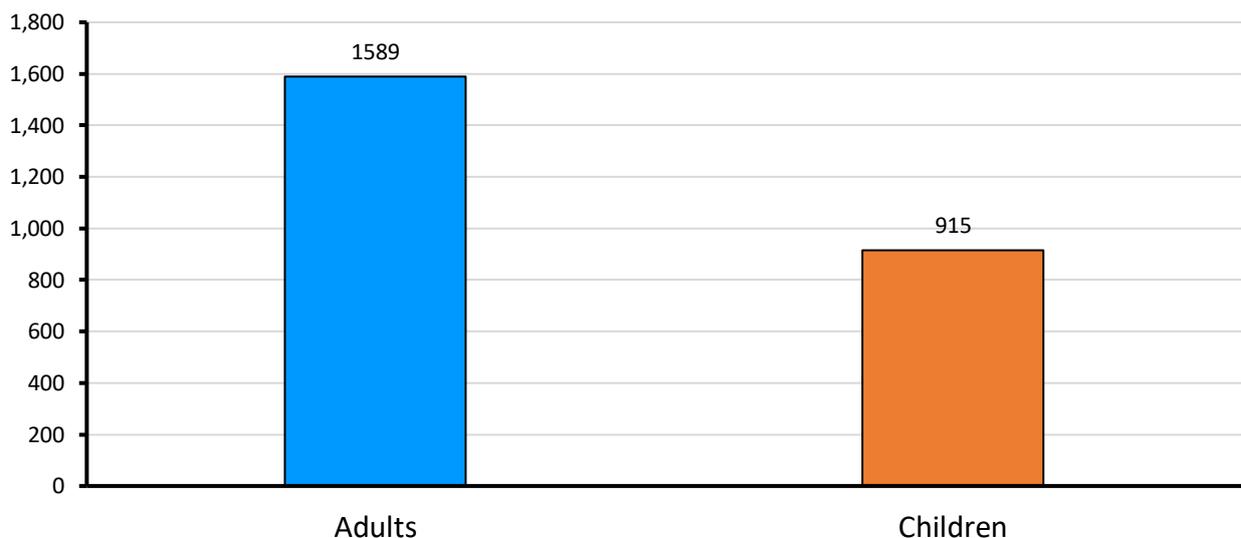
For more information on definitions see **Safeguarding glossary**

All safeguarding concerns and allegations

The overall number of safeguarding related concerns or allegations in respect of children or adults reported to dioceses in 2018 was 2,504.¹

In 2017, this number was 3287. There has been a reduction in overall numbers therefore and we do not know why this might be. 2018's figure is higher than 2015 and slightly below 2016, this may represent a banding of numbers of concerns where the actual figure may fluctuate slightly over time. We do not have enough years' data to know this yet. In line with the overall findings, numbers of children referred for concerns fell from 1257 in 2017 to 915 in 2018, and numbers of adults referred for concerns fell from 2030 in 2017 to 1589 in 2018. This may represent normal variation within a banding. However, we know from our feedback mechanisms that training needs to have more detail regarding adults who may be at risk, especially including mental health, and this is a future area for development.

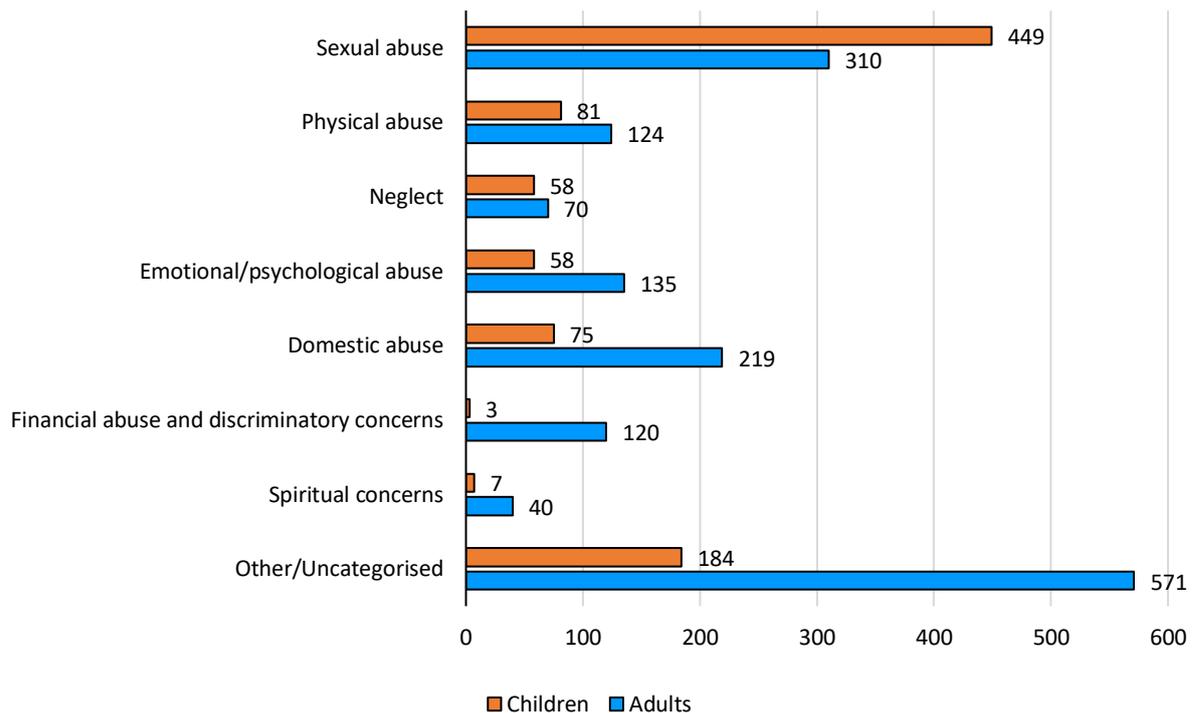
Figure 1: Numbers of reported safeguarding concerns or allegations relating to children and adults 2018



