

Diocesan Self-Assessment  
Key Safeguarding Data  
2019 – 2021

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## 1. Background

Each year dioceses are asked to make a return to the National Safeguarding Team of basic safeguarding data. Dioceses complete a self-assessment pro forma which asks for specific data. This report presents the latest data taken from annual safeguarding returns for 2019, 2020 and 2021. In earlier years the information asked for was extensive and it was a major exercise for dioceses to make the return. For 2019, 2020 and 2021, a slimmed down data return was used to make the task more manageable.

**Care and caution** do have to be exercised when considering this data for the following reasons:

- The Church is still on a developmental journey in respect of recording and reporting of safeguarding data. Arrangements and capacity for recording and reporting data vary considerably between dioceses, which may in part account for variation in the number of concerns and allegations reported. These issues will with time will be addressed by the rolling out of the national casework management system.
- This data only covers a three-year period, so one cannot talk about definite “trends”.
- The data we have is for concerns and allegations **reported** to the Church. Some will be about Church officers such as clergy, but some will not. For example, a church member might have disclosed that their non churchgoing partner was assaulting them, or someone with convictions for sexual offences might join a congregation. The Church aspires to be a safe space where people who have experienced abuse in other parts of their life can disclose that abuse and be supported. It also seeks to minister – safely - to those who been perpetrators of abuse. In each of the three years reported here, over 60% of concerns and allegations were not about Church officers.
- This report details concerns and allegations received by diocesan safeguarding teams, not established incidents of abuse.
- What is initially badged as a “safeguarding” concern or allegation might in fact not turn out to be so following further assessment; for example, it might be more appropriately dealt with under human resources processes.
- The annual audit is a completely different exercise from the Past Cases Review 2 (PCR2) exercise.

## 2. Purpose of this report

- i. The data enables the Church to identify significant or emerging issues to inform dialogue and planning at a national and strategic level.
- ii. This report presents aggregated data taken from the returns. While variation between dioceses is considered at Section 6, data for individual dioceses is not given. However,

dioceses will be able to compare the overall Church position with their own. This should help to generate local dialogue about the nature of safeguarding need and activity.

- iii. The data in this report enables the Church to be accountable and transparent. The data will be published on the Church's website so that bodies and individuals can gain a picture of the nature of safeguarding activity in the Church as a whole.

### 3. Understanding the report

- i. Each questionnaire captures information about **new** "safeguarding concerns and allegations" reported in the particular year. It does not capture information about already known cases where there is on-going involvement from previous years. Nor does it seek to capture the totality of other safeguarding work and activity of the diocese or Diocesan Safeguarding Advisors (DSAs).
- ii. The term "safeguarding concerns and allegations" is used to capture the range of safeguarding matters reported, from possible risk of abuse to allegations of abuse. Dioceses were asked not to include low-level contacts. For example, where a matter is initially referred to the DSA for advice and, although advice is given, the matter is deemed not to be a safeguarding concern or allegation.
- iii. Information was asked for in respect of three groups of people who are the potential/actual victims of abuse (in previous years, only two groups were used: "adults" and "children"):
  - Children (current)
    - These were children (i.e., aged under 18) at the time of the concern/allegation being reported in each year.
  - Children (non-recent)
    - These were children at the time of the alleged abuse but adults when reported in each year.
  - Adults
    - These were adults at the time that the concern/allegation refers to, as well as at the time of reporting.
- iv. **Church officer:** a Church officer is anyone appointed/elected by or on behalf of the Church to a post or role, whether they are ordained or lay, paid or unpaid.
- v. Within this report, all numbers have been rounded up or down to the nearest 5, except for numbers between 1 and 4, which have been replaced by an asterisk ("0" and "5" will remain as numbers). The purpose of this is to reduce the risk of identifying individuals from published figures, and to ensure that it is not possible to calculate the value of the asterisks by deducting the other given numbers from the totals. **This could mean that there are instances where sub-totals do not altogether amount to the given total.**

## 4. Part 1 data

Data in this section is about concerns and allegations about an individual him/herself posing a direct risk to a child or adult because of their actions and/or having committed abusive acts. This included concerns and allegations about Church officers but also non-Church officers (e.g., members of a congregation, including those being supervised by statutory agencies, released from prison etc).

### 4.1 All safeguarding concerns and allegations

#### Key Headlines 2019

- Overall, the number of concerns and allegations reported to dioceses relating to vulnerable adults, children and young people was 2,420.
- 1,170 related to adults and 1,250 related to children – a 48:52 split.
- Of the 1,250 concerns and allegations reported to dioceses relating to children, 795 were current and 455 were non-recent.
- Of the 2,420 concerns and allegations reported, 32% related to a Church officer.
- 13% related to serving clergy or retired clergy with permission to officiate.
- There were 990 concerns and allegations relating to sexual abuse - the largest number of concerns by type – accounting for 41% of the total.
- There were 830 concerns and allegations which were reported to the statutory authorities.
- Dioceses managed around 1,185 safeguarding agreements for individuals attending a worshipping community who might pose a risk to others.

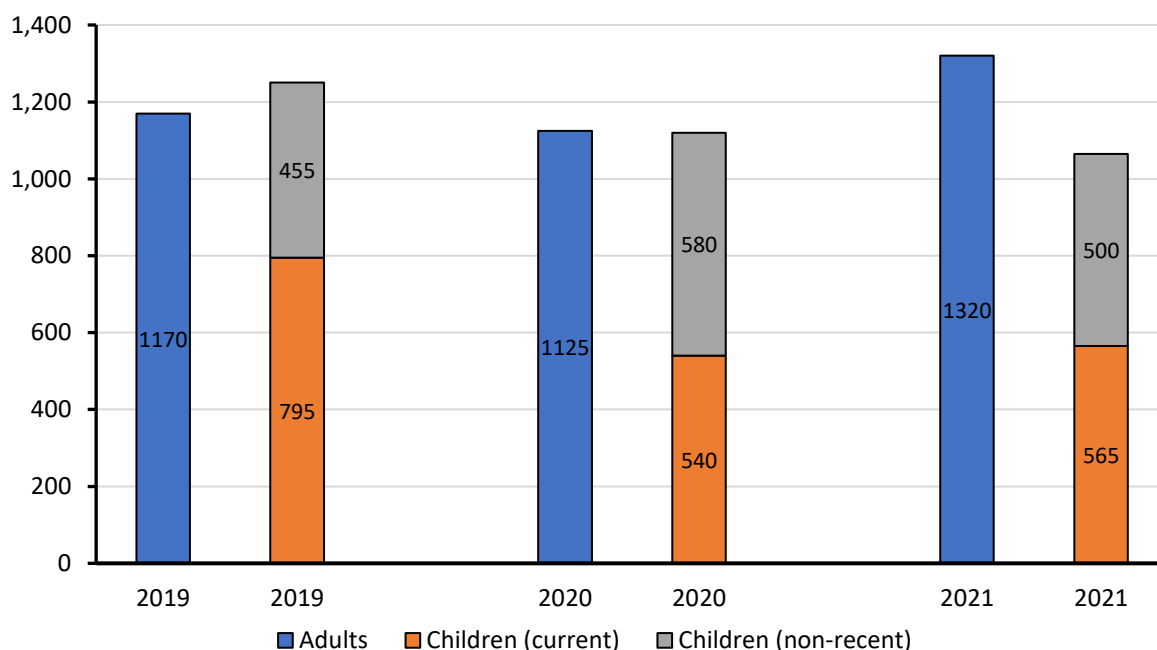
#### Key Headlines 2020

- Overall, the number of concerns and allegations reported to dioceses relating to vulnerable adults, children and young people was 2,245.
- 1,125 related to adults and 1,120 related to children – a 50:50 split.
- Of the 1,120 concerns and allegations reported to dioceses relating to children, 540 were current and 580 were non-recent.
- Significant reduction in figures for children (current) in respect of sexual and physical abuse.
- Of the 2,245 concerns and allegations reported, 39% related to a church officer.
- 16% related to serving clergy or retired clergy with permission to officiate.
- There were 915 concerns and allegations relating to sexual abuse - the largest number of concerns by type – accounting for 41% of the total.
- There were 740 concerns and allegations which were reported to the statutory authorities.
- Dioceses managed around 1,125 safeguarding agreements for individuals attending a worshipping community who might pose a risk to others.

### Key Headlines 2021

- Overall, the number of concerns and allegations reported to dioceses relating to vulnerable adults, children and young people was 2,385.
- 1,320 related to adults and 1,065 related to children – a 55:45 split.
- The number of domestic abuse concerns/allegations increased significantly this year (295 compared with 230 in 2020).
- Of the 1,065 concerns and allegations reported to dioceses relating to children, 565 were current and 500 were non-recent.
- Of the 2,385 concerns and allegations reported, 34% related to a church officer.
- 17% related to serving clergy or retired clergy with permission to officiate.
- There were 940 concerns and allegations relating to sexual abuse - the largest number of concerns by type – accounting for 39% of the total.
- There were 845 concerns and allegations which were reported to the statutory authorities.
- Dioceses managed around 1,180 safeguarding agreements for individuals attending a worshipping community who might pose a risk to others.

**Figure 1: Numbers of reported safeguarding concerns or allegations relating to children and adults 2019 to 2021**

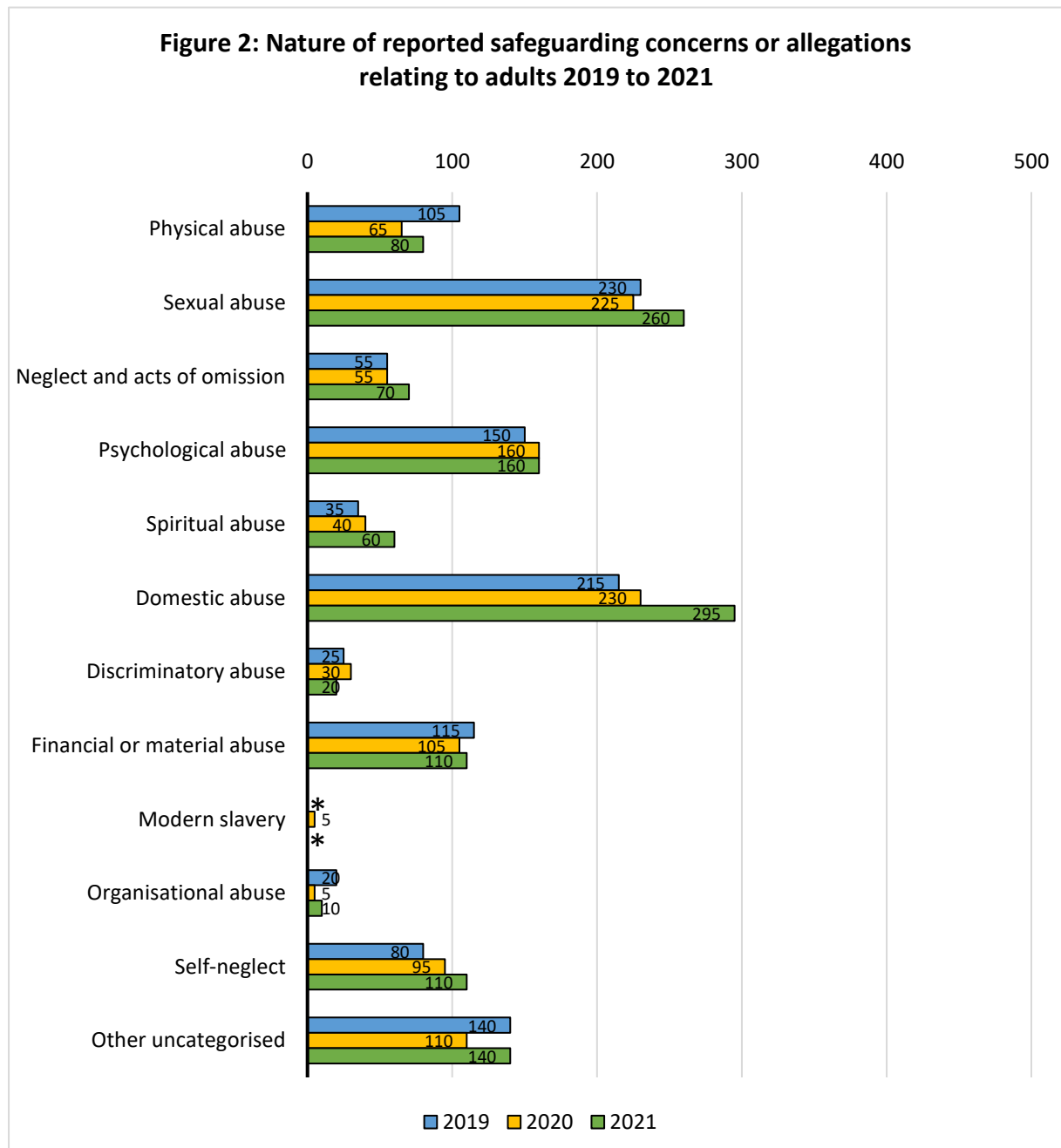


### Comment

- The **overall numbers** of concerns/allegations for 2019 and 2021 are largely the same, with a small dip in 2020 (which might be explained by Covid-19 issues).

## 4.2 Safeguarding concerns and allegations relating to adults

There are twelve categories of safeguarding concerns and allegations relating to adults. The largest categories were those relating to domestic abuse, which accounted for almost 21% of all safeguarding concerns and allegations during the three-year period 2019 to 2021; sexual abuse, which accounted for almost 20%; and psychological abuse, which accounted for 13%.



## Comment

Concerns and allegations regarding adults have **increased** over the three years by 13% – including a 17% increase between 2020 and 2021. The largest increases were:

- Sexual abuse – from 230 to 260, an increase of 13%
- Spiritual abuse – from 35 to 60, an increase of 71%
- Domestic abuse – from 215 to 295, an increase of 37%
- Self-neglect – from 80 to 110, an increase of 38%

There has been one significant reduction during this period: physical abuse reduced from 105 to 80, a reduction of 24%.

### Domestic abuse

The increase in concerns and allegations regarding domestic abuse over this period mirrors the wider societal position. The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) paper *Domestic violence and abuse: Safeguarding during the COVID-19 crisis* (February 2022) found:

*The importance of safeguarding adults who experience domestic abuse has not diminished during the COVID-19 crisis. Evidence from statutory and voluntary agencies across the UK emphasises the increased risks of domestic abuse, with Refuge reporting a 60% increase in calls and online requests since the first lockdown began in March 2020... Domestic abuse organisations observed increased household tension and domestic violence due to forced co-existence, economic stress, and fears about the virus. Increased isolation could create an escalation in abuse, where those who are living with an abusive partner or family member, maybe less likely to ask for help. Fewer visitors to the household mean that evidence of physical abuse could have gone unnoticed.*

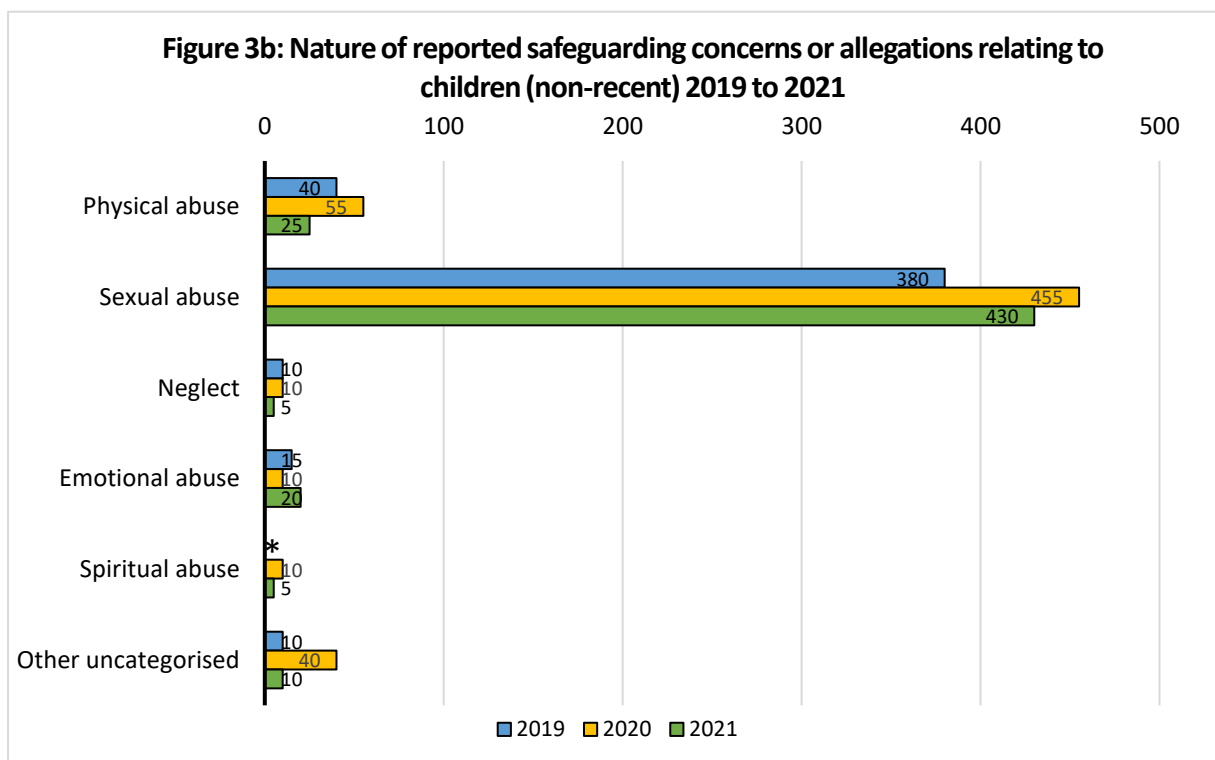
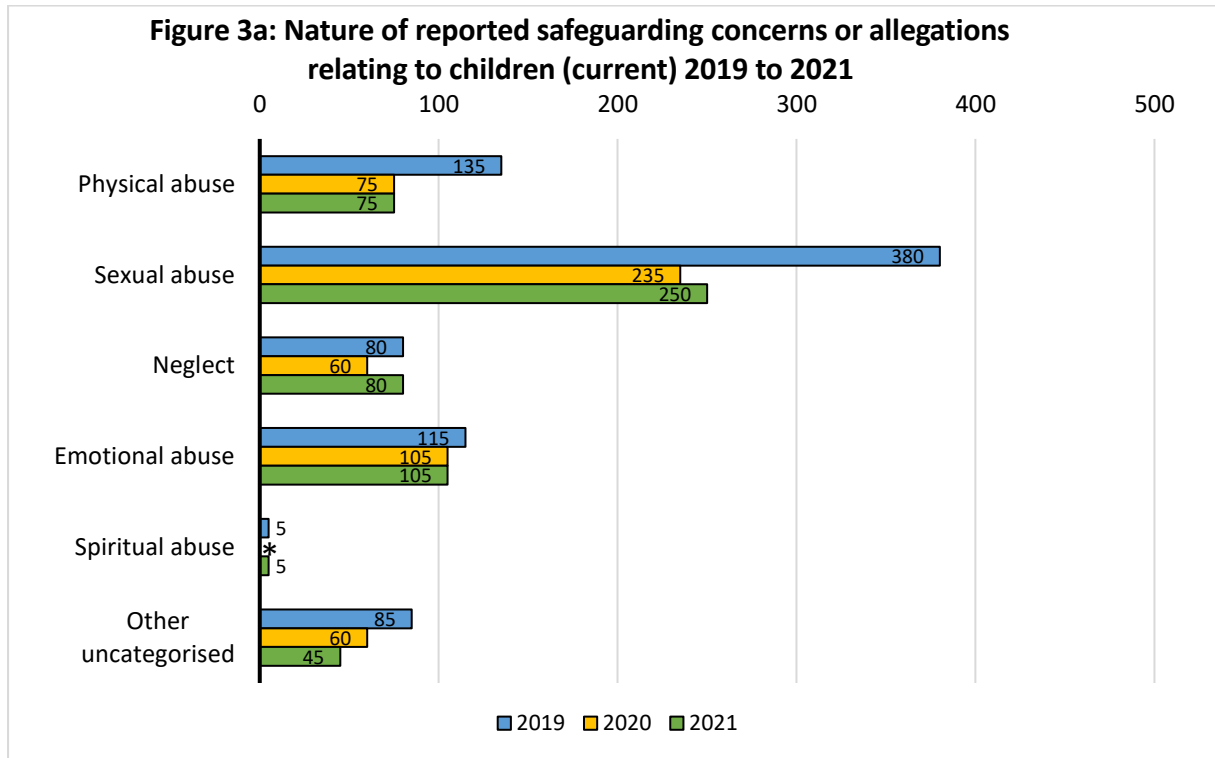
### Spiritual abuse

With regard to spiritual abuse, which is a form of psychological abuse in respect of adults, although the actual numbers are small, the increase from 35 to 60 over three years is of interest as it illustrates the growing awareness of this form of psychological abuse.



### 4.3 Safeguarding concerns and allegations relating to children

There are six categories of safeguarding concerns and allegations relating to children. The largest category was that relating to sexual abuse, which accounted for 46% of all current safeguarding concerns and allegations relating to children during the three-year period 2019 to 2021; and 82% of all non-recent safeguarding concerns and allegations relating to children.



## Comment

### Children (current)

There has been a significant **reduction** in the number of concerns/allegations concerning children (current) from 795 in 2019 to 540 in 2020, and 565 in 2021 (32% and 29% reduction respectively). This reduction might in part be explained by the impact of covid restrictions. For example, the restrictions resulted in reduced opportunities for direct contact between people and the main areas of reduction are in respect of sexual and physical abuse. Alternatively, the impact of covid restrictions might have resulted in a lower level of reporting of abuse rather than an actual reduction in occurrence if one of the impacts of the restrictions was to make abuse more hidden. Nationally, the number of referrals to local authority children's social care services was lower during the lockdowns than in previous comparable periods. Data from the Department for Education indicates that the total number of referrals between May 2020 and January 2022 was around 10% lower than the average during the comparable weeks in 2017 to 2020.

The scale of the reduction in respect of Church reported cases might give some hope that there is something more than the Covid-19 effect happening.

### Children (non-recent)

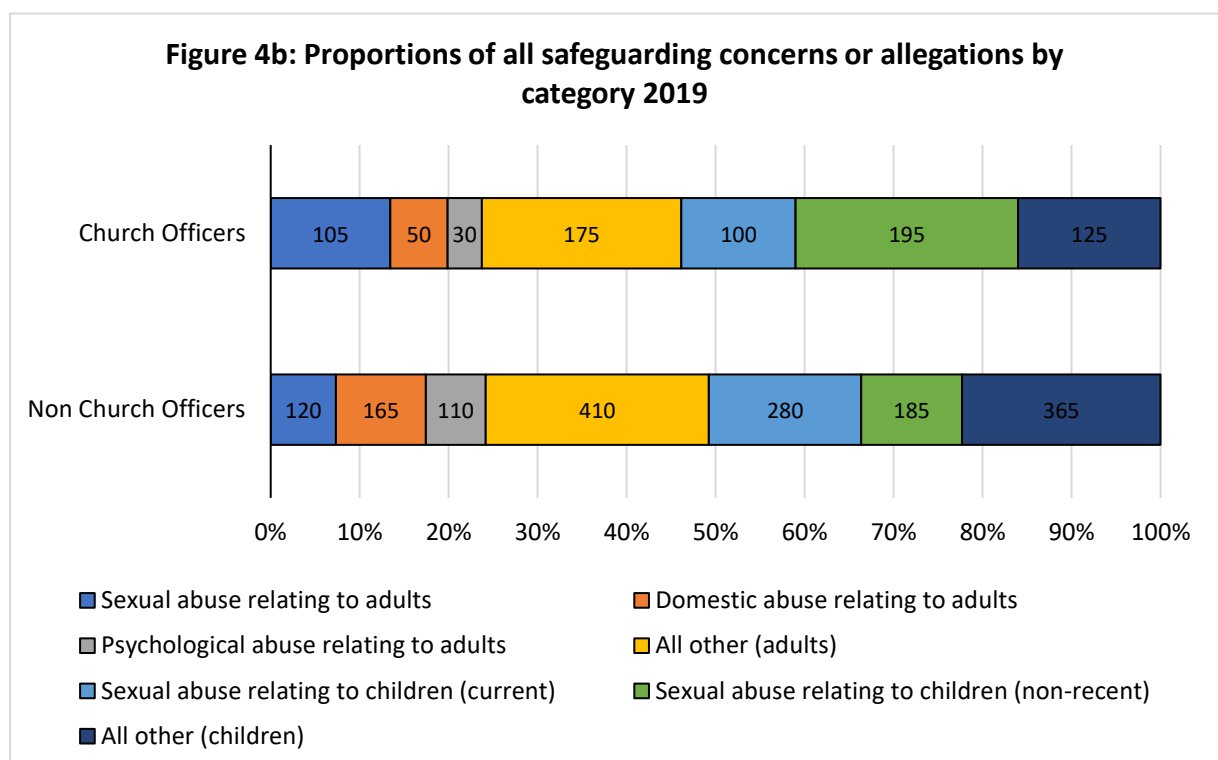
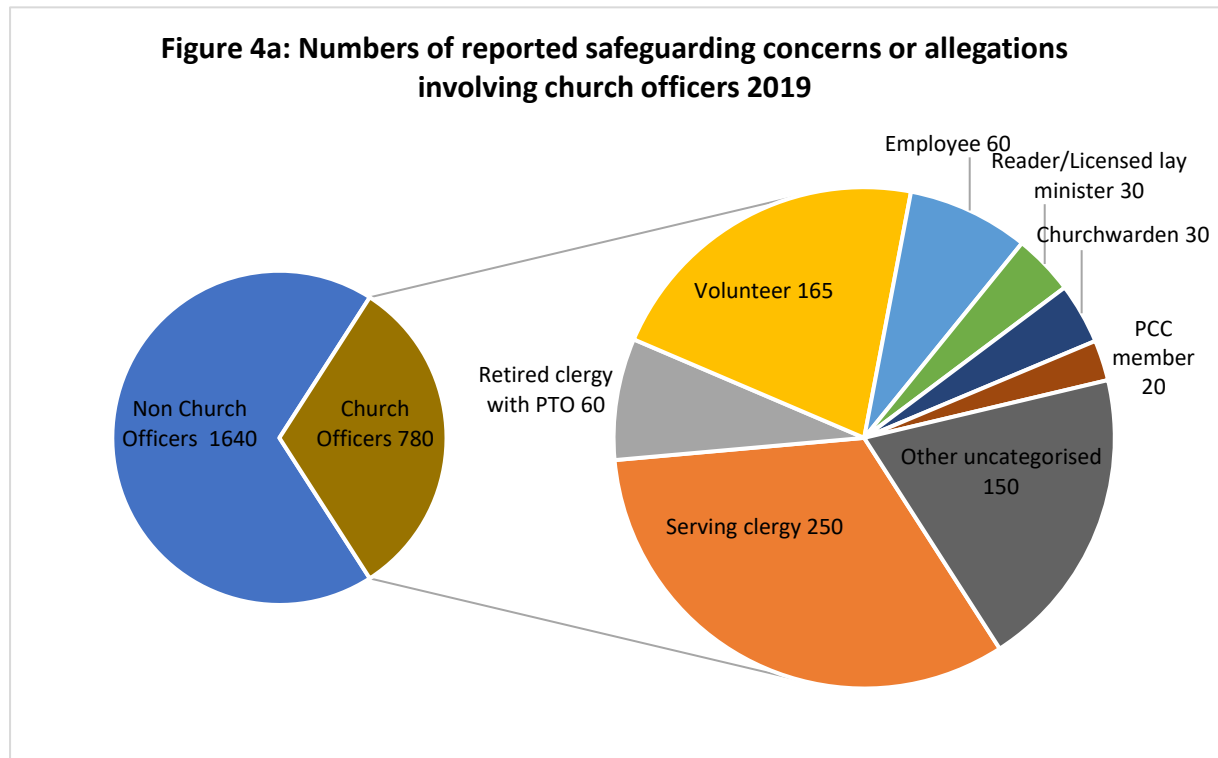
There has been an **increase** in the number of concerns/allegations regarding children (non-recent) over the three years. Sexual abuse remains the largest category of abuse. Compared with 2019 (455), overall numbers increased by 27% in 2020 (580) and 10% in 2021 (500). (Though the figure dropped from 580 in 2020 to 500 in 2021, a 14% decrease)

This overall increase might be the result of the PCR2 process uncovering non-recent cases requiring further investigation.

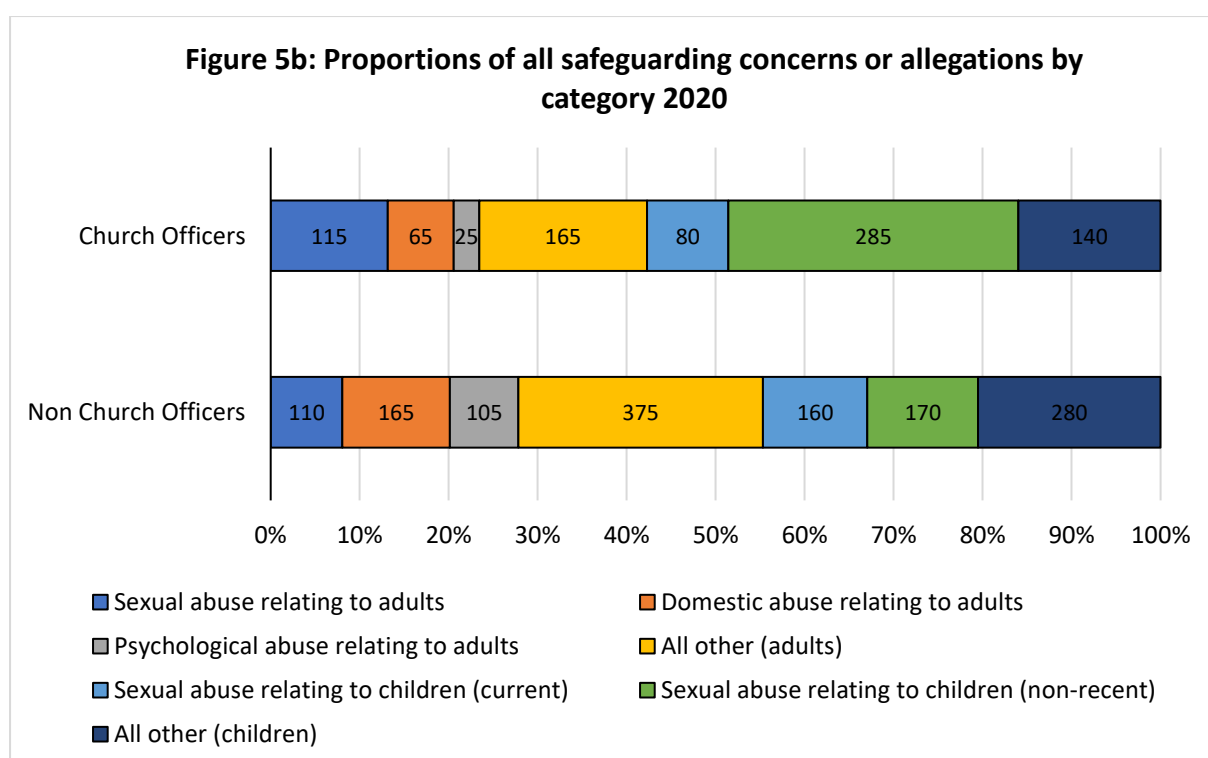
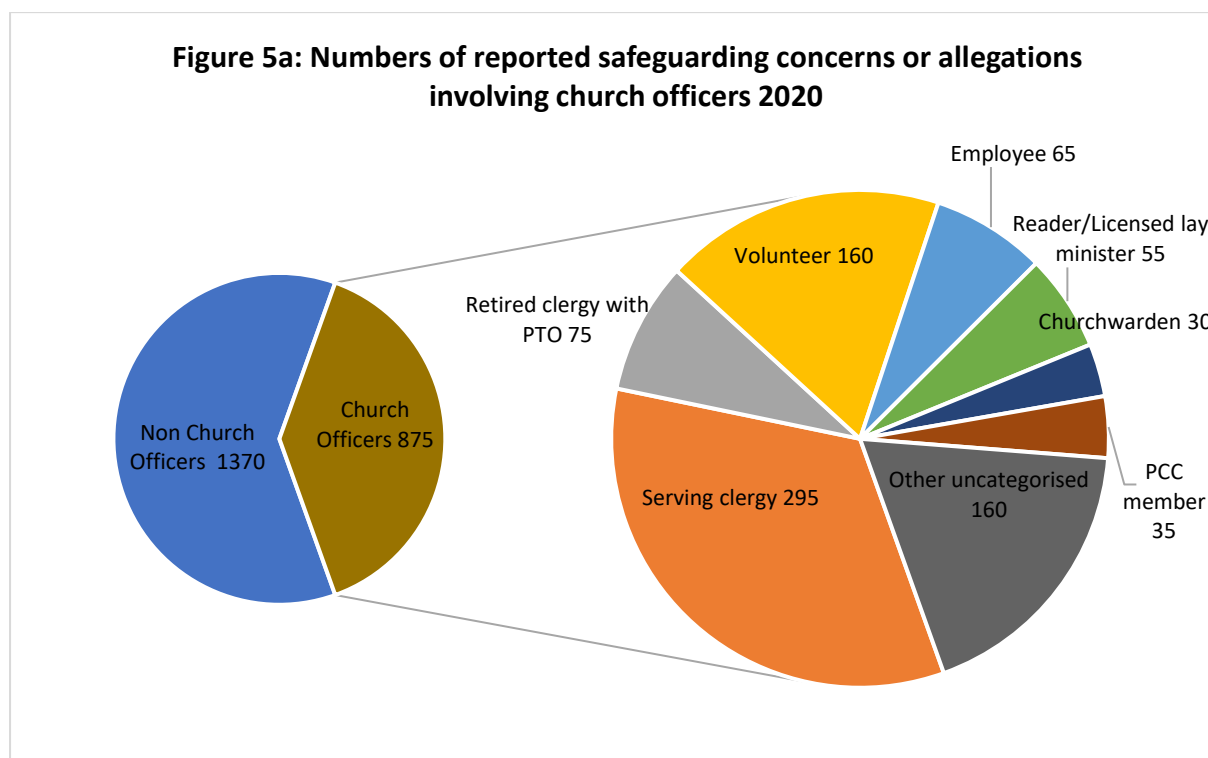
It would also suggest that there is some way to go before all non-recent cases come to light and the curve starts to turn.

#### 4.4 Safeguarding concerns and allegations involving Church officers

Of the total of 2,420 concerns and allegations reported to dioceses in **2019**, in relation to both adults and children, 780 (32%) involved church officers. Concerns and allegations involving serving clergy accounted for around 10% of the total and those involving volunteers around 7%.

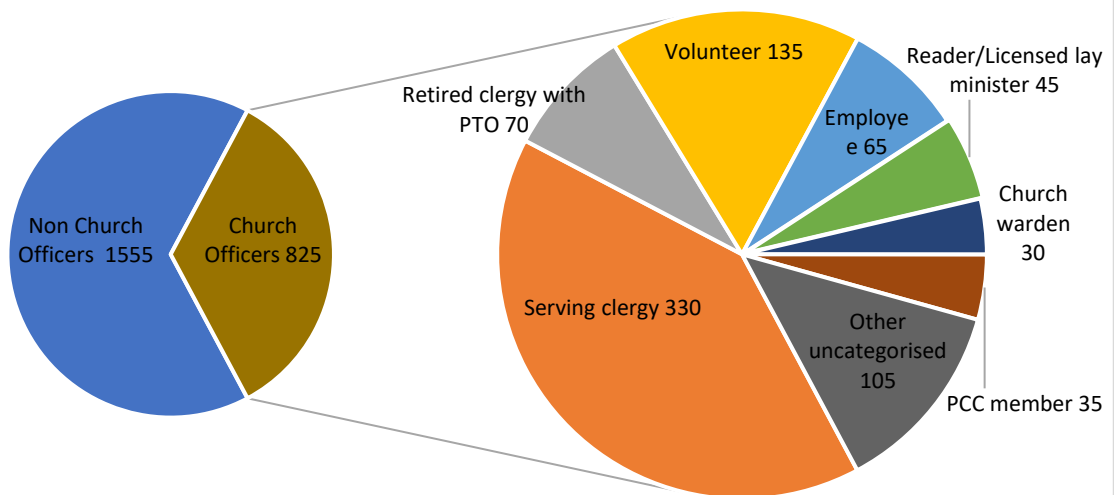


Of the total of 2,245 concerns and allegations reported to dioceses in **2020**, in relation to both adults and children, 875 (39%) involved church officers. Concerns and allegations involving serving clergy accounted for around 13% of the total and those involving volunteers around 7%.

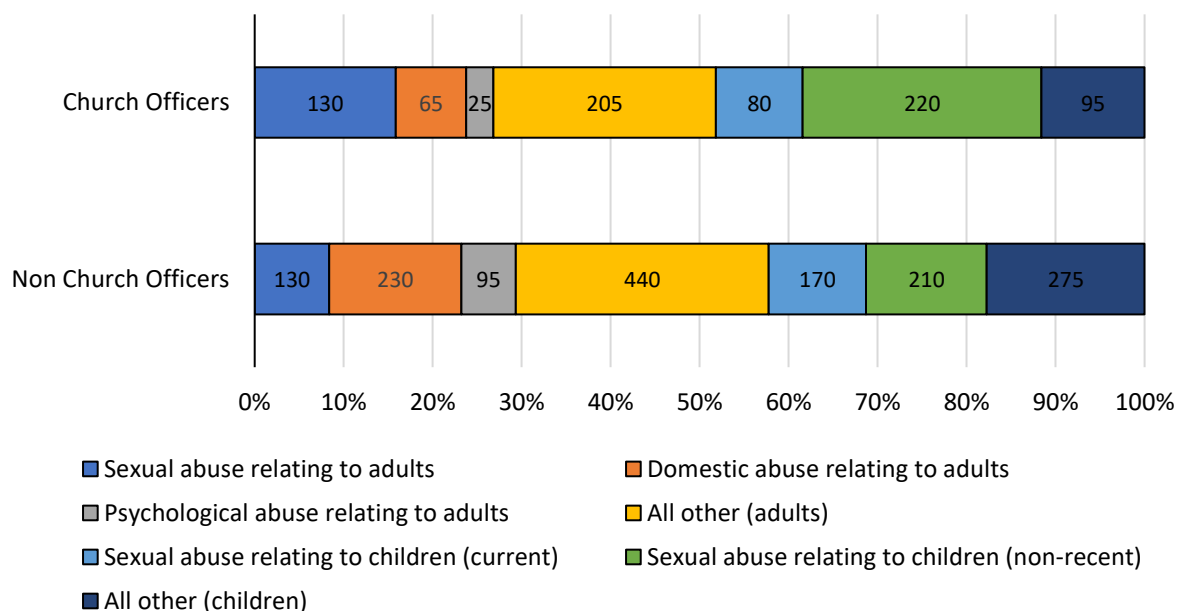


Of the total of 2,385 concerns and allegations reported to dioceses in **2021**, in relation to both adults and children, 825 (35%) involved church officers. Concerns and allegations involving serving clergy accounted for around 14% of the total and those involving volunteers around 6%.

**Figure 6a: Numbers of reported safeguarding concerns or allegations involving church officers 2021**



**Figure 6b: Proportions of all safeguarding concerns or allegations by category 2021**



## Comment

### Definition

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.

### Ratio of Church officers to non-Church officers

When talking about safeguarding and the Church of England, people might assume that all cases relate to priests and other Church officers. However, on average, just over a third of concerns and allegations relate to Church officers. The remainder will be other people involved in the wider Church network, such as registered sex offenders who join Church congregations or members of the congregation with mental health concerns that pose a safeguarding risk. However, over the three years, the proportion of concerns and allegations which are to do with Church officers has gradually increased: 32% in 2019, 39% in 2020 and 35% in 2021.

### Increase in number of serving clergy

Of the Church officers about whom safeguarding concerns or allegations have been, there has been an absolute and proportionate increase in the number of serving clergy: increasing from 250 in 2019 (32% of Church officers) to 295 in 2020 (34% of Church officers) and 330 in 2021 (40% of Church officers). The increase from 250 to 330 represents a 32% **increase** in numbers of serving clergy.

### Reduction in number of volunteers

Whilst the number of concerns and allegations about serving priests has been increasing, those in respect of volunteers have been reducing – from 165 in 2019 (21% of Church officers about whom there were concerns or allegations) to 135 in 2021 (16%).

### Domestic abuse

The number of domestic violence concerns and allegations have increased over the three-year period for both Church officers and non-Church officers. The numbers for non-Church officers saw an increase from 165 in 2020 to 230 in 2021 (39%). Whilst the numbers and rate of increase is lower for Church officers, it is a salutary reminder that domestic abuse is a reality for many Church officers.

## 4.5 Outcomes of concerns and allegations

### 4.5.1 Referrals to statutory agencies

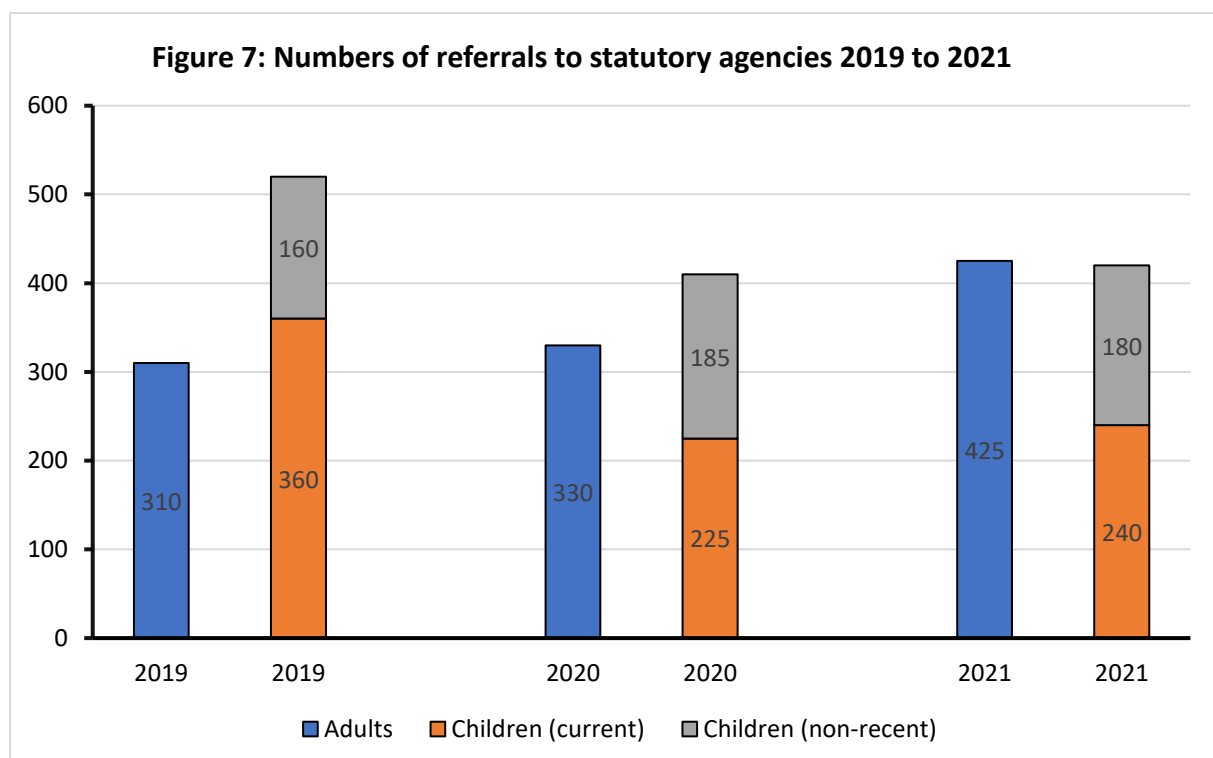
All concerns and allegations should be treated very seriously and in accordance with the Church of England’s House of Bishops’ ‘Responding’ Guidance. In all cases, DSAs decide whether to refer to statutory agencies based on legal requirements, their professional judgement, and locally agreed multi-agency thresholds for referral to such agencies.

In **2019**, there were 830 referrals to statutory agencies arising from safeguarding concerns and allegations. 310 of these related to adults and 520 related to children.

In **2020**, there were 740 referrals to statutory agencies arising from safeguarding concerns and allegations. 330 of these related to adults and 410 related to children.

In **2021**, there were 845 referrals to statutory agencies arising from safeguarding concerns and allegations. 425 of these related to adults and 420 related to children.

Table 1 below shows how these referrals are related to role.



**Table 1: Referrals by role 2019-2021.**

	2019			2020			2021		
	Adult	Child (Current)	Child (Non-Recent)	Adult	Child (Current)	Child (Non-Recent)	Adult	Child (Current)	Child (Non-Recent)
Clergy (inc. retired)	45	30	55	60	20	65	70	35	70
Other Church Officer	50	105	50	45	55	65	55	55	55
Non-Church Officer	215	225	55	225	150	55	300	150	60
<b>Total</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>180</b>

**Comment**

There has been a **33%** reduction in the number of children (current) referred to statutory services over the three years. This is consistent with the reduction in safeguarding concerns and allegations relating to children (current) over this period described above.

There has been a **37% increase in the number of adults** referred to statutory services over the period. This is a rate of increase greater than the increase in actual adult-related numbers.

**4.5.2 Direct actions to safeguarding concerns and allegations**

In **2019**, 265 direct actions were taken in response to safeguarding concerns and allegations, including 50 under the Clergy Discipline Measure (CDM), 40 clergy suspensions, and 10 names added to the Archbishops' list. 25 individuals were referred by dioceses to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for consideration of barring.

In **2020**, 320 direct actions were taken in response to safeguarding concerns and allegations, including 60 under the Clergy Discipline Measure (CDM), 45 clergy suspensions, and 5 names added to the Archbishops' list. 50 individuals were referred by dioceses to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for consideration of barring.

In **2021**, 290 direct actions were taken in response to safeguarding concerns and allegations, including 45 under the Clergy Discipline Measure (CDM), 40 clergy suspensions, and 5 names added to the Archbishops' list. 30 individuals were referred by dioceses to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for consideration of barring.



**Table 2: Direct actions in response to safeguarding concerns and allegations 2019-2021.**

	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
Clergy suspension	40	45	40
CDM: complaint	30	35	20
CDM: disciplinary action	20	25	20
Name on Archbishops' List	10	5	5
Non-clergy disciplinary action	25	25	40
Removal from regulated activity	25	25	25
Referral to DBS for consideration of barring	25	50	30
Serious Incident Report to the Charity Commission	90	110	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>290</b>

**Comment**

- i. More than one of the above actions might apply to the same person.
- ii. Some of these actions might be in relations to allegations and concerns from a previous year.
- iii. Although the number of serving clergy about whom there were concerns or allegations has increased over the period, there has been a reduction in clergy-related direct action. 100 in 2019 (suspension, CDM complaint, CDM disciplinary action, name on Archbishop's list) to 85 in 2021.
- iv. Given the total number of safeguarding concerns and allegations, the number of Serious Incident Reports to the Charity Commission might appear small. This may reflect that many matters reported to dioceses are, on examination, found not to meet the threshold for Charity Commission reporting.

#### 4.6 Risk assessments and safeguarding agreements

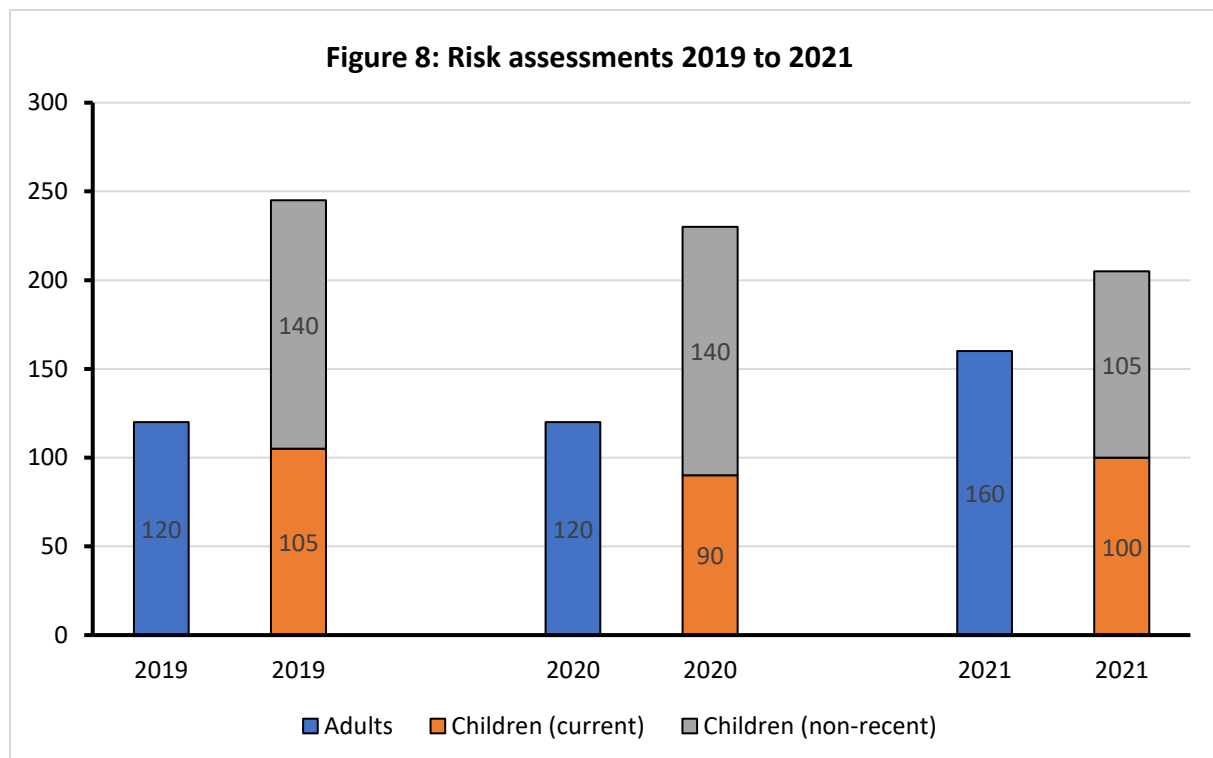
**Safeguarding agreements** are written agreements used to establish clear boundaries for those who may pose a risk to others and, for example, want to attend church services and activities. **Risk assessments** are those specified in House of bishops' Guidance on responding to and managing allegations: standard and independent (independent risk assessments are completed in respect of clergy).

##### 4.6.1 Risk assessments

In **2019**, 365 risk assessments were carried out arising from safeguarding concerns and allegations. 120 of these related to adults and 245 related to children.

In **2020**, 350 risk assessments were carried out arising from safeguarding concerns and allegations. 120 of these related to adults and 230 related to children.

In **2021**, 365 risk assessments were carried out arising from safeguarding concerns and allegations. 160 of these related to adults and 205 related to children.

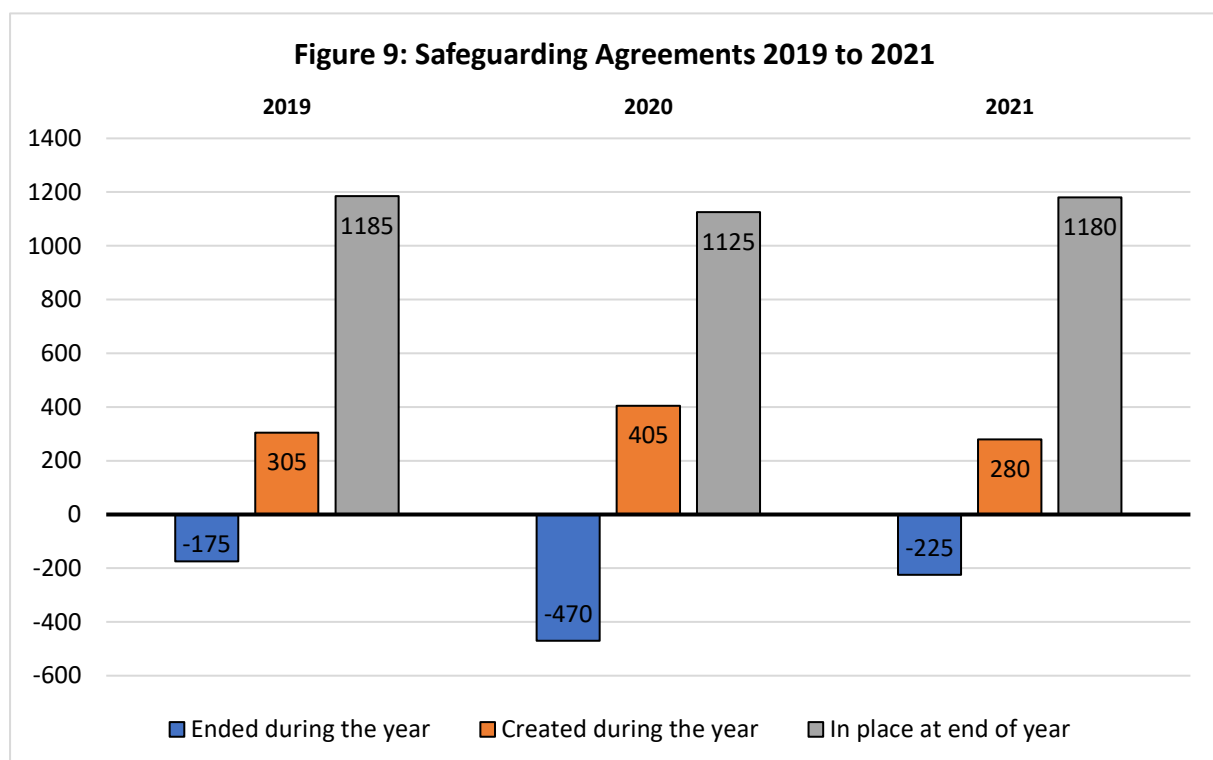


#### 4.6.2 Safeguarding agreements

At the start of **2019**, dioceses reported 1,055 safeguarding agreements in place for known offenders or those who may pose a risk. During the year, 305 safeguarding agreements were set up and 175 were ended. There were 1,185 safeguarding agreements in place at the end of 2019.

At the start of **2020**, dioceses reported 1,185 safeguarding agreements in place for known offenders or those who may pose a risk. During the year, 405 safeguarding agreements were set up and 465 were ended. There were 1,125 safeguarding agreements in place at the end of 2020.

At the start of **2021**, dioceses reported 1,125 safeguarding agreements in place for known offenders or those who may pose a risk. During the year, 280 safeguarding agreements were set up and 225 were ended. There were 1,180 safeguarding agreements in place at the end of 2021.



## 5. Part 2 data.

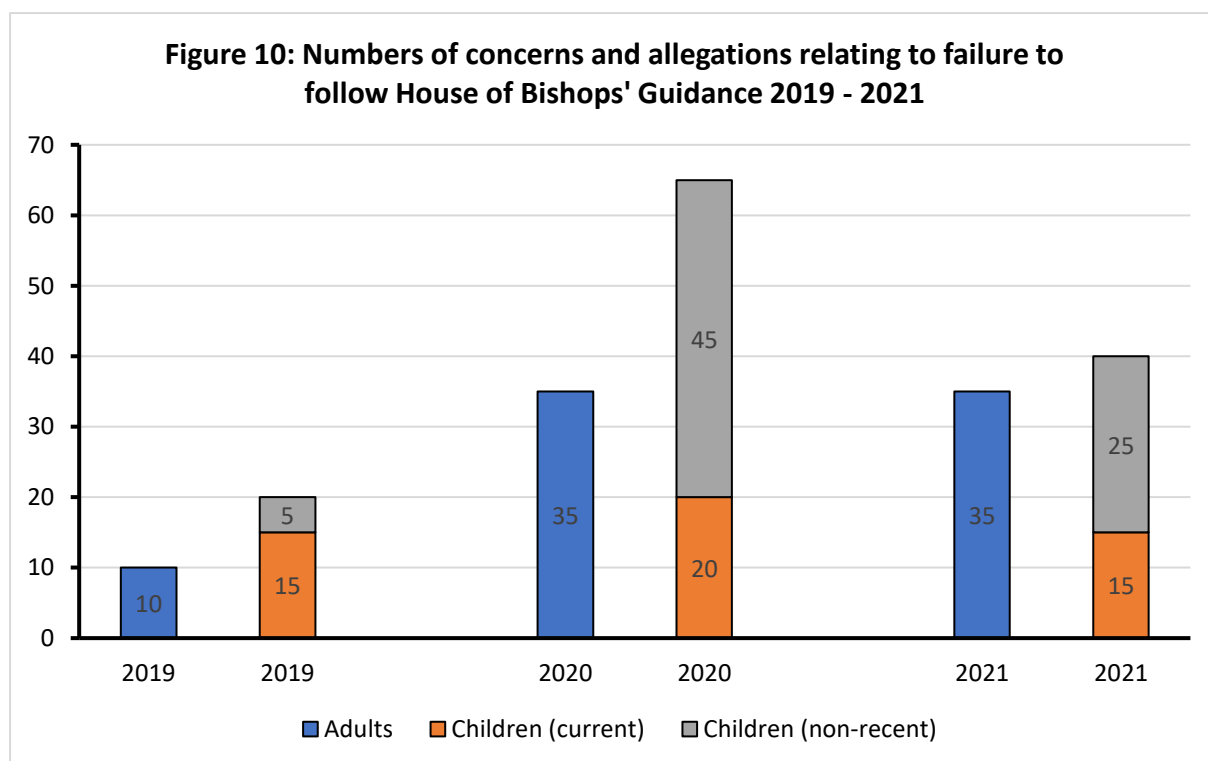
Data in this section relates to concerns and allegations that Church officers have failed to follow House of Bishops' safeguarding guidance. This may mean they have acted in such a way as to constitute a possible indirect risk to children or adults.

### 5.1 Failure to follow House of Bishops' Safeguarding Guidance

In **2019**, the overall number of concerns and allegations that Church officers failed to follow House of Bishops' safeguarding guidance was 30. Of these, 10 were situations relating to adults and 20 were situations relating to children. Of the 20 situations relating to children, 15 were current and 5 were non-recent.

In **2020**, the overall number of concerns and allegations that Church officers failed to follow House of Bishops' safeguarding guidance was 100. Of these, 35 were situations relating to adults and 65 were situations relating to children. Of the 65 situations relating to children, 20 were current and 45 were non-recent.

In **2021**, the overall number of concerns and allegations that Church officers failed to follow House of Bishops' safeguarding guidance was 75. Of these, 35 were situations relating to adults and 40 were situations relating to children. Of the 40 situations relating to children, 15 were current and 25 were non-recent.



## 5.2 Responses to failure to follow House of Bishops’ Safeguarding Guidance

In **2019**, 20 direct actions were taken in response to concerns and allegations about failure to follow House of Bishops’ guidance, including 10 under the Clergy Discipline Measure (CDM) and less than 5 clergy suspensions. Less than 5 individuals were referred by dioceses to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for consideration of barring.

In **2020**, 120 direct actions were taken in response to concerns and allegations about failure to follow House of Bishops’ guidance, including 35 under the Clergy Discipline Measure (CDM), 10 clergy suspensions, and less than 5 names added to the Archbishops’ list. 25 individuals were referred by dioceses to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for consideration of barring.

In **2021**, 80 direct actions were taken in response to concerns and allegations about failure to follow House of Bishops’ guidance, including 30 under the Clergy Discipline Measure (CDM), 10 clergy suspensions, and less than 5 names added to the Archbishops’ list. 5 individuals were referred by dioceses to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for consideration of barring.

**Table 3: Direct actions in response to failure to follow House of Bishops’ guidance 2019 - 2021**

	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
Clergy suspension	*	10	10
CDM: complaint	5	20	15
CDM: disciplinary action	*	15	15
Name on Archbishops’ List	0	*	*
Non-clergy disciplinary action	*	15	10
Removal from regulated activity	*	5	*
Referral to DBS for consideration of barring	*	25	5
Serious Incident Report to the Charity Commission	5	25	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>80</b>

### Comment

- i. The numbers reported for failing to follow House of Bishops’ safeguarding guidance are small compared with concerns and allegations about direct abuse.
- ii. More than one of the above actions might apply to the same person.
- iii. Some of these actions may be in relation to allegations and concerns from a previous year.
- iv. There is a relatively high number of direct actions imposed for failure to follow House of Bishops’ Guidance compared with the number of direct actions arising from cases of direct abuse.

## 6. Variation between dioceses

There is considerable variation between dioceses in terms of population and number and size of churches, which may partially account for the considerable range in the number of safeguarding concerns and allegations reported to individual dioceses for the three years 2019 to 2021. However, the **average** number of concerns and allegations across all dioceses has remained consistent both for those relating to adults and for those relating to children.

**Table 4: Average, highest, and lowest numbers of concerns and allegations by diocese 2019 – 2021<sup>a</sup>**

	2019	2020	2021
<b>Number of concerns and allegations reported to each diocese relating to adults</b>			
Average	25	25	30
Highest	140	110	160
Lowest	*	0	*
95% Confidence Intervals <sup>b</sup>	20-35	20-35	20-40
<b>Number of concerns and allegations reported to each diocese relating to children</b>			
Average	25	25	25
Highest	85	75	95
Lowest	0	0	*
95% Confidence Intervals <sup>b</sup>	20-35	20-30	20-30

<sup>a</sup> Excluding estimated figures from non-returning dioceses (1 in 2019; 2 in 2020| 2 in 2021)

<sup>b</sup> Confidence intervals are a range of values defining where the 'true average' value lies.

### Comment

The variation between dioceses in numbers reported is considerable. Individual dioceses are encouraged to compare and reflect on their own figures against these aggregated figures.