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institute for excellence

# Bristol Cathedral

## Independent Safeguarding Audit

November 2021





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## About SCIE

The Social Care Institute for Excellence improves the lives of people of all ages by co-producing, sharing and supporting the use of the best available knowledge and evidence about what works in practice. We are a leading improvement support agency and an independent charity working with organisations that support adults, families and children 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

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### 1.1 THE AUDIT PROGRAMME

- 1.1.1** The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) is delighted to have been asked to provide an independent audit of the safeguarding arrangements of the cathedrals of the Church of England.
- 1.1.2** This programme of work will see three cathedral audits in 2018, 16 in 2019, four in 2020, 17 in 2021 and a final three early in 2022. There are 43 in total. It represents a significant investment in cathedrals and an important opportunity to support improvement in safeguarding.
- 1.1.3** 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. Cathedral representatives will play a key role in adapting the audit framework to their particular cathedral context. Only in this way will we achieve bespoke audits that are right for each place respectively. Bespoke audits will in turn optimise the usefulness of the audit process and outputs in supporting progress in effective and timely safeguarding practice. We look forward to working with you to this end.

### 1.2 THE AUDIT PROCESS

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

- 1.2.1** 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 is 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 uses 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.

#### **Key principles informing the audit**

- 1.2.2** 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.

## Supporting improvements

- 1.2.3** 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.
- 1.2.4** SCIE methodology does not conclude findings with recommendations. We instead give the cathedral questions to consider in relation to the findings, as the cathedral decides 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.

## The process

- 1.2.5** The process will involve reviewing documentation as well as talking to key people, including focus groups. Further details are provided in the appendix.

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 in relation to the scale of a given operation, and/or where concerns may have been raised in the past for the cathedral.

## 1.3 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 setting out the audit process and any limitations to this audit.

## 2. CONTEXT

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### 2.1 CONTEXT OF THE CATHEDRAL

- 2.1.1** Bristol Cathedral is one of England's great medieval churches. It originated as an Augustinian abbey, founded c. 1140 by a prominent local citizen, Robert Fitzharding, who became the first Lord Berkeley. The transepts of the church date from this period, but its most vivid remains can be seen in the Chapter House and Abbey Gatehouse. The Chapter House is still used for important community events and can be hired out for corporate entertaining and candlelit dinners. The Cathedral has been a Christian presence in the city for nearly 900 years and is part of the wider Diocese of Bristol which extends from Swindon through South Gloucestershire and North Wiltshire.
- 2.1.2** Set on College Green, one of the most high-profile public spaces in Bristol, the Cathedral is at the centre of a modern, vibrant and diverse city. Bristol has a vigorous business and cultural life, a strong festival tradition and an independent spirit. Originally a trading and merchant port, it has become a centre for financial and business services, creative industries and television and film production. The population is increasingly young and ethnically diverse.
- 2.1.3** The city has in recent years become a focus for high profile political protests, with much activity taking place on College Green itself. As the owner of College Green, the Chapter has sought to support marginalised and hard-pressed groups while managing the potential reputational risks of being associated with a place of protest.

### 2.2 CONTEXTUAL FEATURES RELEVANT TO SAFEGUARDING

- 2.2.1** There is no cathedral close in Bristol, so no staff live on site. Instead, accommodation for the Dean, residentiary canons and vergers is provided within walking distance (the furthest being 30 minutes' walk away). The offices for most staff and clergy are based in the Abbey Gatehouse, which is a separate building to the Cathedral. There are two schools adjacent to the Cathedral. Bristol Cathedral Choir School (BCCS) and the Cathedral Primary School (CPS) are both state funded academies (part of the Cathedral Schools Trust – CST). All choristers attend BCCS. Choir probationers are drawn from primary schools across the city, including the CPS. Bristol Cathedral owns the freehold of the parts of the school that are adjacent to the Cathedral.
- 2.2.2** Bristol Cathedral has seen a significant change in personnel over the last 12 months, with five new members of the senior team, including the Dean (who was installed in October 2020), and a new operating officer/chapter clerk beginning in May 2021, following 11 months without anyone in the post.
- 2.2.3** Members of senior leadership are in the process of reviewing the Cathedral's vision and strategy, with the aim of clarifying the purpose and aligning its strategy more closely with that of the diocese.
- 2.2.4** The Cathedral is governed by Chapter, comprising a mixture of clergy canons and lay canons. The Cathedral Council is made up of lay people (including members of the Cathedral community), clergy and the Bishop, and acts as an advisory body to the Dean and Chapter. It has an important role in decision making on major changes to governance arising from the new Cathedrals

Measure (2021).

- 2.2.5** The increasing use of the Cathedral for high profile events such as the Museum of the Moon (which attracted 65,000 visitors in 18 days) and the regular use of College Green as a focus for public demonstrations on a range of issues put pressure on facilities (such as toilets) and on arrangements for safety and security.

## **2.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE SAFEGUARDING STRUCTURE (INCLUDING LINKS WITH THE DIOCESE)**

- 2.3.1** The House of Bishops' practice guidance *Key Roles and Responsibilities of Church Office Holders and Bodies* (2017) states that the role of the Dean is to provide leadership concerning safeguarding, and to encourage everyone to promote a safer Church.
- 2.3.2** The Dean is the Chapter lead for safeguarding, and is supported in her leadership role by a number of clergy, staff and others, including:
- the Canon Precentor, who oversees all liturgical activities in the Cathedral, line manages the Director of Music and is responsible for the music department and also pastoral care, working with the two Cathedral chaplains
  - the Canon Missioner, who oversees 'outward facing' work in the Cathedral, line manages the Cathedral Curate and has strategic oversight of education work
  - the Chief Operating Officer (COO)/Chapter Clerk, who is responsible for all operational areas of the Cathedral and is the Cathedral Safeguarding Lead (CSL)
  - the Operations Officer (OO, Finance and Safeguarding), who is also the Deputy Safeguarding Lead (DCSL), overseeing safeguarding processes throughout the Cathedral including safer recruitment, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, references and training
  - the Visitor Experience Director (VED), who develops and oversees the Visitor Engagement Plan, is the strategic lead on volunteering and the line manager of the Education Officer (EO)
  - the Education Officer (EO), who leads all work with schools and is responsible for Children's Church
  - the Head Verger, who is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Cathedral floor and overseeing the security of the building
  - the Organist and Master of the Choir (OMC), who is responsible for the choir and musicians
  - the choir tutors in the Cathedral and BCCS
  - the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) and their team. The DSA is also the Cathedral Safeguarding Adviser (CSA)
  - the safeguarding lead at BCCS, which is attended by the choristers.

- 2.3.3** The Cathedral is represented at the Diocesan Safeguarding Steering Group



(DSSG) by the COO and, on occasions the DCSL.

## 2.4 WHO WAS SEEN IN THE AUDIT?

**2.4.1** The audit involved reviewing documentation and case files and talking to people at the heart of safeguarding in the Cathedral and BCCS, including the Dean, Chapter members, the COO, safeguarding staff, music leads, EO, bell tower officers and those managing the floor of the Cathedral. The fieldwork aspect of the audit was conducted over 2.5 days.

**2.4.2** Further details are provided in the appendix.

## 2.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE AUDIT

**2.5.1** The auditors were able to conduct all interviews 'live', albeit socially distanced and observing all Covid-related government rules and guidance. However, some limitations remained that made some aspects of the audit necessarily different from those conducted in 2019/2020.

**2.5.2** No focus groups were held during this audit. They were replaced by an electronic survey which was widely distributed to children with close links to the Cathedral (i.e. choristers and child servers), and adults in a range of roles across the Cathedral community, including staff, volunteers, parents of choristers and members of the congregation. These were analysed by the audit team and findings explored and referenced throughout conversations. The children's survey had seven respondents, so any findings drawn from this number are limited by the extent to which they can be generalised to the wider chorister group. The adult survey had 59 responses, across a broad spectrum of roles, including congregants. Although informative, the surveys nevertheless limited the depth of knowledge that could be gained from participants. This was further limited by the inability to hold follow-up discussions with respondents.

**2.5.3** The Cathedral is just returning to 'normal' operations post-Covid. During the periods of lockdown in 2020 and early 2021, most Cathedral activities were suspended, and the building remained closed to visitors for some of the time. Significant numbers of staff were furloughed and volunteer activity suspended. Some activities have not yet resumed, and not all volunteers are expected to return to the roles they carried out pre-Covid.

**2.5.4** Nobody who had received a safeguarding response from the Cathedral responded to the invitation to speak with the auditors, and their specific perspective is therefore absent.



## 3. FINDINGS – PRACTICE

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### 3.1 SAFE ACTIVITIES AND WORKING PRACTICES

#### Precincts and buildings

- 3.1.1** There are significant challenges to running a place of worship that welcomes large numbers of worshippers each week, receives several thousand visitors a year and is open to the public, some of whom may be vulnerable themselves, or a possible risk to others. A prominent public building like a cathedral is also vulnerable to external threats. The commitment of the Dean and Chapter to make the cathedral a public space as well as a place of worship means that a consistent balance must always be maintained between being open and welcoming and ensuring safety and security.

#### *Description*

- 3.1.2** Bristol Cathedral is in the centre of Bristol, on a site which looks out over the waterside area to the south and is opposite the City Council on College Green to the north. The main visitor entrance is from College Green through the north door, and there is another entrance through the cloisters. The cafe and Chapter House are located near this latter entrance, as is the Song School. The enclosed garden is accessible from the cafe and also via the slype (a covered walkway) from the cloisters. Stairs leading from the cloisters to the upstairs rooms, including the Chapter vestry and the education room, have doors at the bottom which are usually closed or roped off. There are toilets located adjacent to the cafe which, as the only easily accessible toilets in the vicinity, are at times quite busy, given the regular use of College Green for recreation and public demonstrations.
- 3.1.3** The entrance to the Cathedral from this direction is through the south transept. The vergers' office, which contains CCTV monitors, is located adjacent to this entrance. There are four side chapels off the north and south quire aisles at the east end. These are open to view from the aisles. There is CCTV coverage of much of the exterior and interior of the Cathedral and its precinct. The cameras are not consistently monitored, but the images are of high quality and recordings are regularly used for investigating incidents which may have arisen. There is no longer a shop in the Cathedral.
- 3.1.4** The Cathedral shares its precinct to the south with two schools, BCCS (a secondary academy), and the Bristol CPS. A public road bisects this part of the site, ending in a cul-de-sac behind the Abbey Gatehouse, which is where most of the Cathedral staff are located. This gives rise to significant safety concerns due to the juxtaposition at busy times of vehicles and children of all ages. Limited safety measures have been put into place by the City Council, including removal of public parking spaces, a change to the colour of the road surface to make it look more like a pedestrian area, and designated pedestrian crossing points. Despite these changes, significant risks remain and are the subject of continuing dialogue with the City Council, which is also responsible for the street lighting in this area. The City Council also manages College Green on behalf of the Cathedral.
- 3.1.5** The Cathedral is open to the public between 8.00 am each day until after evensong (around 6.30 pm on a weekday and 5.00 pm at the weekend). A team

of four full-time vergers is responsible for opening and closing the building, and for overseeing the safety and security of the Cathedral, Abbey Gatehouse and their immediate surroundings, as well as for the support of all liturgical functions. The Head Verger is also responsible for overseeing cleaning and events management. The verger team is supplemented at busy times by a small group of assistant vergers.

- 3.1.6** The buildings have both fire and security alarms. The fire service responds automatically to the alarm. The Head Verger and two of his team live close by in Cathedral accommodation, and act as first point of contact in the event of the security alarm being triggered. Depending on circumstances, they may call for assistance from colleagues before attempting to investigate its cause.
- 3.1.7** The vergers work alongside clergy and volunteers each day. A single verger opens the building at 7.30 am, and choir practice begins on weekdays (except Wednesday) at 8.00 am, so in practice there is a very limited period of lone working. Morning prayer begins each weekday at 8.30 am, by which time there is clergy presence. One or other of the two coordinators for the welcomers (who also act as chaperones for the choir) take up their role immediately after choir practice finishes at 9.10 am and are joined by additional volunteer welcomers at 10.00 am. Welcomers remain on duty until around 4.00 pm each weekday. The building is locked up each evening by two vergers. There are two vergers on duty all day on Sunday.
- 3.1.8** The Head Verger has been in his role since October 2021, and a member of the verger team for 18 years. He reports directly to the Dean. Two of the other three vergers are relatively new, which means that, as a team, they are relatively inexperienced. Communication with the vergers is by radio. There is no mobile phone coverage in the Cathedral. Welcomers at the main entrance have access to a radio when on duty.
- 3.1.9** Weekly staff meetings and fortnightly operations meetings are held to promote good communication regarding activities and events. These are attended by the Head Verger, who also holds team meetings at which they review the diary held by the Dean's PA and use this to plan ahead. The Head Verger is also a member of the Cathedral's senior leadership team (SLT).
- 3.1.10** All the vergers have undertaken basic awareness and foundation safeguarding training. The Head Verger has completed C2 (leadership) training as well, and recently undertook mental health first aid training. The latter training is to be made available to the rest of the vergers.

### *Analysis*

- 3.1.11** Arrangements for keeping safe the Cathedral and associated buildings and those working in and visiting them are good. Staff, volunteers and congregants are confident that they are kept safe. There are some gaps in policies and procedures to be addressed to underpin the work of ensuring the Cathedral is a place of welcome and safety for visitors, staff and volunteers.
- 3.1.12** The management of the Cathedral site works well overall. Managers are continuing to work with the City Council to improve safety, such as the installation of external lighting, in the parts of the site which are its responsibility. The Head Verger has a clear understanding of safeguarding and the need for this to be an integral part of the vergers' work. The auditors saw evidence of good working between the verger team and other departments such as

volunteers. Communication and coordination between different departments has improved through the introduction of regular cross-departmental meetings. The way that the vergers organise their time means that lone working is minimal.

**3.1.13** The auditors reflected that many procedures and working practices rely heavily on the vergers as a first line of response in a range of circumstances. Although growing in confidence overall, and in the process of undertaking relevant training, as a team the vergers are relatively inexperienced, and lack confidence in key areas. This includes how to respond in the event of an external threat. As these are areas which are not yet covered by clear procedures, including for the choir, and have not been practised, they would be useful to address promptly. The auditors reflected that, given they are a new team, this presents a good opportunity to review and address areas which have not received significant attention before now.

**3.1.14** The responses of the survey of staff, volunteers and congregants of the Cathedral reflected a view regarding safety and lone working. Asked how safe they felt in their Cathedral activities, 69% (n = 41) said extremely and 12% (n = 7) said moderately, while the rest said the question was not applicable. In relation to lone working, while 34% (n = 20) felt lone working was extremely avoidable in their current role, 13 respondents (22%) felt that lone working was only moderately avoidable and four respondents (7%) felt that it was not at all avoidable. The auditors did not see a policy on lone working and reflected that this may be a useful area for discussion with staff and volunteers.

#### Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How can the Cathedral best support the verger team in ensuring that policies and procedures are reviewed, updated and workable in practice?

#### Children

This section is about children who come to the Cathedral in various capacities. It does not cover choristers, or children who bell-ring, who are referred to in section 3.2.

##### *Description*

**3.1.15** Children are engaged with Bristol Cathedral in two main ways: via organised educational activities arranged between the Cathedral and schools, and through the Sunday School for children whose parents attend the Sunday morning Eucharist service (although this has not operated for more than a year due to the pandemic). There are also two child servers.

**3.1.16** The education provision is led by a part time EO, a former secondary school teacher, who has worked at the Cathedral since 2017. She has completed safeguarding training at basic awareness, foundation and leadership levels, and also safer recruitment and relevant health and safety training. Volunteers within the department have completed levels 1 and 2. All staff and volunteers within the education department are safely recruited and have a DBS check in place. The EO has recently become a member of the Cathedral Safeguarding Committee (CSC).

**3.1.17** The EO is supported by a team of volunteers, who help to deliver and facilitate school and group visits. There were 20 education volunteers pre-pandemic, but

this has shrunk to a small group of four, who are also Cathedral guides.

- 3.1.18** A range of educational opportunities is offered, including education days, packages for schools and 'Crafty Cathedral' events. School visits are managed safely and agreed procedures are in place to support a consistent approach that includes initial contact and booking, sharing of risk assessments and supervision on the day of the visit. Adult:child ratios are specified by the Cathedral as 1:10, exceeding the Ofsted minimum ratios, due to the challenges of managing the size of groups, which typically comprise 60–90 children, and the particular constraints of the setting. Schools follow their own safeguarding policy when on site and retain complete responsibility for the children in their group. The EO writes detailed 'verger notes' before each trip and provides a hard copy for the vergers' office.
- 3.1.19** Children and staff arrive at the main door and are met in person by the EO, who delivers a short briefing about safety and practical arrangements. Vergers and welcomers are briefed in advance, including about any additional needs members of groups may have. Use is made of the Cathedral floor, the Chapter House and the education room (which is small, and only able to accommodate around 20 children). There are plans for updating the information on the Cathedral website and supplementing it with all the relevant details and forms needed by schools planning a visit.
- 3.1.20** The role of the newly appointed Canon Missioner includes building up provision for children and young people in the Cathedral and developing direct engagement with these groups. He has been working with the EO on plans to restart the Sunday School in November 2021. Given the enforced suspension due to the pandemic, the Cathedral took the opportunity to reassess the location of the Sunday School, which was previously within one of the side chapels off the nave, and it will now be located in the Chapter House, which provides a large, secure space in which noise will not disturb the main body of the Cathedral, albeit bringing some practical challenges including access to the toilets, which are also available for public use. The use of risk assessments and good practice already in place for school visits has informed the procedures and guidance which have been developed in readiness for the reopening.
- 3.1.21** Bristol Cathedral has two child servers at present. All arrivals, departures, robing and activities within services are conducted in public areas and always with a minimum of two adults present. The lead servers are DBS checked and supervise the child servers at all times. There are no formal procedures or practice guidance relating to child servers. Initial discussions took place pre-pandemic but progress has stalled and there is nothing in place at present.
- 3.1.22** In response to the survey, 96% of respondents (n = 57) said they were extremely or moderately confident about their own or other people's children's wellbeing, when in the care of the Cathedral, with the remainder saying the question was not relevant to their role or experience. One respondent indicated a lack of confidence. The few children who completed the survey said that they felt safe in the Cathedral.

### *Analysis*

- 3.1.23** The present provision for children is safely operated, with appropriate procedures in place. There are opportunities to draw on good practice in the education department when addressing gaps in procedures and guidance for

other activities where children and young people are involved.

- 3.1.24** There are strong arrangements in place for school visits and clarity about the extent of (and limits to) the responsibilities of Cathedral staff and volunteers. Well tested systems help to assure the safety of children and others while in the Cathedral. Staff and volunteers in the department are DBS checked and have received training, and communication with relevant others, particularly the vergers, is good. Plans to develop the education pages on the website to include a more extensive range of documentation are good. Existing information on the website is in need of updating, however.
- 3.1.25** Preparations for the reopening of the Sunday School drew on the knowledge and experience of the education department. The auditors did not see written procedures or guidance, although were told about the arrangements for children to access the toilets, which had been a concern, given the new location of Sunday School in the Chapter House. The auditors reflected on the potential for there to be further sharing of good practice across the Cathedral, given that the EO is now a member of the CSC.
- 3.1.26** The auditors noted that there had been no progress made in developing practice guidance concerning the safety and wellbeing of child servers, despite this having been identified as a gap more than two years previously.

#### Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- Who is best placed to develop practice guidance in relation to the safety and wellbeing of child servers and how quickly might this be completed?
- How confident is the Cathedral that all areas of activity relating to children and young people are covered by written safeguarding procedures and guidance?
- What opportunities are there for good practice in the education department to be spread to other parts of the Cathedral?

## Adults

### Description

- 3.1.27** Bristol Cathedral's location in central Bristol, together with its explicit commitment to social justice, have put it at the forefront of efforts in a range of areas such as homelessness in Bristol, refugees, the rights of the LGBTQ community, caring for the environment, creating interfaith relationships and the legacy of slavery in the city. The Cathedral works closely with a wide range of local and national groups, and the recent appointment of a Canon Missioner provides a new focus for this 'externally facing' aspect of the Cathedral's mission.
- 3.1.28** Homeless outreach is conducted in the vicinity of the Cathedral as part of the nationwide initiative Street Link, in partnership with Bristol City Council and the homeless charity, St Mungo's. It aims to connect people sleeping rough with the local services that can support them and safely recruited Cathedral volunteers work in pairs on four mornings each week. All these volunteers have undertaken basic awareness (C0) safeguarding training.
- 3.1.29** At the same time, the Cathedral represents a place of welcome for those



seeking support, worship or shelter. The staff and volunteers therefore engage regularly with those who may be considered vulnerable by virtue of their physical, emotional or mental health needs. This includes a small number of homeless people, those with learning difficulties and elderly adults with possible dementia. Many within the Cathedral, including members of the verger team, are familiar with individuals and know them by name – ‘we’re all aware of them’.

- 3.1.30** At this individual level, people who appear vulnerable often receive a first response from the vergers, some of whom know the community well and are familiar with individuals who come into the Cathedral regularly.
- 3.1.31** For those seeking or in need of spiritual support, a day chaplain is usually available on weekdays. Day chaplains have all had training focused on safe working practice and following reporting guidance. The auditors were told that they would record and communicate any concerns to the CSL or his deputy.
- 3.1.32** The volunteer welcomers are a consistent presence in the Cathedral during core opening hours. They are supported each weekday by a choir tutor once the latter has finished their tasks at morning choir practice. This is a recently introduced paid role with the welcomers and brings valued understanding and experience of safeguarding.
- 3.1.33** A number of the clergy are involved in offering pastoral care and some keep their own records. Advice is occasionally sought from the DSA. There is no formal process for referring anyone for pastoral visits.
- 3.1.34** Leadership of pastoral care has sat generally with Chapter but is not clearly within the remit of any individual. The COO keeps a list of pastoral incidents which are referred to him in his role as CSL. The auditors also saw a ‘pastoral tracker’ comprising an electronic spreadsheet showing who is visited, address, dates, who is on a ‘watching brief’ and notes of ‘situations’. It was not clear to the auditors who was writing the notes, what oversight there is, and whether the spreadsheet is searchable/cross-referenced anywhere else.
- 3.1.35** Many volunteers felt very vulnerable over the past 18 months due to the pandemic and its various restrictions. The auditors heard that 170 people were kept in touch with by telephone during the time the pandemic meant that individuals were unable or unwilling to come to the Cathedral. There is an understanding across those managing volunteers of the potential vulnerabilities that volunteers themselves may have, by virtue of their age or health, and the need to both monitor and support them in their work. With the appointment to the VED role, which has responsibility for oversight of volunteers, there is an opportunity for this to be more systematically addressed.

### *Analysis*

- 3.1.36** A commitment to social justice informs the Cathedral’s responses to vulnerability. Vulnerable adults within the Cathedral community receive good, caring responses when their needs are identified. Pastoral care is underdeveloped; there is potential to develop a more structured approach to identifying and responding to vulnerability.
- 3.1.37** Work on how the Cathedral engages with vulnerable communities in the city is still developing and will receive further impetus now that the Canon Missioner is in post. The auditors reflected that it would be desirable to appraise activity from a safeguarding perspective to ensure that this dimension is considered in all

responses, alongside the reason for the initial intervention (such as homelessness).

- 3.1.38** Auditors saw and heard about many good caring pastoral responses to vulnerable adults, some involving working with other agencies. The incorporation of the choir tutor has brought expertise and confidence to the welcomers' team. The first point of contact for many concerns is the vergers' team, some of whom as yet are relatively inexperienced, and there are positive plans in place to provide further training in areas such as mental health first aid and domestic abuse.
- 3.1.39** The auditors noted that many individuals were involved in offering pastoral care, some formally recorded and reported and some not. They also saw and heard examples of different individuals and departments employing different criteria to decide when something should be regarded as a potential safeguarding matter and noted no common language for expressing a general concern. The auditors questioned whether the language of abuse used in the safeguarding policy is getting in the way of people raising more general, 'low-level' concerns, and wondered whether a common format for reporting concerns could help promote wider reporting, improve consistency of responses and assist in 'joining up' the different systems for recording incidents and concerns.
- 3.1.40** Survey responses indicated a high level of confidence (91%) that the Cathedral would respond in a timely and effective manner if told that someone was being hurt in some way, or that someone was behaving inappropriately.

#### Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How might the Cathedral develop a more coherent and consistent approach to pastoral care?
- What would be the benefits of introducing a single means of reporting concerns and how might this be achieved?
- What are the safeguarding implications of the role of Canon Missioner and how might the Cathedral anticipate and deal with these? What safeguards are needed?

## 3.2 CHOIRS AND MUSIC

- 3.2.1** All cathedral choirs raise particular safeguarding issues, particularly for children. As young children, sometimes away from home, working towards a highly prized goal, firstly, there is the vulnerability of choristers to being groomed by people in positions of trust within the choir context. Secondly, the demands of regular public performance, in some contexts to elite standards, can be in tension or conflict with child welfare requirements and expectations.

#### *Description*

##### *Choir*

- 3.2.2** Bristol Cathedral Choir consists of 22 choristers (11 boys and 11 girls). All choristers attend BCCS, which is the first government-funded choir academy in the country. The academy has music as its specialism. It occupies the former abbey buildings, together with newer buildings in College Square. The choristers



are supported by choral incentives given by the Bristol Cathedral Choral Foundation. The main point of entry into the choir as a chorister is as a probationer chorister. A chorister will normally leave the choir at the end of year 9. The probationary choristers have a part-time timetable and attend primary schools across the city. The CPS, also in the Cathedral precinct, only has a small number of probationers attending. Probationers have dedicated time with the Assistant Organist (AO) prior to evening rehearsals and services, to help develop their understanding, skill and confidence. Each senior chorister acts as a mentor to a probationer, developing what was described to the auditors as a 'hierarchical but warm' relationship.

- 3.2.3** The Song School is a room off the cloisters and is used for rehearsing and robing. There are private toilet facilities within the Song School which are only accessible from the Song School. If choristers are in other areas of the Cathedral they would be accompanied to the Song School to use the toilet. A separate room nearby is used for tea and social time. There are no facilities for physically disabled children. Access to the Song School is the cloister door, where children are dropped off by parents for morning rehearsal and collected after evensong. BCCS is very close by and choristers who attend there make their own way across to school after morning rehearsal. Children of primary school age do not attend morning rehearsals.
- 3.2.4** A chorister handbook is produced annually which sets out in detail 'everything you need to know about chorister life, including details of attendance, services, Cathedral personnel, parental involvement, and the Rules and Regulations'. The handbook emphasises that 'a chorister place in Bristol Cathedral Choir means that the choir takes priority over all other activities'. Choristers and parents are encouraged to keep the OMC and Choir Tutor informed of 'anything important happening in their lives outside of the choir'.
- 3.2.5** According to the draft safeguarding handbook, the OMC has the main pastoral and management responsibility for the choristers. This can be delegated to the Choir Tutor who has pastoral oversight during chorister tea, rehearsals, services, concerts and trips and tours. The auditors were told that teatime is used informally by staff and the Choir Tutor for pastoral purposes. The Choir Tutor also has responsibility for risk assessment, first aid, behaviour management and liaison with families.
- 3.2.6** Bristol Cathedral Choir also includes six lay clerks and four choral scholars. A choral evensong is sung daily (excepting Thursdays) in the Cathedral in term-time, with the boy and girl choristers singing an equal number of services each week. The Cathedral consort comprises older children of secondary age, some of whom are former child choristers, who sing monthly during a service.
- 3.2.7** The OMC is considering developing a music strategy to address the challenges he has identified in recruiting and retaining boy choristers.

#### *Staff*

- 3.2.8** The OMC took up his post in 1998, when the Cathedral choir was boys only, as was the Choir School. A choir of older girls was established in 2001, and a girls' choir was introduced, mirroring the boys' choir, when BCCS became co-ed in 2006. The existing girls' choir of older girls became the Cathedral Consort and is conducted by the AO.
- 3.2.9** The Choir Tutor acts as a second adult for the choristers on four days each

week. One of the lay clerks fulfils this role on two days each week. The role of the Choir Tutor is described in the choir prospectus as 'facilitating communication between the Cathedral, the parents and the choristers'. She attends evensong on the days she is on duty, where she takes a formal role in the service which requires her to be robed. She uses her personal mobile to send and receive messages to and from parents, as there is no departmental mobile phone.

- 3.2.10** The relationship between the Cathedral and BCCS is necessarily close, and auditors were told that this interface works well. The Choir Tutor is a former member of school staff; the school also has a choir tutor, whose role is to 'facilitate communication between the Cathedral, the school, the parents and the choristers. The school's Choir Tutor attends staff meetings, and keeps staff informed of additions to the choristers' workload, which may necessitate flexibility regarding homework deadlines etc.'. BCCS's choir tutor also takes the register each morning when choristers arrive at the Cathedral for rehearsal.
- 3.2.11** A weekly departmental meeting is held at which individual choristers may be discussed by exception. These meetings are not minuted. There are no files kept on individual children, although personal details, including relevant contact and health information, are noted by the Music Administrator, who also maintains records of consents, e.g. for use of photos, and responds to parental enquiries.
- 3.2.12** The OMC informed the auditors that he would make a judgement whether a concern might have safeguarding implications and would initiate a discussion with the school's choir tutor, the CSL or deputy CSL. He has no access to any safeguarding meetings within the school and does not contribute to school record keeping but was confident that safeguarding concerns would be shared with him on a 'need to know' basis. Arrangements for reporting concerns in respect of probationary choristers were unclear to the auditors.
- 3.2.13** Staff, including lay clerks, have completed the level of safeguarding training considered by the Cathedral to be appropriate to their role. The OMC has also taken part in the recent leadership training with other members of the SLT. The OMC and his assistant are members of the CSC. Staff also sign to indicate their agreement with a new (January 2021) *Code of Safer Working Practice*, which aims to safeguard all members of the choral foundation (i.e., all children involved with the choirs) of the Cathedral.

#### *Parents*

- 3.2.14** The OMC described good relationships with parents. A meeting is held at the beginning of the school year which also includes the Precentor. The handbook for chorister parents, updated each year, gives a useful summary of what parents can expect over the year, but does not contain detail of weekly routines, for example. There are no scheduled one-to-one meetings between parents and music department staff other than by request.
- 3.2.15** A 'Music Forum' is held in the Cathedral, at the start of each term, usually after a Sunday morning Eucharist. Attendees comprise a representative of the boy choristers, girl choristers, probationers and consort, and music staff (Precentor, OMC and AO, and the Music Administrator). The Music Administrator invites selected parents (usually parents of the head choristers or deputy head choristers) to be representatives at these meetings and then emails contact details for other parents to send questions and concerns to these

representatives. According to the handbook, the 'Music Forum is an opportunity to bring to the music staff collectively any queries or concerns that there may be which are more easily resolved in that scenario, rather than simply by email'. Notes are kept of the meeting. The auditors were told that the forum has not discussed any issues of particular note, other than food.

**3.2.16** There is no equivalent forum for choristers as a whole group.

*Visiting choirs*

**3.2.17** The Visiting Choir Handbook sets out the information needed for choirs who will be visiting and singing at the Cathedral. It includes a short section on 'child protection requirements' and requires a visiting leader to sign to confirm that the choir has its own child protection procedure and 'follows a procedure that includes checking the background of adult singers, choir trainers and choir attendants including a current DBS or equivalent if from overseas'. No details are requested about, for example, ratios of adults to children, anyone who may be subject to a safeguarding agreement or has a background of offending, or choristers with additional needs. A visiting choir risk assessment sets out useful health and safety information for visiting choirs to take into account when conducting their own risk assessment in advance of their visit.

*Analysis*

**3.2.18** Arrangements for keeping choir children safe are good. Attention needs paying to the balance between striving for musical excellence and promoting the wellbeing of individual children. Formalising oversight of each child's wellbeing and ensuring there is someone independent of the music department who can offer a listening ear to any concerns would provide additional security.

**3.2.19** Arrangements are in place for keeping the choristers safe while in the care of the Cathedral. The development of the safeguarding handbook is ensuring that these procedures are written down. Choristers (six in total) who responded to the survey all said that they feel extremely safe during rehearsals, services and performances and enjoy their time in the choir. There remain some areas where procedures are not yet sufficiently tight. For example, there is no permission slip regarding where parents give consent for their child to travel unaccompanied. This is in the process of being rectified.

**3.2.20** Relationships between BCCS and the Cathedral music department staff appear strong, and the auditors were told that communication is good. Arrangements for morning rehearsals were observed by auditors to work well. These apply to the older, more experienced choristers. The auditors did not see or hear about arrangements for the younger children, all probationers, who are drawn from primary schools across the city. The auditors reflected that these younger children may need additional support, including direct engagement with their schools, to ensure their continued wellbeing in what is, invariably, a demanding aspect of their daily lives. At present, there appears to be little thought given to the support and communication needed regarding children who may be more vulnerable or disadvantaged, such as a child who is looked-after or the subject of a child protection plan. As the role of the Canon Missioner develops, and the Cathedral's profile as a focus of social justice is enhanced, it could be anticipated that the intake of children who aspire to be choristers may become more diverse than it is at present. More formal, regular arrangements for considering the wellbeing of each chorister could be beneficial in ensuring that

'low level' concerns are properly recorded, and available for oversight by safeguarding staff.

- 3.2.21** Departmental staff described the importance of balancing striving for excellence in performance with ensuring the wellbeing of children. This is not at present reflected in the literature which is given to children and their parents. For example, the choir handbook states that 'the Choristers are expected to conduct themselves with professionalism, as they are, to all intents and purposes, professional musicians'. The regulations set out in the same document reinforce this message, and do not reference, for example, an ethos of kindness and mutual care which auditors have seen elsewhere. Asked 'How good a balance do you have between choir rehearsals and services, schoolwork, seeing friends and other hobbies that you have?', two choristers replied 'extremely [good]' and four replied 'moderately'.
- 3.2.22** Arrangements for engaging with parents are in place, and parents who responded to the survey (15 in total) all expressed high levels of confidence in the care and support of their children. The auditors reflected that the 'Music Forum' could be strengthened by widening representation from parents. Current membership is by invitation, with parents of senior choristers attending. This means that parents of younger children do not attend and, although they can participate by email, this may not work effectively for all.
- 3.2.23** Arrangements for listening to the children are less developed, other than informally. The very close working between the music department staff, the Choir Tutor and BCCS is a strength, but from the perspective of young children, this may feel rather closed. The auditors reflected that access to a familiar person outside the close networks of the music department and BCCS may be desirable as an extra option for children. That said, the choristers who responded to the survey all knew who they would speak to if they were worried about themselves or other choristers. Two were 'moderately' confident that their worries would be listened to and that people would help (the remainder were 'extremely' confident). The same proportion of response was made to questions about feeling safe on trips, knowing what would happen if they felt unwell before a rehearsal or service, and how well adults involved in the choir or services deal with bullying. It is possible that developing more direct engagement with all the children might be helpful in ensuring they are equally confident.
- 3.2.24** The auditors were pleased to note that the OMC and assistant are now members of the CSC, enabling them both to share good practice from the music department and also learn from practice in other areas of Cathedral activity.

#### Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- What could the benefits be of ensuring the children in the choir have access to a person who is independent of the music department and how might this be achieved?
- How confident is the Cathedral that there is a good balance between excellence in performance and child wellbeing, and that this is reflected in procedures and practice?

- What advantages might there be in developing more representative means of engaging with children and parents?

## Bell-ringing

### *Description*

- 3.2.25** There are two sets of bells in Bristol Cathedral, one in the central tower which is rung electronically, and a set of eight changing bells in the north-west tower. These were taken out of the ruined Temple Church, which was bombed in the war. They are rung by hand, by volunteers and visiting bell-ringing groups. All belong to the Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Association of Church Bell Ringers.
- 3.2.26** Bristol's ringing team is led by the Tower Captain, who has been in his role since 2019. The Secretary of the Ringers has been a member of the Cathedral team since 1982. The third officer is the Steeple Keeper. Two officers have a DBS check (the Tower Captain has not kept received DBS clearance) and have completed basic awareness and foundation level safeguarding training. Officers are elected annually at the group's AGM, which is chaired by the Dean.
- 3.2.27** The Cathedral ringing team comprises a group of around 25 adult ringers, who ring in several of the churches around the centre of Bristol. They ring for services on a Sunday and for other events by request but are mindful of the impact of bell-ringing on local residents, as the area around the Cathedral has become increasingly developed. The monthly practice night is on a Friday, and is sometimes attended by children, who come with their parents. The tower is not formally a teaching tower, but the Tower Captain is required to have an enhanced DBS to enable teaching and the present office holder would like to develop this aspect of the team's activities. In the past, a vulnerable adult has been included in the ringing team. No current ringers are known to be vulnerable. Expectations of the ringers to undertake safeguarding training at an agreed level are unclear.
- 3.2.28** Access to the north-west tower is via the Cathedral floor. When the Cathedral is not already open (e.g., on Friday practice night), access for the ringers is via the cloister door, the keys to which are held by each of the three officers. Ringers gather in the cloisters, and the first eight go together to the tower, leaving two others at the door for a further 15 minutes to admit late arrivals. An attendance register has been kept recently 'for Covid reasons', having not been in use previously. Lone working is not permitted. When maintenance is required, the Steeple Keeper is always accompanied by another group member. In an emergency, it is possible to leave the tower via the roof to another exit.
- 3.2.29** A visitors' book is used to note the names of any individual visitors to the tower. There is no sign in/sign out system. Competence of visitors is assessed through conversation and observation, and individuals are not permitted to ring unsupervised. There are no formal arrangements in place for visiting bands of ringers.
- 3.2.30** The Tower Secretary works closely with the Head Verger and the Dean's PA, keeping them informed of planned activities and events, and hearing in turn from



them about relevant matters.

- 3.2.31** The Cathedral's safeguarding policy applies to the tower. Safety measures are in place, based on the knowledge and extensive experience of the Secretary and other ringers, but there are no specific procedures and practice guidance in place for the bell tower.

### *Analysis*

- 3.2.32** There are safe working practices in place in the bell tower, with clear understanding demonstrated by tower officers. Arrangements could be strengthened by agreeing written procedures, especially for visiting individuals and bands, and aligning the tower more closely with the Cathedral.
- 3.2.33** The auditors reflected that the existing good working practices described to them were dependent on the knowledge, understanding and presence of the tower officers, and would benefit from being written down, to promote the development of a system less dependent on individuals and 'custom and practice'. This would also support the aspiration for the tower to be developed as a teaching tower.
- 3.2.34** Access to the tower is well controlled and safety precautions while in the tower are well developed. The auditors did question, however, whether more specific guidance on the application of the Cathedral safeguarding policy within the bell tower might be of benefit, building on the recent risk assessment. This might include factors such as the signing-in process. At present, in an emergency, those on the ground would not know how many individuals are present in the tower and there would be no clear way of accounting for all present.
- 3.2.35** Bell towers, by their nature and times of operation, can risk becoming isolated from the wider Cathedral. It was therefore positive to hear that the Dean chairs the AGM and that this contact with the Dean is valued by the ringers. Communication between the Secretary and key staff in the Cathedral appears to be good. The auditors wondered whether there may be opportunities for this engagement to be more formalised, such as by inclusion of the Tower Captain or Ringing Master in relevant Cathedral forums such as the planning meeting and the safeguarding group.
- 3.2.36** Reflecting on the view expressed on behalf of the ringers that they did not regard themselves as Cathedral volunteers, and therefore should not be expected to participate in safeguarding training expected of other volunteers, the auditors wondered whether there may be an opportunity to work with the other churches visited by the ringers to adopt a common standard in this regard. The recent appointment of the VED, with responsibility for the oversight of volunteers, may be a further opportunity to promote good practice in this area.
- 3.2.37** The auditors agreed with the Cathedral's own assessment that the current processes of the tower assuring itself of the suitability of visiting ringers, especially in assessing any risk they may pose to others, is not sufficiently developed. More formalised processes would be beneficial.

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

- How can the Cathedral ensure that the safe working practices in place within the bell tower are reflected in written procedures which align with the Cathedral's

safeguarding policy and address specific factors such as the teaching of children and assessing the suitability of visiting ringers?

- How might coordination between the bell tower and the Cathedral be further developed and formalised, including addressing the status of ringers as cathedral volunteers?

### 3.3 CASE WORK (INCLUDING INFORMATION SHARING)

- 3.3.1** When safeguarding concerns are reported, a timely response is needed to make sense of the situation, assess risk and decide what 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 situations of people receiving pastoral support.

#### *Description*

- 3.3.2** The Service Level Agreement (SLA) between diocese and Cathedral makes provision for the DSA to be 'made available' for safeguarding case consultations with the Cathedral. In practice, the DSA or the caseworker will assume responsibility for all cases concerning allegations against Church officers (clergy, staff or volunteers), or where a member of the Cathedral community is putting themselves or others at risk. This includes risk assessing, developing and reviewing safeguarding agreements.
- 3.3.3** A number of Cathedral clergy and staff are involved when concerns are raised which may include a safeguarding element. Good use is made of the facility for consultation with the DSA, whose advice is invariably followed.
- 3.3.4** The current pastoral visiting service comprises one chaplain visiting to deliver communion to a small number of congregants in their own homes. The chaplain maintains a spreadsheet showing when visits have taken place and keeps additional notes in a secure area of the cathedral server accessible only to the chaplain.

#### **Effectiveness of responses and information-sharing practice**

- 3.3.5** The auditors looked at seven safeguarding cases. Three had records kept by both the Diocesan Safeguarding Team (DST) and the Cathedral. The auditors discussed some of those cases further in relation to specific areas of the Cathedral through individual conversations. These concerned vulnerable adults, allegations against Church officers and persons who may pose a risk to others. Only one case involved children. This is likely to be a result of the limited opening of the Cathedral because of the pandemic, during which time the choirs were not operating, and there were no activities for children.
- 3.3.6** The auditors found that when incidents were reported to the DSA, there was evidence of a timely and appropriate response. Casework involved appropriate people, including the person of concern and those affected, or potentially affected. There was prompt liaison with other agencies where required and there was good follow-up to those raising concerns.
- 3.3.7** Where cases were regarded as safeguarding but did not directly involve the DSA, arrangements were unclear and outcomes not always recorded. Three of the four cases were pre-pandemic. The COO appeared to be the main point of



contact in each case. For the single case post-pandemic, the COO was again the first point of contact. Records for this latest case indicated good coordination, continuing attention being paid to the subject's wishes and feelings, awareness of role and boundaries (including information sharing), and a good interface with mental health services. There was consultation with the DSA to check actions and confirm whether anything else was needed. A debrief meeting was held with all those involved, which was good practice.

- 3.3.8** The auditors also looked at four individual files of pastoral casework and a log of 'pastoral incidents'. All of these concerned vulnerable adults. In each case, the content of the casework was appropriate and caring, there were timely responses, and relevant people were involved and kept informed. Work was almost all done via telephone calls and emails, rather than putting heads together to create an agreed plan. The auditors reflected that an individual plan for responding to those vulnerable adults who regularly come to the Cathedral may facilitate a more consistent and informed response as well as being a support to vergers, welcomers, day chaplains, etc. Further benefit would be gained from there being a clearly designated individual who either undertook or supported casework which sits below the current threshold for DSA involvement. The auditors were aware that the present DST would not have capacity to do this, however.

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

- 3.3.9** The auditors looked at the single safeguarding agreement in place at present. This included a good risk assessment and detailed provisions in the agreement were appropriate. The agreement was reviewed annually as required, with the correct people involved in the reviews. The auditors reflected that the effectiveness of the agreement depended heavily on the vergers, and considered this to be a potential risk, given the other demands on their time during services, and the particular individual risks identified.
- 3.3.10** A second case, which concerned an individual posing a potential risk, was similarly dependent on the vergers.

### **Quality of recording**

- 3.3.11** The DST uses an electronic recording system to keep casework records. Once the new national casework management system is introduced, this will also be available for use by the Cathedral, which in the meantime maintains a combination of electronic and paper files. This will be a positive development. Individual clergy maintain their own records, as do separate departments such as the music department. There is no system of oversight to ensure that records do not indicate safeguarding concerns.
- 3.3.12** The auditors found that recording was inconsistent, did not always tell a clear 'story', including when and how a referral was made, or how the involvement started, and records generally did not contain a closing summary or record of what the outcome was. A useful 'pastoral notes record' was evident on a small number of files, and the template contained information about the subject of the case, but this was not always completed and was not known about or used by everyone engaged in pastoral care.

- 3.3.1** The auditors found that case work by the DSA is good quality and the threshold for escalating a concern to the DSA is clear. Casework below this threshold was less coordinated and consistent. In the absence of a professional designated as a Cathedral safeguarding officer, there is limited capacity to ensure that thresholds for safeguarding concerns are being consistently and appropriately applied.

#### Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How confident is the Cathedral that it has access to adequate capacity for identifying, responding to and overseeing thresholds for safeguarding cases?
- What measures would be helpful in making referrals/responses to pastoral care needs more consistent and well recorded?

### 3.4 CLERGY DISCIPLINARY MEASURES

- 3.4.1** Disciplinary processes in the Church differ significantly from a secular work context, in that they are initiated by someone making a complaint, rather than management assuming responsibility and appointing an investigating officer to investigate what has happened.
- 3.4.2** There were no blue files which included a safeguarding concern relevant to the audit. All clergy blue files were reviewed as part of the national Past Cases Review 2 (PCR2). None were reported as having any additional safeguarding concerns which require action.

#### Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- There were no considerations in this section.

### 3.5 TRAINING

- 3.5.1** Safeguarding training is an important mechanism for establishing safeguarding awareness and confidence throughout the Cathedral. It requires good quality substance, 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 for training over time that tracks what training has been provided, who attended, and who still needs to attend or requires refresher sessions.

#### *Description*

- 3.5.2** Bristol Cathedral's safeguarding policy includes a commitment to ensuring that 'staff and volunteers receive appropriate guidance and training to assist them in this aspect of their duties'. The (draft) safeguarding handbook states that 'the type of DBS check and the level of training required for those with specific roles/responsibilities will be set out in job descriptions and in appointment and induction processes. Regular updating and follow up advice, guidance and support will be provided. All training is in line with the Church of England national

training and development framework for safeguarding'. To support their training, all volunteers are provided with a basic safeguarding pack including a copy of *Promoting a Safer Church*, a leaflet identifying those with key safeguarding responsibilities in the Cathedral and diocese, a card with contact numbers for reporting safeguarding concerns and a summary of 'recognise, respond, record and report'.

- 3.5.3** The SLA between diocese and Cathedral underpins the provision of training by the diocese to Cathedral staff and volunteers and confirms that the diocese is responsible for all clergy safeguarding training. The DST has included a dedicated training and development officer since 2017. The DST delivers national Church training including both the safeguarding-specific training and more specialist areas such as domestic violence and abuse. The mental health first aid course is available but has not yet been delivered to all those in the Cathedral who would benefit.
- 3.5.4** The post of the OO (Finance) was extended to include safeguarding in 2019, becoming the DCSL. The postholder has worked closely with the DST, delivering C0 (basic awareness) training and using a variety of means to get alongside volunteers who have been reluctant to undertake it, for whatever reason. She is due to be trained as a trainer to deliver C1 (foundation) training, which will further extend trainer capacity in the Cathedral.
- 3.5.5** Staff roles have been reviewed to establish which level of training is appropriate for their role, and what additional training is appropriate. As noted above, this will be reflected in the proposed staff handbook. A record is kept on staff HR files of training completed. A spreadsheet is also maintained by the OO (Finance and Safeguarding) which details the type and level of training that is required/completed/due for review. The SLT is part way through the new leadership training, undertaken as a team.
- 3.5.6** Volunteers are expected to undertake at least basic awareness training, and newly recruited volunteers all do this as part of their induction. While there is no 'bottom line' regarding participation, the expectation is being made increasingly clear that safeguarding training should be completed by all. There are a small number of volunteers, for example the bell-ringers and lay members of Chapter, where decisions are outstanding about what training is required.
- 3.5.7** All day chaplains complete required training as part of the requirements for retaining permission to officiate (PTO). This is reported and monitored at the DSSG. The auditors were told that the PTO training is more suitable for parish priests and is likely to be revised.
- 3.5.8** The training spreadsheet shows that good progress is being made with ensuring that all clergy, staff and volunteers are undertaking the appropriate level of training, although progress was inevitably interrupted by the pandemic. The planned introduction of electronic HR and record-keeping systems will replace the need for maintaining a spreadsheet which, although comprehensive, is cumbersome to maintain and difficult to use as a means of monitoring and reporting. This work was expected to progress rapidly once a second operations officer took up post in mid-November 2021. The postholder will be responsible for the introduction of ChurchSuite, which will collate all volunteer records.
- 3.5.9** The Cathedral's safeguarding improvement plan has included actions related to training. These have focused on ensuring training expectations for each role are

clear and in line with national guidance, and that records are up to date.

- 3.5.10** When asked how adequate for their role is the safeguarding training received from the Cathedral, 73% (n = 59) of survey respondents said it was either extremely (33) or moderately (10) adequate. Only 2% (n = 1) said it was not at all adequate, and 25% (n = 15) said the question was not relevant for their role. Comments made to the auditors underlined the importance of using examples relevant to the Cathedral context, and the value of face-to-face training in permitting discussion between participants who may occupy very different roles.

### Analysis

- 3.5.11** Safeguarding training is in place for staff and volunteers, supplemented by more specialist training specific to individual roles, and is generally well received. There is a central tracking system which works well. More systematic monitoring, and consideration of how the impact of training on daily practice might be evaluated, would be beneficial.
- 3.5.12** The auditors noted that safeguarding training featured as a priority in the Cathedral's safeguarding improvement plan. They heard general support expressed for undertaking safeguarding training and noted how this is becoming embedded into 'business as usual' – for example, through the incorporation into staff and volunteer induction. The enthusiasm and commitment of the OO (Finance and Safeguarding) in supporting volunteers to undertake training has proved beneficial in promoting the engagement of volunteers and the establishment of clear expectations, although these have not yet been formalised.
- 3.5.13** Training requirements have been included in the safeguarding improvement plan, and progress regularly reviewed, with a focus on ensuring that training requirements are matched to each post and that records are up to date. The CSC has occasionally received a verbal update on progress. Developing a spreadsheet to monitor training required and completed has been a significant step forward, the next being the systematic reporting and monitoring of training compliance. This will be further helped once the anticipated HR databases are in place for staff and volunteers respectively.
- 3.5.14** While the Cathedral has been focused on ensuring that all who require core safeguarding training have been supported to complete it, and feedback to the auditors indicated that safeguarding training is generally well received, there has been less attention given to assessing the impact of training on culture and practice within the Cathedral. A training plan, coupled with systematic reporting of delivery against set targets, might prove helpful.
- 3.5.15** The new House of Bishops' *Safeguarding Learning and Development Framework*, which was approved by the National Safeguarding Steering Group on 22 April 2021, provides a good opportunity to review what the Cathedral has achieved so far in its promotion of training. The framework argues that a 'paradigm shift in safeguarding requires a "whole system" approach within which change is achieved by the inter-relatedness of different strands'. Church bodies are required to plan for full implementation from January 2022. The guidance contains useful information about how training can be evaluated and includes a template for a diocesan training strategy which could be adapted for Cathedral

purposes, if required.

#### Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- What is needed to ensure that the requirements of the new House of Bishops' *Safeguarding Learning and Development Framework* are fully met?
- How might the Cathedral assess the impact of training on its safeguarding culture and practice?

### 3.6 SAFER RECRUITMENT

#### Description

- 3.6.1** Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the Church is one of the six policy commitments set out in the national guidance *Promoting a Safer Church* (2017). This is reflected in Bristol Cathedral's safeguarding policy, which gives a commitment to meeting the standards set out in national guidance for the recruitment and appointment of staff and volunteers.
- 3.6.2** Bristol Cathedral employs 25 staff (both full and part time) and, pre-pandemic, was supported by around 400 volunteers. This number has reduced, post-Covid, to around 100. The safe recruitment of staff is led by the HR Director, an independent consultant who has worked with the Cathedral for several years. The HR Director works with the COO, who is head of paid staff for the Cathedral, and is involved in advertising, job description review, shortlisting, interviews and the take-up of references for staff appointments. The Church of England confidential declaration is currently required for all posts, but this will change in line with new guidance from the National Safeguarding Team. DBS checks are conducted through Thirtyone:eight (formerly CCPAS). Where a DBS is reported as blemished, or an offence disclosed, the advice of the DSA is sought.
- 3.6.3** The OO (Finance and Safeguarding) provides administrative support and keeps records of the key stages in the recruitment process on an Excel spreadsheet. The spreadsheet also contains details of which posts require DBS clearance, what level of training is required and when renewals are due. The Cathedral has plans to acquire the 'PeopleHR' database. Once fully populated, this will replace the spreadsheet for recruitment and training and will operate as a single central record and simplify the process of monitoring renewals, progress reporting, etc.
- 3.6.4** The OO (Finance and Safeguarding) has undertaken safer recruitment training, as have other managers in the Cathedral. The COO has been working together with the Finance and Operations Director and the OO to review all roles against national guidance on DBS and training to ensure that all are correct.
- 3.6.5** The new post of VED (Visitor Experience Director) has within its remit the oversight of all volunteers, including their safer recruitment. Recruitment had previously been conducted within different departments. The VED took the opportunity offered by the Museum of the Moon event in 2020 to safely recruit 70 welcomers, many of whom were from the Cathedral's existing pool. The planned introduction of ChurchSuite will enable all volunteer records to be collated onto



one system.

- 3.6.6** The Cathedral does not have its own safer recruitment policy but is planning to adopt that of the diocese. The safeguarding handbook, which is under development, sets out the broad framework for safer recruitment but does not contain detailed guidance. The diocesan safer recruitment policy is dated 2017 and will require updating in line with the national *Safer Recruitment and People Management Guidance* which was issued by the House of Bishops in June 2021.
- 3.6.7** The safeguarding improvement plan contains actions relating to HR and safer recruitment and is systematically updated, but at present the implementation of safer recruitment guidance is not regularly reported.

### Analysis

- 3.6.8** Good practice in safer recruitment is evident and developing. The use of electronic databases will enable systematic monitoring and more detailed reporting.
- 3.6.9** The auditors noted that good progress has been made in embedding safer recruitment practice in all areas and reflected that this would be further enhanced by the adoption of the diocesan safer recruitment policy and latest national guidance. Relevant staff have received safer recruitment training. The creation of a spreadsheet to provide oversight of all important stages in the recruitment process is useful, pending the implementation of an HR database, which will also enable systematic monitoring and reporting.
- 3.6.10** The auditors reviewed nine HR files, four for staff and five for volunteers. All staff had been recruited in 2021. Volunteers had been recruited either in 2019, pre-pandemic, or in 2021. Staff files showed that safer recruitment processes were being systematically applied for new appointments, and record keeping was good. Job descriptions included a safeguarding statement. References were requested and received for all roles. Volunteer files were less comprehensive but still showed improving recruitment practice.
- 3.6.11** There were gaps in information on both staff and volunteer files. In particular, the *Code of Safer Working Practice*, ratified in January 2021, was not evident on staff files, although was signed as received on the recent volunteer files. As one person interviewed said to the auditors, 'nobody put the safeguarding policy in my hand and told me to sign it'. The auditors reflected that the increased attention being paid to this area of safeguarding is likely to address these gaps.

### Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- What needs to happen to ensure that the Cathedral's recruitment and record keeping practices meet the standards set out in the new national guidance and how will this be monitored and reported?

## 4. FINDINGS – ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORTS

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### 4.1 POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND GUIDANCE

- 4.1.1 All parts of the Church of England must adopt or take account of the House of Bishops' policy statement *Promoting a Safer Church* (2017) within their own safeguarding policy. The policy statement must actively underpin all safeguarding work within the Church and the drive to improve safeguarding practice.
- 4.1.2 This has been supplemented by further 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.
- 4.1.3 Both these documents, together with other national guidance, provide a broad framework for cathedrals to work within, but do not provide sufficient detail to enable them to be implemented fully at a local level. Each area therefore needs to review the national guidance and supplement it with local procedures and practice guidance.

#### *Description*

- 4.1.4 Bristol Cathedral's policy, *Safeguarding Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults*, is dated 2017. It reflects the national policy framework and is aligned with the Bristol diocesan safeguarding policy. The safeguarding policy is available on the Cathedral's website. A decision has been made by Chapter to adopt formally all relevant diocesan safeguarding policies and this work is in progress.
- 4.1.5 There is a range of other policies, procedures and handbooks of relevance, which supplement the safeguarding policy. These include:
  - Diocese of Bristol allegations management procedure
  - Diocese of Bristol domestic abuse statement
  - supporting safeguarding
  - Diocese of Bristol safeguarding policy for children and adults
  - complaints policy (draft)
  - data protection – data policy and privacy notice
  - policy for responding to domestic abuse
  - staff handbook
  - various handbooks in the music department.
- 4.1.6 Chapter has recognised that many of its policies and procedures are out of date, not properly accessible and need reviewing.
- 4.1.7 The Cathedral safeguarding handbook is being developed under the leadership of the Safeguarding Improvement Group with a vision of having all safeguarding procedures and practice guidance, for all departments and occupational groups, gathered in one place. This will include areas conducted by the Social Justice



Group, such as homeless outreach and the night shelter. The handbook will be online when completed, openly via the website or more restricted using SharePoint (the internal document management system), depending on the subject, thus promoting easy access and regular updating. A volunteer with previous professional experience of safeguarding, working with the leader of each activity area to ensure that all procedures and guidance are being written down in a common format, is leading this project.

**4.1.8** The Cathedral is taking on two online management tools to support storage of information, access to policies and improve communication. These have been discussed elsewhere.

**4.1.9** The work in progress on the Cathedral's vision and strategy offers further opportunity to ensure consistency of messaging across all internal and public-facing communications, including about safeguarding.

### Analysis

**4.1.10** There is a range of policies and procedures related to safeguarding in place. Work is in progress – identified by the Safeguarding Improvement Group – to develop and update these, address gaps and align them where appropriate to those of the diocese. Attention will be needed to ensure these are accessible, properly understood and embedded in practice.

**4.1.11** The vision for the safeguarding handbook, and the work being done to collate policies and procedures across all occupational areas, is considerable and well advanced. The volunteer coordinating this work, with the support of the Improvement Group, is assiduous in identifying areas where there are gaps to be filled. These include areas such as the bell tower (discussed in 3.1). The auditors wondered whether there is also scope to identify where good practice in one area might be extended to others, or even across the whole Cathedral. For example, there is no safeguarding code of conduct at present, but the music department has the *Code of Safer Working Practice*, dated January 2021, which applies to the choral foundation only. This could easily be developed as a code of conduct with wider applicability.

**4.1.12** The auditors noted that there is no social media policy at present, and reflected that, as the Cathedral is developing its online presence and use of social media, thought needs to be given to a protocol for responding to complaints and concerns via social media platforms to ensure that any potential safeguarding issues are quickly identified and addressed. These should complement existing and developing procedures for making complaints, raising concerns and whistleblowing.

### Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How might the Cathedral ensure that its new safeguarding handbook remains current, reflects best practice and underpins safeguarding practice across the Cathedral?

## 4.2 THE DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING ADVISOR/CATHEDRAL

## SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

### *Description*

- 4.2.1** The DSA provides advice, guidance and support in specified circumstances, and carries out case work on behalf of the Cathedral, within the terms of a safeguarding support and procedure protocol (service level agreement - SLA) between the diocese and the Cathedral. The SLA also provides for a DBS service and safeguarding training for the Cathedral. It is in the process of being revised and developed to include other areas of common interest.
- 4.2.2** The DSA is a qualified and experienced social worker with extensive experience of working in multi-agency systems/partnerships. He has been in post full time since December 2016. He is line managed by the Diocesan Director of HR and Safeguarding and receives professional supervision from an appropriately qualified professional. Neither of these two arrangements include casework supervision.
- 4.2.3** The DSA heads a small team comprising a caseworker (who works 0.6 FTE and has a background in public protection), a safeguarding coordinator (who supports training and DBS processes) and a training and development officer (0.6 FTE, whose professional background is in higher education).
- 4.2.4** The planned introduction of a joint case management system, as it becomes nationally available, will enable the DSA to access Cathedral case records and hence give oversight of cases in the Cathedral, and monitoring of cases at the interface between diocese and Cathedral, should that be an agreed task.
- 4.2.5** The DSA supports and is accountable to the DSSG, providing quarterly monitoring reports based on the National Safeguarding Team self-evaluation reporting. These give details of training delivery – including for PTOs, DBS and any risk assessments arising from blemished DBS checks – safeguarding agreements across the diocese, and the numbers and types of new cases. The DSSG has not reviewed the DST capacity in the light of such monitoring reports to date.
- 4.2.6** The COO is the CSL and is named as a first point of contact for reporting safeguarding concerns in the Cathedral, as is his deputy, but does not undertake casework. The DSA operates as the Cathedral Safeguarding Officer within the terms of the SLA. The DSA liaises with the CSL and DCSL, attends CSC meetings, and provides advice and support to these and other individuals who approach him. He is well known, well regarded and his advice is respected and followed.

### *Analysis*

- 4.2.7** The DSA and his team provide good support to the Cathedral within the terms of the SLA. The Cathedral would benefit from enhanced professional capacity to support its developing safeguarding arrangements.
- 4.2.8** The service provided to the Cathedral by the DSA and his team is good and well regarded. Their roles are widely known and understood. The DSA's advice and support are regularly sought and valued. The appointment of a Director for HR and Safeguarding in the diocese, who is now the DSA's manager, brings welcome additional influence and capacity into this area of work. The recent reduction of the DSA's hours has added pressure on a team already working at

or beyond capacity, however.

**4.2.9** The auditors reflected that the Cathedral would benefit from increased professional capacity which could offer more than the limited amount of casework and advice currently available within the terms of the SLA. At present, the DSA has no capacity to undertake a range of relevant activities: for example, providing advice and support as new activities are developed, leading and supporting a consistent approach to identifying and responding to lower-level needs, particularly in vulnerable adults, improving standards of safeguarding record keeping and providing oversight of safeguarding thresholds.

**4.2.10** The auditors welcomed the intention to revisit the SLA, which has not been reviewed since 2015. A formal review would provide an opportunity to consider what is the likely demand from the Cathedral of a professional safeguarding service. The recent appointments of a Diocesan Director of HR and Safeguarding, and a new independent chair of DSSG offer an opportunity to do this in the context of a wider appraisal of diocesan needs for a safeguarding service.

#### Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How confident is the Cathedral that the capacity of the current professional safeguarding service is sufficient to meet its needs and how might any shortfall be addressed?

## 4.3 RECORDING AND IT SYSTEMS

### *Description*

**4.3.1** 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.

**4.3.2** Bristol Cathedral, together with the DST, employs a range of recording systems in the administration and oversight of safeguarding, some centrally held, and some maintained within departments and by activity leaders. These include:

- The DST has an electronic case management system on which all casework undertaken by members of the DST is recorded for both the diocese and the Cathedral. Access to this system is restricted to specific, named people. The DSA supplements this with a spreadsheet which provides an easily accessible overview of all referrals from the Cathedral, including those which are not opened formally as cases. The DST also holds information about safeguarding training in respect of Cathedral clergy, staff and volunteers, which is shared with the Cathedral.
- Pastoral incidents are reported by a variety of means (usually telephone or email) and are logged electronically by the CSL who maintains a list and ensures they are kept securely.
- The Cathedral Chaplain keeps a spreadsheet of pastoral visits undertaken, and supplementary information, which is stored in a secure part of the server

accessed only by them.

- Activity leaders (such as the Sunday School leader and the Tower Captain) keep their own records in a variety of formats.
- Departmental staff such as the VED and the EO hold information electronically on the Cathedral server.
- The music department holds personal information about choristers, including contact details and relevant medical information. This information is kept within the department.
- Records of meetings such as the CSC and the various operational meetings are kept securely on the Cathedral server.
- Records relating to clergy are held in the Bishop's office and access is tightly controlled.
- Spreadsheets are maintained for recording and tracking safer recruitment, DBS completion and safeguarding training. These will be replaced shortly when the two new electronic systems (People HR and ChurchSuite) are populated.

**4.3.3** The Precentor does some pastoral work but keeps no records. Other clergy also keep records of aspects of their work.

**4.3.4** The Cathedral does not currently have a centralised database for recording safeguarding concerns.

**4.3.5** There are plans to develop information sharing agreements with the diocese and the Cathedral Schools Trust.

#### *Analysis*

**4.3.6** Progress is being made on establishing single central record systems regarding staff and volunteers. A similarly coordinated approach is needed for reporting and collating concerns in order to enable oversight and promote consistent practice.

**4.3.7** A number of different systems for recording information and incidents are in use around the Cathedral. These are not all fully mapped, and there is no consistency. They are kept in different ways and in different places, and there is no oversight and monitoring.

**4.3.8** While concerns considered to meet the safeguarding threshold are shared with the CSL and the DSA, this remains open to subjectivity. It therefore raises the risk that perceived low-level concerns – that may otherwise help to build a combined understanding of risk from sources across the Cathedral – are not shared and are instead held in isolation. The proposed national case management system should help to address this challenge.

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

- How might the current system of locally held records be combined to enable effective oversight of low-level concerns and ensure a consistent threshold for action?

## 5. FINDINGS – LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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### 5.1 QUALITY ASSURANCE

- 5.1.1** 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 (QA) enables an organisation to understand its strengths and weaknesses. Potential sources of data are numerous, including independent scrutiny. QA 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.

#### *Description*

- 5.1.2** Bristol Cathedral has its safeguarding improvement plan which identifies key areas of focus relevant to safeguarding, including leadership and governance, policies and procedures, training, HR, communications and finance. The plan includes the actions needed to achieve improvement, who is responsible and a timetable for completion. Progress is RAG (red/amber/green) rated. This reveals that there is much work either achieved or ongoing and much timely completion. Outstanding areas include appointing an independent safeguarding advocate to replace the previous postholder and developing a system for ensuring the safeguarding processes for visiting bands of bell-ringers or choirs. The auditors saw evidence of this action plan being scrutinised and updated regularly and progress is reported verbally to Chapter.
- 5.1.3** Other elements of QA activity that are in place include:
- Safeguarding as a standing item on Chapter's agenda.
  - Oversight by the CSC of matters such as safer recruitment, training requirements and policy development. Other matters are discussed when the need is identified.
  - Attendance and verbal contributions by the Cathedral at the DSSG, and (most recently) presentation of a written report, where feedback from the independent chair and panel members is also given.
  - Developing systems to enable monitoring and reporting, such as the spreadsheets which collate information on safer recruitment and training.
- 5.1.4** There is no formal mechanism in place for gathering feedback systematically from those who are engaged with the Cathedral, in whatever capacity, or who receive a safeguarding service. The planned appointment of an independent safeguarding advocate is intended to help address this.

#### *Analysis*

- 5.1.5** There are several elements of a framework for quality assurance already in place. More effective systems for monitoring and reporting, and for gathering feedback from those engaged with the Cathedral, would strengthen arrangements.
- 5.1.6** The safeguarding improvement plan has proved to be an effective catalyst for achieving rapid progress in identified areas. The plan has been overseen by the COO, who reports regularly to Chapter. The plan identified gaps where



processes, procedures and activity were missing or needed improvement, which included developing systems for collating information to enable monitoring. This area will be further progressed as the new databases are fully populated. Overall, however, data has not yet been used systematically to demonstrate progress or focus activity. This means that leaders may be overly reliant on what is verbally reported to them.

- 5.1.7** The auditors reflected that the current development of a new vision and strategy for the Cathedral, with accompanying performance indicators, could potentially provide a good framework within which a successor to the current improvement plan could sit, now that the majority of actions have been completed. A *Promoting a Safer Church* plan, as specified in national guidance, could provide the means of integrating current and planned activity into a single document, against which progress could be monitored and reports to Chapter, the DSSG and the Bishop could be made. This would strengthen Chapter's governance and oversight of safeguarding, and also provide an opportunity for stepping back and reflecting what systems for data collection and reporting (including voices of survivors, children, adults) can best support Chapter in promoting a culture of care and vigilance. This is discussed further in section 5.5.
- 5.1.8** Chapter may also wish to consider what role could potentially be taken by the DSA and DSSG in providing formal, arm's length scrutiny of its safeguarding arrangements.

#### Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- What are the next steps in developing the Cathedral's QA arrangements and how might these be taken forward?
- How might the Cathedral seek regular feedback from a range of children and adults, including survivors of abuse?
- What role might the DSA and DSSG play in providing assurance to the Dean and Chapter about the effectiveness of Cathedral safeguarding arrangements?

## 5.2 COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE SAFEGUARDING SERVICE

- 5.2.1** 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.
- 5.2.2** A complaints policy for the Cathedral is in draft form and remains a work in progress. It puts complaints in a positive light, seeing them as providing an opportunity to learn and improve. It is intended for use by any member of the public, volunteer, or user of the Cathedral's facilities, and there is an intention to make the policy available via the Cathedral website.
- 5.2.3** Employees, office holders, workers or self-employed contractors providing services are directed to the grievance procedures appropriate to their role, the Cathedral whistleblowing policy, or through direct recourse to the Public Interest

Disclosure Act, whichever is most suitable.

- 5.2.4** The draft policy distinguishes between a complaint and reporting a safeguarding concern. It does not refer directly to making a complaint about the safeguarding service. It is clearly written and includes a two-stage process with provision for variation if the complaint is about the COO, the Dean or a member of Chapter. There is a commitment to publishing information in the Cathedral safeguarding annual report on the numbers of safeguarding complaints received, the categories of complaints and the percentage of complaints upheld.
- 5.2.5** The Diocese of Bristol has a complaints policy which is available on its website. This also distinguishes between complaints and reporting a safeguarding concern. It references both whistleblowing and the Clergy Disciplinary Measure. It does not make clear that the policy can be used to make a complaint about a safeguarding response by the DST. The auditors were not able to ascertain whether the Cathedral and diocesan complaints policies were intended to align.
- 5.2.6** The auditors did not see any cases relating to complaints made about the safeguarding service within the Cathedral. The limited capacity in the DST means that there is no systematic monitoring of complaints in the diocese in relation to potential safeguarding concerns.

#### Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- What might be the benefits of aligning the Cathedral's complaints policy and procedure with that of the diocese?

### 5.3 WHISTLEBLOWING

- 5.3.1** Effective whistleblowing procedures enable workers to raise concerns about a range of issues (sexual abuse, bullying, fraud, etc.) without fear that their disclosures will lead to any harassment or negative impact on their personal work role/environment.
- 5.3.2** There is a draft whistleblowing policy in the Cathedral's staff handbook, which itself is in the process of being revised. Employees and others are encouraged to raise any concerns that they may have about the conduct of others in the business or the way in which the business is run. The policy includes a set of principles and a staged procedure which includes recourse to external bodies in the event of continuing concerns once the investigative processes set out in stages 1–3 have concluded. The policy would be further strengthened by reference to external advice/support bodies such as Protect (formerly known as Public Concern at Work) and provision for reporting when an individual feels unable to report to a senior person in the Cathedral.
- 5.3.3** The diocesan website contains reference to a 'speaking out' (whistleblowing) policy, but the link does not work. It was therefore not possible for the auditors to determine whether and how the Cathedral's draft policy and that of the diocese are aligned.
- 5.3.4** The DSSG terms of reference contain a section on confidentiality and whistleblowing. This invites individuals with concerns that the diocese has failed to react effectively to a safeguarding concern or that the standard of



safeguarding activity within the diocese has failed to keep vulnerable individuals safe from harm, to report this to the independent chair, who will take appropriate action. By implication, although not specific, this would apply to the Cathedral.

#### Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How might the Cathedral work with the diocese and DSSG to ensure that their respective whistleblowing policies and procedures are appropriately scoped, aligned and understood?

## 5.4 DSSG/CATHEDRAL SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE

- 5.4.1** Based on the national guidance in *Key Roles and Responsibilities* for Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panels (DSAPs), the 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

- 5.4.2** Bristol's DSSG was established in April 2014 following an independent review of safeguarding arrangements in the diocese, commissioned from Barnardo's. Its current terms of reference are dated March 2018 and align closely with those set out for DSAPs in national guidance (*Key Roles and Responsibilities*, 2017). There is an independent chair, whose role also aligns with national guidance. The current chair was appointed in early 2020. He is a qualified social worker/probation officer who has extensive experience in public protection at all levels, including governmental. Membership includes representatives from the diocese and the Cathedral, together with representatives from a range of statutory and voluntary organisations. Minutes indicate that multi-agency attendance at DSSG is limited.
- 5.4.3** Details of diocesan safeguarding governance arrangements are available on the diocesan website, together with the safeguarding annual reports prepared by the DSA and his team. These are based on the quarterly monitoring reports presented to each meeting of the DSSG.
- 5.4.4** A risk management subgroup was established just pre-lockdown, with the purpose of monitoring and providing quality assurance in relation to risk assessments and safeguarding agreements. This subgroup is acting as the steering group for the national PCR2 on behalf of the diocese.
- 5.4.5** The parish safeguarding dashboard was adopted by DSSG in January 2020 as a quality assurance tool. Each parish was asked to register and use this tool in place of the annual safeguarding audit. The dashboard has three levels: Level 1 – Safer Foundation; Level 2 – Safer Activities; Level 3 – Safer Practices. A safer recruitment module is being developed. To date, 97% of parishes have registered and 70% are making active use of the dashboard. The dashboard is not used for the Cathedral as it is not considered fully fit for this purpose.
- 5.4.6** The Cathedral is expected to provide an annual report to the Bishop and DSSG. There are plans to do so for the first time in early 2022. There is no regular

agenda item for reporting on Cathedral safeguarding arrangements, but a written report was presented in 2021 which gave a brief update of safeguarding developments following a period of significant personnel changes, together with an overview of the main areas of focus in the Cathedral's safeguarding improvement plan. The previous Chapter Clerk was the Cathedral's representative. The COO is now expected to attend but has not yet done so – his deputy has attended on his behalf. The annual report for 2020 indicates that no Cathedral representative attended during that year.

- 5.4.7** Within the Cathedral there are two groups which have a safeguarding remit. The Safeguarding Improvement Group has been overseeing the safeguarding improvement plan and coordinating preparations for the audit. This is considered in further detail in 5.1 above.
- 5.4.8** The purpose of the Bristol CSC is 'to oversee the Cathedral's safeguarding policies and procedures and to provide assurance to Chapter on compliance'. The CSC is chaired by the Dean and membership includes the DSA, the OMC and his assistant, the Choir Tutor, the EO, the Head Verger, the DCSL, the COO, the Canon Missioner and the Cathedral Chaplain. The head and DSL from BCCS also attend, as does the head of the CPS. The CSC meets at least (school) half-termly. Terms of reference (revised in September 2021) describe the CSC's main role as 'to oversee the Cathedral's work in relation to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults'. Minutes of meetings held prior to the review of the terms of reference indicate that the CSC was used primarily as a means of information exchange between Cathedral, diocese and schools.
- 5.4.9** The COO gives a verbal report of progress on the safeguarding improvement plan and from CSC to each meeting of Chapter. There has been a recent decision by Chapter to include safeguarding as a standing item on the agenda for each Chapter meeting and there is discussion about how this item can be made more meaningful.

### *Analysis*

- 5.4.10** The foundations for a good system of safeguarding oversight are in place. Developing existing structures within and external to the Cathedral would clarify and strengthen safeguarding arrangements and improve scrutiny.
- 5.4.11** Safeguarding leadership, oversight and scrutiny sit with several different bodies – Chapter, CSC, the Safeguarding Improvement Group and DSSG. The relative roles and responsibilities of each in relation to the Cathedral's safeguarding arrangements are not always clear, and membership and reporting overlap. The auditors reflected that the coincidence of recent developments including key personnel changes and realignments of Cathedral leadership, a new chair of DSSG, the work on a new vision and strategy, forthcoming changes arising from the Cathedrals Measure 2021 and the very good progress made with the safeguarding improvement plan, provides an opportunity to review whether arrangements for oversight and accountability remain fit for purpose.
- 5.4.12** The auditors understand that there is consideration being given to designating the CSC as a formal committee of Chapter.
- 5.4.13** There is also willingness in the DSSG for a more structured contribution from the Cathedral to each meeting, and to develop its role to become more of a 'critical friend' to the Cathedral. There is also an opportunity for the Cathedral to provide a model for parish churches in how it meets its safeguarding responsibilities.

This would in turn provide the DSSG with evidence on which to provide regular feedback to Chapter on the effectiveness of the Cathedral's safeguarding arrangements, as it already does to the Bishop in relation to the diocese.

#### Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How might current structures be developed to provide systematic oversight and evidenced assurance to the Dean and Chapter of the quality and effectiveness of Cathedral safeguarding arrangements?

## 5.5 LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- 5.5.1** Safeguarding leadership takes various forms – strategic, operational and theological – 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.

### Theological leadership

#### *Description*

- 5.5.2** The remit for theological leadership in relation to safeguarding is clearly always with the clergy and especially with the Dean. Their leadership 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.
- 5.5.3** The present Dean was installed in October 2020, while Covid-related restrictions were still in place. She came from Southwark Cathedral, where she had been Canon Chancellor, and had previously worked in the Diocese of Leicester. The circumstances made it difficult to get to know the Cathedral community as quickly as would ordinarily be possible. For nine months there was no COO/Chapter Clerk, the previous postholder having left prior to the Dean's arrival, and the Dean found herself undertaking many of the tasks that would ordinarily have been in the remit of that post.

The Dean has a strong commitment to an open and inclusive culture, and has preached regularly about inclusion. She talks less directly about safeguarding, believing this to be integral to the concept of inclusivity. This is reflected in the revised vision for the Cathedral, which is the subject of consultation across the Cathedral community and beyond. The proposed vision examines the purpose of the Cathedral, which includes a commitment 'to serve others... [by offering] ... a safe, accessible, accepting, kind and inclusive place for all'.

#### *Analysis*

- 5.5.1** Theological leadership by the Dean is visible. The development of a new vision and strategy for the Cathedral is an opportunity to develop this aspect of safeguarding leadership further.
- 5.5.2** Despite the difficult circumstances in which she arrived, the Dean has established a strong presence and her vision of an open and inclusive cathedral

is well understood.

- 5.5.3** The Cathedral was felt to be successful in making safeguarding an obvious priority, with 98% (n = 58) of survey respondents feeling that this was extremely (n = 41) or moderately (n = 17) the case. One person said it was not relevant to their role or experience.
- 5.5.4** The auditors saw evidence that the Dean is successfully conveying strong messages about the integral position of safeguarding in the life of the Cathedral. The survey asked 'How active is the Dean in communicating the importance of safeguarding within the Church?' – 84% (n = 50) of all respondents said the Dean was 'extremely' (n = 41) or 'moderately' (n = 9) active; one person responded 'not at all' and the remainder (n = 8) replied that it was not relevant to their role or experience.
- 5.5.5** There appeared to be less confidence in the messages being given by the clergy as individuals, suggesting that there is more that could be done to promote messages about safeguarding and inclusion within the Cathedral. Asked to what extent does safeguarding, and the safety and wellbeing of others, form part of the message of sermons, 71% (n = 42) replied 'extremely' (n = 15) or 'moderately' (n = 27), while three people replied 'not at all'. The remainder (n = 14) said it was not relevant.
- 5.5.6** The auditors reflected that the process of developing a new vision for the Cathedral, and what that vision will look and feel like, is a significant opportunity for promoting safety and wellbeing as integral to the life of the Cathedral.

#### Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- What more might the Dean and clergy do to promote understanding of the importance of safeguarding and its integral place in Cathedral life?

#### Strategic leadership

- 5.5.7** The House of Bishops' *Roles and Responsibilities* practice guidance assigns different and overlapping roles to Dean and 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.

#### Description

- 5.5.8** Chapter is the main body responsible for the direction and oversight of the Cathedral, and is made up of the Dean, the three residentiary Canons, and four lay non-residentiary members. Chapter is also attended by the COO, who holds the position of Chapter Clerk. Three members have been appointed since the arrival of the Dean. Chapter currently has one committee, the Finance Committee. It is also advised by the Fabric Advisory Committee which works on behalf of Chapter and the Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England.
- 5.5.9** Chapter works alongside two other bodies to govern the Cathedral. These are the Cathedral Council, which is responsible for reviewing and advising on the direction and oversight of Chapter; and the College of Canons, which meets to

discuss progress on key projects, and receives the annual report and accounts each year. These arrangements are likely to change with the implementation of the Cathedrals Measure 2021, which will see every Anglican cathedral register with the Charity Commission as a charity over a period of a few years.

- 5.5.10** Changes at Chapter have been mirrored among the lay leadership team, which now includes a new COO, who took up post in May 2021, a new Head Verger, and the VED, who has within her remit the overall responsibility for volunteers. This had previously been distributed around different departments and individuals and had never been centrally coordinated.
- 5.5.11** The Dean and COO have worked together to differentiate governance and strategic and operational leadership, clarifying responsibilities and accountabilities. While retaining thematic leadership responsibilities (such as for liturgy and music, and for education and social justice), clergy are no longer managers of departments. Lay staff all report directly to their departmental heads, or indirectly to the COO.
- 5.5.12** This has been mirrored by a change in organisational structure, effective in September 2021, supported by a series of formal and focused meetings, some of which were initiated by the previous acting Dean, which aim to promote transparency and accountability, empower staff at all levels of the organisation and develop what was described to the auditors as a more 'intentional' culture. As part of this change, an SLT (senior leadership team), comprising senior clergy and departmental heads and chaired by the Dean, meets monthly to provide strategic leadership.
- 5.5.13** The Dean and the COO are also working to reset the relationship with BCCS. Although this works well in relation to the choir, the two leadership groups have not always communicated effectively, particularly over the use of the Cathedral as an additional space by the school.
- 5.5.14** Recognising that the 2017 Cathedral's strategy 'Come and See', intended as a 10-year plan running to 2027, was in need of revision, and seeing an opportunity to strengthen the alignment between Cathedral and diocese (which was itself reviewing its strategy 'Transforming Church'), the Dean initiated a review of the Cathedral's vision and strategy, using this as a vehicle for promoting discussion and dialogue across the cathedral community. A peer review conducted by the Association of English Cathedrals is due to take place later in November and will likely lead to further reflection and change.
- 5.5.15** The Dean is currently the Chapter lead for safeguarding, although she intends that to change to someone with more expertise as part of the forthcoming changes arising from the Cathedrals Measure 2021. In this role, the Dean chairs the CSC and works closely with the COO in his role as CSL. Meetings of Chapter include safeguarding as a standing item and there are discussions about how this can be used more actively, rather than simply as a reporting item. The COO is the Cathedral's representative at DSSG.
- 5.5.16** Asked how visible are the people leading safeguarding in the Cathedral, 93% (n = 55) of survey respondents replied either 'extremely' (n = 31) or 'moderately' (n = 24). Three replied that they were 'not at all' visible.

## Analysis

- 5.5.17** Strategic leadership of safeguarding is developing well and there has been



significant progress in a short time, despite the challenges associated with the pandemic. There is a good understanding of current strengths and weaknesses and clear plans to address these. Changes have been recent, and work will be needed to ensure these become embedded in everyday practice.

- 5.5.18** The appointment of a Canon Missioner signalled a renewed commitment to social justice and a determination to position the Cathedral as central to the city and open to the wider community, rather than maintaining its previous low profile. Together with some changes in the composition of Chapter, and in operational leadership, including the appointment to new posts, the leadership team is now very different from how it was pre-pandemic.
- 5.5.19** The Dean and COO have been visible and very active in promoting the importance of strong safeguarding arrangements, underpinned by clear procedures and guidance. They have worked to break down barriers between departments and spread good practice. The auditors agree with the Dean's recognition that the role of Chapter Lead for safeguarding would be better held elsewhere, once there is someone with suitable expertise to carry out this role effectively.
- 5.5.20** The decision to align the Cathedral more clearly with the diocese by adopting policies in common makes good sense, and the forthcoming review of the SLA will further support development. The inclusion of the OMC as a member of the SLT was an important step in promoting the inclusion of the music department into the wider body of the Cathedral, having been seen previously as somewhat separate.
- 5.5.21** The organisation has been going through a period of major change at precisely the same time as it has been reopening after the restrictions necessitated by the pandemic. This has coincided with preparations for both the safeguarding audit and the Association of English Cathedrals (AEC) peer review, with significant time and energy being expended on putting policies and procedures into place, filling gaps and thinking about safeguarding implications in every department of the Cathedral.
- 5.5.22** After such an intense period of activity, the auditors reflected that there is now an opportunity to take stock of what has been achieved and think more strategically about next steps in order to ensure that safeguarding becomes embedded as 'business as usual'. In particular, the auditors considered that Chapter might want to know how successful they are being in achieving their ambitions of a safe, accessible, accepting, kind and inclusive place for all, in the context of its developing new vision. At present, there is not the means of doing this systematically.
- 5.5.23** The Safeguarding Improvement Group, which comprises key leaders, has provided a strong focus for the audit preparation and helped promote confidence across the organisation about what can be a source of anxiety through a clear focus on a safeguarding improvement plan, now largely completed. Were the Cathedral to develop a safeguarding strategy and delivery plan as a successor to the current improvement plan, this could, in the view of the auditors, provide the strategic framework for further developing safeguarding arrangements as well as the basis for improved accountability and scrutiny across the system. Together with the work on key performance indicators being developed as part of the work on the vision and strategy, this would provide validated evidence of activity and effectiveness and a basis for systematic reporting to both Chapter

and DSSG.

### Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- What opportunities are presented by the development of the next phase of the Cathedral's vision to place safeguarding as central to its vision and mission?
- What benefits might there be in developing a strategy for *Promoting a Safer Church* with an accompanying delivery plan, and how could this be achieved?

## Operational leadership

### Description

- 5.5.24** Operational leadership of the Cathedral's lay functions sits with the COO, supported by around 25 staff and managers (including the six lay clerks) across a number of different departments. The COO is the CSL and has been instrumental in ensuring that each department has safeguarding embedded in its operating procedures and processes, supported by the DCSL.
- 5.5.25** Changes to the structure of meetings, aimed at supporting the clarification of leadership responsibilities, are referred to in 5.5.12. A whole team meeting takes place monthly, chaired by the Dean and the COO, with the aim of ensuring that all understand the Cathedral's vision, values and strategy, and what part they play in it, and to give everyone a voice. The COO chairs a two-weekly diary and operations meeting with the aim of ensuring that the Cathedral runs smoothly, the diary is well managed, and resources are effectively used. These meetings are supplemented by a series of weekly departmental meetings, to ensure effective communications and integrated planning.
- 5.5.26** The Communications Officer (who is also the Music Administrator) is leading work on developing the website and enhancing the Cathedral's social media presence.
- 5.5.27** The COO is working to support change in the Cathedral by reducing dependence on individuals through building resilient systems. Key to this is the work on revising the staff handbook and developing the safeguarding handbook, which involves reviewing working practices, promoting consistency and writing these into policies, procedures and practice guidance which reflect best practice. A review of the safeguarding SLA between the Cathedral and the diocese is an important aspect of this work and is likely to involve deepening the relationship between the two bodies. Similarly, a recognition of the value of independent voices in informing the Cathedral's work will see further changes.
- 5.5.28** The creation of the post of VED has had a significant impact in enabling the support to and oversight of volunteers to become more systematic and consistent. The VED used the opportunity of the Museum of the Moon to safely recruit volunteers, many of whom were already volunteers but had not previously been through this process.
- 5.5.29** The CSC oversees the Cathedral's safeguarding policies and procedures and provides assurance to Chapter on compliance. The CSC is chaired by the Dean and is described and discussed in section 5.4. The CSC is, in effect, the Cathedral's safeguarding leadership group, although its duties are both strategic

and operational.

- 5.5.30** The Safeguarding Improvement Group (see 5.5.23) has developed and overseen the delivery of the safeguarding improvement plan.

#### *Analysis*

- 5.5.31** Operational leadership is strong and well supported by new structures for meeting and communication which are becoming embedded. A continued focus on operational delivery is needed to ensure that good safeguarding practice is consistent across all departments.
- 5.5.32** The auditors heard that safeguarding is a standing item on all meeting agendas, and that thought is being given to how this may be developed from a reporting item into something which is educative and proactive.
- 5.5.33** The auditors questioned the continued need for two groups with a safeguarding remit, and also reflected on the importance of operational safeguarding responsibilities being clear and involving key leaders. Now that the safeguarding improvement plan has been largely delivered, they wondered whether there is now an opportunity to rethink the operational leadership and accountability arrangements for safeguarding. A forum where activity is coordinated, performance discussed, good practice identified and shared, and actions identified offers an important foundation for creating a safeguarding system which is not overly dependent on individuals for oversight and reporting. Were the Cathedral to develop a safeguarding delivery plan, as a successor to the improvement plan, this would need to be coordinated and led by an operational group in order to ensure implementation across all parts of the Cathedral.

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

- What is needed to ensure coordinated operational delivery of the Cathedral's safeguarding policy and how might this be progressed?

## **5.6 CULTURE**

- 5.6.1** The most critical aspect of safeguarding within any organisation relates to the culture. In a Church of England context, that can mean, for example, the extent to which priority is placed on safeguarding individuals as opposed to the reputation of the Church, or the ability of all members of the Church to think the unthinkable about friends and colleagues. SCIE's experience auditing safeguarding in faith contexts more broadly suggests that in areas where there is experience among senior clergy of previous serious abuse cases, a culture of openness and humility in approaching safeguarding issues can be stronger and accompanied by a 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.
- 5.6.2** Any cathedral should strive for an open, learning culture where safeguarding is a shared responsibility, albeit supported by experts, and which encourages people to raise concerns about how things are working in order that they can be addressed. An open learning culture starts from the assumption that maintaining adequate vigilance is difficult and proactively seeks feedback on how

safeguarding is operating and encourages people to highlight any concerns.

### *Description*

- 5.6.3** The Dean is committed to developing a confident and inclusive culture: 'I like things to be clear and transparent.' Discussions have been used to set the tone for a new, more engaged culture which is open to challenge. New appointments to Chapter have signalled the introduction of a more collegiate approach. Staff training and discouraging 'silo' working by undertaking collective work has supported this direction of travel, together with developing a well documented framework of policies and procedures and reducing reliance on individual knowledge and working practices.
- 5.6.4** Not everyone has bought into this approach. There has been some reluctance among volunteers to undertake safeguarding training, for example, but persistence, enthusiasm and patience is proving effective in overcoming resistance.

### *Analysis*

- 5.6.5** Bristol Cathedral has an energised leadership team with a coherent vision for the Cathedral as a safe place for all and a strong commitment to developing a healthy culture and a clear-eyed view of strengths and weaknesses in relation to safeguarding.
- 5.6.6** The energy and attention given to safeguarding across the Cathedral in recent months is evidence that safeguarding is a well understood priority, and although not yet explicit in key documents such as the Cathedral's existing vision statement, this is in the process of being rectified. Documents and conversations indicate that people in a wide range of roles, not necessarily with an explicit focus on safeguarding, have sought to apply safe working practices to their area of responsibility. Structures, procedures and daily practice show that safeguarding is becoming regarded as everybody's business
- 5.6.7** Asked to what extent there is a culture in the Cathedral that does not tolerate bullying, mistreatment, abuse and misuse of power, and a norm of treating adults and children with respect and care, 97% (n = 57) responded that this is extremely or moderately the case, and 3% (n = 2) thought it not relevant to their role or experience. A similar proportion (95%) expressed confidence that they would be taken seriously if they shared concerns that someone was being hurt in some way, or that someone was behaving inappropriately. The other 5% said the question was not appropriate to their role or experience.
- 5.6.8** Respondents to the survey were complimentary about the culture which is developing under the current leadership, some adding extra comments. One congregant/volunteer commented: 'Recent changes in staffing at leadership level mean that safeguarding is being embedded into the culture, rather than being a necessary bolt-on.' Another, in a professional role, added: 'What I have seen of the "corporate culture" of the Cathedral has been incredibly healthy and positive. There is an overt, explicit focus on our safeguarding responsibilities and need for scrupulous care to be taken in this regard. I have every confidence in the leadership team – those at the top have fostered a climate where all levels of staff and volunteers are encouraged to give their views and perspectives on how things are run.' This is a strong endorsement, particularly considering the newness of the leadership team and the difficult circumstances in which they

have come together.

- 5.6.9** The auditors reflected that there is not yet a way in which the voices of survivors of abuse can be heard. It may be that the forthcoming appointment of an independent advocate (a role that has been vacant since the previous advocate left just before the pandemic) might assist in addressing this. The Canon Missioner may also be able to support this by reaching out to organisations which support survivors of domestic abuse, for example.

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

- What are the next steps in building and embedding a culture which puts the experiences of victims and survivors at its heart and where safeguarding is owned as 'everybody's business'?



## 6. CONCLUSIONS

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The Cathedral's self-assessment presented an accurate picture of safeguarding strengths, weaknesses and areas for development. The direction of travel is clear and there is good capacity for improvement. The auditors found as follows.

- 6.1.1** Arrangements for keeping safe the Cathedral and associated buildings and those working in and visiting them are good. Staff, volunteers and congregants are confident that they are kept safe. There are some gaps in policies and procedures to be addressed to underpin the work of ensuring the Cathedral is a place of welcome and safety for visitors, staff and volunteers.
- 6.1.2** The present provision for children is safely operated, with appropriate procedures in place. There are opportunities to draw on good practice in the education department when addressing gaps in procedures and guidance for other activities where children and young people are involved.
- 6.1.3** A commitment to social justice informs the Cathedral's responses to vulnerability. Vulnerable adults within the Cathedral community receive good, caring responses when their needs are identified. Pastoral care is underdeveloped. There is potential to develop a more structured approach to identifying and responding to vulnerability.
- 6.1.4** Arrangements for keeping choir children safe are good. Attention needs paying to the balance between striving for musical excellence and promoting the wellbeing of individual children. Formalising oversight of each child's wellbeing and ensuring there is someone independent of the music department who can offer a listening ear to any concerns would provide additional security.
- 6.1.5** There are safe working practices in place in the bell tower, with clear understanding demonstrated by tower officers. Arrangements could be strengthened by agreeing written procedures, especially for visiting individuals and bands, and aligning the tower more closely with the Cathedral.
- 6.1.6** Casework by the DSA is good quality and the threshold for escalating a concern to the DSA is clear. Casework below this threshold was less coordinated and consistent. In the absence of a professional designated as a Cathedral safeguarding officer, there is limited capacity to ensure that thresholds for safeguarding concerns are being consistently and appropriately applied.
- 6.1.7** Safeguarding training is in place for staff and volunteers, supplemented by more specialist training specific to individual roles, and is generally well received. There is a central tracking system which works well. More systematic monitoring, and consideration of how the impact of training on daily practice might be evaluated, would be beneficial.
- 6.1.8** Good practice in safer recruitment is evident and developing. The use of electronic databases will enable systematic monitoring and more detailed reporting.
- 6.1.9** There is a range of policies and procedures related to safeguarding in place. Work is in progress – identified by the Safeguarding Improvement Group – to develop and update these, address gaps and align them where appropriate to those of the diocese. Attention will be needed to ensure these are accessible,

properly understood and embedded in practice.

- 6.1.10** The DSA and his team provide good support to the Cathedral within the terms of the SLA. The Cathedral would benefit from enhanced professional capacity to support its developing safeguarding arrangements.
- 6.1.11** Progress is being made on establishing single central record systems regarding staff and volunteers. A similarly coordinated approach is needed for reporting and collating concerns in order to enable oversight and promote consistent practice.
- 6.1.12** There are several elements of a framework for quality assurance already in place. More effective systems for monitoring and reporting, and for gathering feedback from those engaged with the Cathedral, would strengthen arrangements.
- 6.1.13** The foundations for a good system of safeguarding oversight are in place. Developing existing structures within and external to the Cathedral would clarify and strengthen safeguarding arrangements and improve scrutiny.
- 6.1.14** Theological leadership by the Dean is visible. The development of a new vision and strategy for the Cathedral is an opportunity to develop this aspect of safeguarding leadership further.
- 6.1.15** Strategic leadership of safeguarding is developing well and there has been significant progress in a short time, despite the challenges associated with the pandemic. There is a good understanding of current strengths and weaknesses and clear plans to address these. Changes have been recent, and work will be needed to ensure these become embedded in everyday practice.
- 6.1.16** Operational leadership is strong and well supported by new structures for meeting and communication which are becoming embedded. A continued focus on operational delivery is needed to ensure that good safeguarding practice is consistent across all departments.
- 6.1.17** There is an energised leadership team with a coherent vision for the Cathedral as a safe place for all and a strong commitment to developing a healthy culture and a clear-eyed view of strengths and weaknesses in relation to safeguarding.

## APPENDIX

### Information provided to auditors

In advance of the audit, the Cathedral sent through:

- 'About Bristol Cathedral', October 2021
- site plan, February 2010
- Cathedral internal layout
- 'Bristol Cathedral Introduction', October 2021
- meeting schedule, September 21
- organisational chart, September 2021
- proposed structure
- vision to strategy, draft, v. 6
- safeguarding children and young people and vulnerable adults policy, 2017
- safeguarding structure, September 2021
- clergy list
- Cathedral activity groups list
- Chapter minutes, 16 June, 20 July, 18 September 2021
- risk register
- past case review: Cathedral declaration, 19 April 2021
- safeguarding Sunday sermon, 26 January 2020
- safeguarding support and procedure protocol, July 2015
- safeguarding handbook (draft)
- safeguarding self-assessment, October 2021
- safeguarding improvement plan, October 2021
- staff handbook (draft), 2021
- Safeguarding Committee terms of reference, September 2021
- Safeguarding Committee minutes, 5 March 2020, 30 March, 29 June 2021
- terms of reference: Diocese of Bristol Safeguarding Steering Group (DSSG), March 2018
- DSSG minutes, 5 November 2019, 28 January 2020
- report to the DSSG, Diocese of Bristol, September 2021

- *Supporting Safeguarding: Diocese of Bristol Safeguarding Policy for Children and Adults*, v. 4, April 2018
- Diocese of Bristol safer recruitment guidance and toolkit, v. 3, June 2017
- Diocese of Bristol allegations management procedure, v. 4, 1 January 2018
- Diocese of Bristol domestic abuse statement, 2017
- Bristol Cathedral policy for responding to domestic abuse, 2018
- Bristol Cathedral *Code of Safer Working Practice*, January 2021
- safer recruitment: Church of England confidential declaration form, 2020
- Bristol Cathedral safer recruitment matrix, 2020
- complaints policy (draft)
- data protection: data policy and privacy notice, May 2018
- risk assessment: young persons, 5 June 2019
- risk assessment: Cathedral kids Sunday morning, 14 January 2020
- general education visit to Bristol Cathedral, risk assessment, 2018
- 'Moving On', risk assessment, June 2018
- Bristol Cathedral choir chorister handbook, 2021–2022
- chorister parent handbook, 2021–2022
- Bristol Cathedral choir prospectus, 2021–2022
- visiting choir handbook
- responsibility for choristers and probationers before, during and after weekday rehearsals
- draft: 'Guidelines for interaction between members of the public and the choir'
- visiting choir risk assessment, 2017
- chorister for the day risk assessment
- safeguarding procedures for day chaplains team
- safeguarding procedures for prayer ministry team
- correspondence regarding server team and child servers
- safeguarding: winter night shelter, 2020
- safeguarding agreement for the hire of Church premises – music teaching facilities
- Faal safeguarding pilot – documents.

## Participation of organisation staff

The auditors had conversations with:

- the Dean
- Diocesan Safeguarding Officer
- Organist/Director of Music
- HR Director
- Chief Operating Officer/Cathedral Safeguarding Lead
- Operations Officer/ Deputy Cathedral Safeguarding Lead
- Canon Precentor
- Cathedral Chaplain
- Canon Missioner
- Head Verger
- Tower Captain
- Secretary of the Ringers
- Volunteer/member of Safeguarding Improvement Plan Group
- Visitor Experience Director
- Education Officer
- Choir Tutor
- Music Administrator/Communications Officer
- Assistant Organist
- Designated Safeguarding Lead, Bristol Cathedral Choir School
- Chair Of Diocesan Safeguarding Steering Group.

## What records/ files were examined?

The auditors reviewed:

- children's survey responses
- adults' survey responses
- four staff recruitment files
- five volunteer recruitment files
- safeguarding case files
- records of pastoral incidents and concerns.





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