¹ Concerns/allegations were reported during the year but the incidents that they relate to may not necessarily have occurred during that year – they are both current and non-current.

In terms of types of abuse, the largest category of concerns or allegations relating to both children and vulnerable adults relates to sexual abuse (30%) (see Figure 2). This is consistent with the previous data which also showed sexual abuse as the highest category of concern (42%) although there has been a decrease.

Figure 2: Nature of reported safeguarding concerns or allegations relating to children and adults in 2018



Concerns or allegations relating to the safeguarding of children

The overall number of safeguarding concerns or allegations about children, reported in 2018, was 915. The largest category was concerns or allegations relating to sexual abuse (449), accounting for 49% of the total.

Concerns or allegations relating to the safeguarding of adults

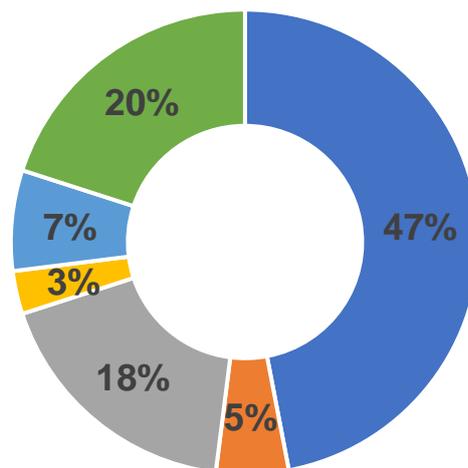
The overall number of safeguarding concerns or allegations about adults, reported in 2018, was 1,589. There were 571 concerns or allegations where a single defined category was not assigned at the time of information capture. Otherwise, the largest category was concerns or allegations relating to sexual abuse (310), accounting for 20% of the total. It is of note that for recent concerns about adults, sexual abuse accounted

for 13%, whereas out of non-recent concerns sexual abuse accounted for 40%. It suggests that we continue to see reporting of historical sexual abuse into dioceses. The actual numbers of sexual abuse reported by adults in 2018 is 155, for both recent and non-recent incidents. The data does not tell us if adults reporting non-recent concerns about sexual abuse were adults or children at the time the abuse occurred, which is an area for further development.

For both children and adults, a number of concerns raised have not been assigned a single category of abuse (adults 40% and children 20%). It is likely that a number of concerns raised about children and adults may cover more than one category, or do not fit easily into a category at all. Defining more closely the types of concerns raised is also an area for development to inform learning and practice.

Domestic abuse is the second highest category of reported concerns in 2018, accounting for just under 300 concerns out of 2,504. We know that the impact of COVID-19 has seen an increase in contact to domestic abuse support services and so it seems likely that there will be a similar increase in domestic abuse reported in a church context in the future.

Figure 3: Allegations made in 2018 against church officers, 34% of the total numbers of allegations (anyone appointed to a church role, lay or ordained, paid or unpaid)



- Clergy
- Churchwardens
- Volunteers
- Readers and licensed lay ministers
- Employees
- Other

Of the total number of concerns and allegations, 844 allegations (34% of the total) were made against church officers in relation to both adults and children in 2018. In 2017, there were 736 allegations made. The proportion of allegations against clergy accounts for around 16% of all concerns or allegations (400 concerns). In 2017 this was 12% of clergy and 300 concerns. This increase suggests that there is better awareness of safeguarding within the Church, and greater likelihood of concerns being referred into DSAs, both of which represent improved safeguarding systems. It is probable that actual safeguarding concerns about members of clergy have not significantly changed over time (see later evidence relating to clergy discipline), but that the increase reflects the impact of safeguarding training across the whole Church, and the increased likelihood that people will report concerns to a DSA about members of clergy, where there may have been greater reticence in the past. Of the 844 allegations against church officers, 47% were made against clergy and 18% against volunteers. Individuals categorised as 'other' accounted for 20% of allegations against church officers in 2018. The category of 'other' comprises miscellaneous church officers and members of church groups and committees. Figure 3 provides a further breakdown of the roles associated with concerns or allegations against church officers in 2018. The breakdown between different roles is similar to previous data.

The number of allegations relating to sexual abuse by church officers was 441 in 2018, accounting for 18% of the total concerns.

Outcomes of concerns or allegations

Of the 2,504 safeguarding concerns or allegations relating to children and adults reported in 2018, 631 (25%) were reported to statutory agencies. However, just under half (44%) of all concerns about children (401 out of 915) were reported to statutory agencies.

This figure does not take into account individuals who have been referred to the Church by statutory partners, for example those who are subject to Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements or who have come to the attention of statutory agencies for other reasons. This means that referrals to dioceses in 2018 leading to a proportion of the 1120 safeguarding agreements have come from statutory partners therefore do not require referral back again. It is therefore the case that the number of adults known to

statutory partners, out of the 2.504 concerns, is higher than 25%. It is not possible from the current dataset to identify this figure however.

In all cases, the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser will make a decision as to whether to refer to statutory agencies in accordance with legal requirements, their professional judgement, and locally agreed multi-agency thresholds for referral to such agencies. All concerns and allegations are treated very seriously according to House of Bishops' Guidance.

Disciplinary measures were taken in 49 cases in 2018, of which 24 were under the Clergy Disciplinary Measure and 6 names were added to the Archbishops' List. In 2017 there were 72 cases (39 CDMs). There were 19 non-clergy disciplinary processes (33 in 2017). In 2018, 33 individuals were referred by dioceses to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for consideration of barring (36 in 2017). This does suggest variation in activity between the years, and combined with the overall increase of concerns raised about clergy, suggests that more concerns are being raised earlier because there are greater overall numbers but lower numbers of disciplinary cases. It is possible therefore that the overall increase in clergy concerns shows that more people are willing to refer clergy to the DSA when they first begin to have concerns and are not waiting until escalation or more serious incidents. It may also be that CDMs have a time lag, so cases raised about incidents in 2018 may not have been completed until 2019.

Risk assessments and safeguarding agreements

In 2018, 656 standard risk assessments were completed. Risk assessment guidance was first introduced in 2015 and updated in 2017. There were 511 in 2017.

The number of independent risk assessments was 14 in 2018, of which 11 related to clergy. Regulations relating to independent risk assessments came into force in 2017 when 27 were completed about clergy. These figures also point to the hypothesis above, that although greater numbers of concerns are being identified about clergy, this may be happening earlier therefore enabling safeguarding action to be taken in a timely and more effective way.

Dioceses reported 1,120 Safeguarding Agreements (1056 in 2017) in place for known offenders or those who may pose a risk. Agreements generally are ongoing, although subject to review, and therefore the number is unlikely to decrease significantly over time.

Conclusion

The Church of England is involved in every community and can potentially play an important role in the safeguarding of children and vulnerable people in our society. Everyone who participates in the life of the Church has a role to play in promoting a Safer Church for all.

The House of Bishops' safeguarding policy states: "Safeguarding means the action the Church takes to promote a safer culture. This means we will promote the welfare of children, young people and adults, work to prevent abuse from occurring, seek to protect those that are at risk of being abused and respond well to those that have been abused. We will take care to identify where a person may present a risk to others and offer support to them whilst taking steps to mitigate such risks".

We now have four years' worth of data about safeguarding activity within the Church. We know that further work is required to embed a quality assurance framework, which will improve our ability to self-assess and use data to inform learning and development at a national level. We know that the current data collection operates largely manually, and that we have not yet defined sufficiently the data required to ensure consistent interpretation. However, we have begun to build a baseline of numbers of concerns, types, those affected (children and adults), and those causing concern, and types of activity resulting from this: risk assessments and safeguarding agreements. We now need to build upon this to continue the Church's progress in effective safeguarding.

For more information about the work of the National Safeguarding Team please visit www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding.