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Chelmsford Cathedral

Independent Safeguarding Audit

June 2021



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND



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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

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 to 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 use audits and reviews to generate that kind of understanding. 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 they decide how best to tackle the issue at hand. This approach is part of the SCIE Learning Together audit methodology. The approach requires those with local knowledge and responsibility for progressing improvement work to have a key role in deciding what exactly to do to address the findings and to be accountable for their decisions. It has the additional benefit of helping to foster ownership locally of the work to be done to improve safeguarding.

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.
- 1.2.6** The site visit will be either three days or 2.5 days. Cathedrals have been selected for the three-day audit to provide a broad base, or on the scale of an operation and/or where concerns may have been raised in the past for 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 sets out the audit process and any limitations to this audit

2. CONTEXT

2.1 CONTEXT OF THE CATHEDRAL

2.1.1 The leadership in each cathedral, as part of the audit process, was asked to supply a brief description of the institution. Chelmsford Cathedral's is below.

'Chelmsford is one of the newest cities in the UK. It stands at the heart of the region we seek to serve and is seeing rapid population growth. The Cathedral is at the geographical centre of the Diocese and is home to thriving congregations which continue to develop, including significant work with children and young families. But the wider challenge for the Cathedral is how a small cathedral, punching above its weight and seeking to make a difference, can serve a large and complex region and the wider networks of the Diocese.'

'The Cathedral - as the national church's free gift to the Diocese - seeks to use its resources in the service of the networks of the city, diocese and region, delivering much of its ministry through the strength of its partnerships.'

The mission and ministry of the Cathedral, rooted in John 20.21 and John 15.9, is expressed in the four themes of the Strategic Plan - the Cathedral as:

- a thriving, outward-facing community
- the church of the Bishop
- a community shaped by worship
- public space for everyone.'

2.1.2 Chelmsford Diocese is a church region of more than 1,500 square miles that stretches from the east coast to the Thames and ranges from countryside to towns and suburbs. It comprises the East London boroughs of Barking & Dagenham, Havering, Newham, Redbridge and Waltham Forest, the county of Essex, and the unitary authorities of Southend and Thurrock. With a population estimated to be 3,211,000, Chelmsford is the second largest diocese in England.

2.1.3 Chelmsford Cathedral is dedicated to St Mary the Virgin, St Peter and St Cedd, and is the seat of the Bishop of Chelmsford. Originally a parish church, it became a cathedral when the Anglican Diocese of Chelmsford was created in 1914.

2.1.4 Chelmsford Cathedral is in the city centre, surrounded by an open, grassy graveyard which contains numerous trees and is criss-crossed by paths. The earliest stonework dates from Norman times and in the 15th century, the church was rebuilt to include the tower, parapets and south porch. On the north side of the Cathedral, the vestry block was added in the 20th century. The song school is upstairs in the vestry block. There is through traffic on one side of the square; the other three sides are either pedestrianised or very quiet. The Chapter House is at the north-west corner of the square; both the cathedral and diocesan offices are across the busy road on the east side of the square. The graveyard is well used as a place of leisure and thoroughfare, and also as a refuge by members of the city's homeless population.

2.1.5 Chelmsford Cathedral is relatively small inside, but light and airy. There are few hidden corners; side chapels are open sided. A number of changes since the 1950s, including the removal of fixed pews and the installation of underfloor heating, means

that the Cathedral is a comfortable, warm and flexible space which is well used for a variety of events in addition to services, including lunchtime and evening concerts, education days, talks and formal dinners. The building is well suited for the Cathedral's mission to be a public space as well as a place of worship.

2.2 CONTEXTUAL FEATURES RELEVANT TO SAFEGUARDING

- 2.2.1** The former Director of Operations left Chelmsford Cathedral in late 2019. An experienced Chief Operating Officer (COO) has been working in an interim capacity since November 2019, replacing the previous Director of Operations, whose role was more operational than strategic. Recruitment for a permanent COO has just started.
- 2.2.2** The interim COO has worked with the Dean to introduce a number of significant changes since being in post. These include separating out the strategic and operational roles of Chapter through the creation of an Executive Team, enabling the rest of the lay team to deal with day-to-day operational matters, initiating discussions with the Diocese with a view to developing a service level agreement (SLA) which will incorporate safeguarding, HR, IT and property functions and securing agreement (with funding) to employ a Cathedral Safeguarding Officer (CSO). The appointee took up post in April 2021; the previous CSO was a volunteer and had worked in this capacity since 2016.
- 2.2.3** On 11 March 2021, the Rt Rev Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani was confirmed as the new Bishop of Chelmsford and started her ministry in Chelmsford Diocese in April 2021. The Previous Bishop, Stephen Cottrell, left Chelmsford in mid-2020 to become Archbishop of York. A new Diocesan Secretary and Chief Executive Officer is about to take up post in the Diocese following the departure of her predecessor in June 2020.

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'. The Dean was on sabbatical for four months immediately prior to the pandemic, returning in March 2020. In his absence, the Vice Dean fulfilled these responsibilities.
- 2.3.2** The Dean is supported in his leadership role by a number of clergy and staff:
- The Vice Dean, who also fulfils the role of Canon Pastor, leads the Cathedral's pastoral care team, oversees work with volunteers and is extensively involved with organisations and forums in the wider community
 - The Canon for Evangelism and Discipleship, who oversees an extensive programme of learning and outreach as well as managing the Children and Families' Minister
 - The Canon for Worship and Music, who oversees the music department and the vergers
 - The recently appointed Chapter Safeguarding Lead, who is Deputy Head Teacher of a local primary school
 - The Chief Operating Officer, who heads the lay staffing structure, including the CSO

- The Cathedral Organist and Master of the Choristers, who reports directly to the Dean and leads the music department and choirs
- The Head Verger, who oversees the safety and security of the buildings and immediate surroundings
- The Cathedral Safeguarding Officer, who is managed by the COO.

2.3.3 The volunteer role of Assistant CSO is carried by a local head teacher who is also an Associate Priest of the Cathedral.

2.3.4 The Audit and Risk Committee reports to Chapter and the Risk Register (which includes safeguarding) is regularly monitored by the Executive Team.

2.3.5 The Cathedral Safeguarding Management Group is chaired by the Vice Dean and operates as a sub-committee of the Executive Team, which in turn reports direct to Chapter.

2.3.6 The Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSO) and her team (DST) provide advice, support and training to the Cathedral, as they would to any parish church in the Diocese. This support is in the process of becoming formalised; a memorandum of understanding has been agreed, as the first step towards a formal SLA.

2.3.7 Prior to 2020, the Cathedral had no engagement with the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel (DSAP). Since March 2020, the Canon for Evangelism and Discipleship has attended on behalf of the Cathedral.

2.4 WHO WAS SEEN IN THE AUDIT

2.4.1 The audit involved reviewing documentation, auditing case files, talking to people at the heart of safeguarding in the Cathedral (e.g. the Dean, Clergy and lay staff members, safeguarding staff, music leads, and people managing the floor of the cathedral), and discussing safeguarding with a number of other individuals with a range of roles and responsibilities. The audit took place 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 did undertake a site visit and were able to conduct all interviews 'live'. However, due to the coronavirus pandemic and the partial national lockdown still in place throughout the period of this audit, certain aspects of the audits were necessarily different from those conducted in 2019/20.

2.5.2 Focus groups were replaced by an electronic questionnaire which was widely distributed to children with close links to the Cathedral (such as choristers and servers) and adults in a range of roles across the Cathedral community. These included staff, volunteers, chorister parents and members of the congregation. The questionnaires were used as the mechanism for seeking feedback on the awareness, understanding and impact of safeguarding arrangements across the Cathedral, and were returned by over 60 adults and children. Despite this good response, the inability of the auditors to hold follow-up discussions with respondents limited the depth of knowledge that could be gained from participants.

2.5.3 Pressure of time meant that the auditors were not able to attend evensong. They were able to observe the pre-service arrangements for the girls' choir, however, which

enabled them to gain a degree of understanding of arrangements in place to support and safeguard the choristers.

- 2.5.4** During the periods of lockdown during 2020 and early 2021, most Cathedral activities were suspended, and the building remained closed to visitors for some of the time. No live services were held, and the choirs did not sing. Significant numbers of staff were furloughed and volunteers were not active at all.
- 2.5.5** At the time of the audit, services and activities were gradually starting again, with adjustments in order to comply with post-lockdown requirements such as social distancing. This meant, for example, that choir practices were being held in the nave rather than in the song school; other activities, such as Junior Church, were taking place outside. Volunteers are only just beginning to return to their duties.

3. FINDINGS – PRACTICE

3.1 SAFE ACTIVITIES AND WORKING PRACTICES

Precincts and Buildings

Description

- 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.
- 3.1.2** The building is open to the public from 7.30am to 6.00pm every day; it is open later on specific occasions. The Cathedral itself is relatively open and visibility is good. Public events such as the weekly lunchtime concerts are gradually resuming, the latter regularly attracting around 500 people for each concert pre-lockdown. Rooms in the Chapter House and Cathedral Offices are available for hire. 'Welcome on Wednesday' brings many more vulnerable people into the Cathedral.
- 3.1.3** The safety and security of the Cathedral floor is the responsibility of a team of vergers comprising a full-time Head Verger and three full-time vergers, who are also responsible for the safety and security of buildings in the Cathedral precinct, including the Chapter House and the Cathedral Offices. They are identifiable by their uniform of black trousers, white shirt and black jumper, and by their Cathedral badge. An assistant verger is called in on an ad hoc basis to cover holidays and other absences in the verger team, and at particularly demanding times of year, such as Christmas and Easter. The vergers hold additional roles, such as preparing the Cathedral for services and setting up for special events.
- 3.1.4** Until recently, there were two public entrances to the Cathedral, via the south and west doors. Staff and choirs usually use the north (vestry) door. Since the lockdown, entry has been restricted to the south door, with exit via another door on the north side. This arrangement has been found to work well and is likely to remain.
- 3.1.5** Entry into the Cathedral is free. During the pandemic, when there were no volunteers working, the verger role was developed into a 'ministry of welcome' and the welcome desk at the south door was permanently staffed by a verger during opening hours. This arrangement worked well, and is likely to remain, even when volunteers return to full duties. Day Chaplains, who are also on duty during Cathedral opening hours, are available to 'cover' if a verger is required elsewhere.
- 3.1.6** The vergers keep a book in which they record 'pastoral encounters', many of which are referred on to the Vice Dean. These are referred to further below in the section on responses to vulnerable adults.
- 3.1.7** Apart from the south side of the Cathedral, which is covered by the city centre CCTV, there is no CCTV inside or out and none of the buildings are fitted with burglar alarms. Many doors are openable with a single key. Toilets, open to the public, are located inside the vestry block and accessible from inside the Cathedral. The vergers call the police if they need assistance and collaboration is good.
- 3.1.8** The staff car park is at the end of the extensive Guy Harlings garden, which is behind

the Cathedral Offices. The garden is protected by gates which are locked by the vergers when they leave the premises each evening.

Analysis

- 3.1.9** Arrangements for overseeing the safety and security of the Cathedral and associated buildings, and those who use them, are generally good but over-reliant on a very small team of vergers who 'do a lot with a little'. More could be done to strengthen security arrangements, particularly through the use of technology.
- 3.1.10** The use of the south door as a single point of entry, and the location of the welcome desk staffed by a verger immediately inside, is effective in providing initial oversight of those who enter the Cathedral. The verger team is well known and respected, and increasingly confident in identifying and responding to those who may be particularly vulnerable, or who may cause a risk to others. Given the small verger team and the spread of their responsibilities in three different locations, the auditors wondered how in practice their time is rostered, and how realistic it is to expect them to be consistently visible in a single location, in addition to their other duties, as well as responsive to incidents as they arise. Although there are often day chaplains available who are able to provide support to the vergers, they are not trained to respond to the range of situations which fall within the responsibilities of the vergers and do not cover the same hours in full.
- 3.1.11** Of the 53 adults who returned a completed questionnaire, over 90 per cent said they felt extremely (46) or moderately (3) safe in their Cathedral activities. Four felt that the question was not relevant to their role or experience. One respondent added the following comment: 'the vergers' authority in face-to-face safe-keeping matters in the Cathedral buildings needs more emphasis'.
- 3.1.12** Seven out of eight child choristers said they felt extremely safe doing rehearsals, services and performances, and one felt moderately safe.
- 3.1.13** The auditors noted the vulnerability of the north door, which is frequently left open or unlocked. The corridor leading to the vestry and song school is equally open and accessible from inside the Cathedral. There is a sign which informs the public that the toilets are not available to them (i.e. when the children's choir are using them) but the auditors are aware of instances when this was not observed. Simple measures such as putting a keypad on the north door would make this entrance more secure.
- 3.1.14** A degree of lone working by the vergers is perhaps inevitable. However, the lone worker policy does not appear to apply to them at all. It also refers to the buildings being 'alarmed', which they are not. The policy relies heavily on individuals likely to be working alone to inform 'someone'. There are no arrangements specified in the policy for reporting or debriefing, hence no systematic means of learning from when incidents occur. The final locking up of the car park requires a lone verger to walk the length of a long garden, by torchlight on dark nights.
- 3.1.15** The lack of CCTV anywhere in the Cathedral or associated buildings, for example on the various entrance and exit points, means that there is no means of being able to review who has entered or exited the buildings. This is a vulnerability, and would inhibit any incident investigation, should one be needed.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- What practical steps could be taken to improve safety and security in the Cathedral and its associated buildings and surroundings?
- Given the limited capacity, how realistic is it to expect the verger team to provide a 'ministry of welcome' throughout the Cathedral's opening hours in addition to their other responsibilities?
- How might the lone worker policy be developed, in conjunction with staff and volunteers, to provide firmer support to those who work alone regularly or occasionally?

Children

This section is about children who come to the Cathedral in various capacities. It does not cover choristers (see section 3.2 below).

Description

- 3.1.16** Children engage with Chelmsford Cathedral in many ways. They attend activities, including Junior Church; they volunteer as servers; they visit with their school, and come with their families.
- 3.1.17** In 2019, before COVID, the Cathedral welcomed nearly 3,500 schoolchildren from 100 schools on educational visits.
- 3.1.18** This area of activity is overseen by the Canon for Evangelism and Discipleship, whose role is new to Chelmsford. The role encompasses the children and families ministry, new forms of worship and teaching and learning (including the schools team). Her team includes a full-time Children and Families Minister and a (volunteer) Education Officer, who is a qualified teacher, former Head Teacher and education adviser. The Education Officer heads up a team of 14 volunteers, all of whom have teaching qualifications except for one social worker, who has experience in education settings. All were safely recruited.
- 3.1.19** The Education Officer has been in her role since 2016. On her arrival, she reviewed the safeguarding arrangements relating to her area of responsibility and introduced systems and improvements. The team are all DBS cleared and have completed Church of England in Essex and East London Diocese of Chelmsford Level 1 (basic awareness) child safeguarding training either from 2020 or 2021 and most will have completed Level 1 in adult safeguarding 2020 or 2021. These were online. All but one member of the team has completed level 2 training, organised by the Learning Centre, which was delivered to the team and selected colleagues from across the Cathedral by an external consultant, in February 2020.
- 3.1.20** The school visits policy was last reviewed and agreed by Chapter in January 2018. There are arrangements in place for ensuring that risks are assessed and safeguarding arrangements are clear for school visits. Safeguarding procedures are discussed during planning before a visit and on the morning of the visit. All members of the team know to report any incidents to the Education Officer who, in turn, reports to the lead teacher from the school and to the Cathedral Safeguarding Officer (CSO).

All schools have to complete a booking form which includes information about safeguarding procedures and requirements when visiting the Cathedral.

- 3.1.21** A diocesan event prior to lockdown highlighted the importance of absolute clarity over who is in charge when the Diocese uses the Cathedral for events.
- 3.1.22** Prior to lockdown, there were 10 child servers. The auditors were told that child servers are accepted with the consent of their parents or designated responsible adult carer. Training is 'on the job' which means that it takes place in service; children are never in 1:1 contact with adult servers or any members of the congregation. Lockdown has meant that no child servers have been in the Cathedral for well over a year, so any that still want to participate will be recruited again and trained /retrained when the time comes, with appropriate permissions/consent in place.
- 3.1.23** The Children and Families Minister took up her role – a new one for Chelmsford Cathedral – in January 2020 and was furloughed shortly after, returning to her job in July 2020. She is a former primary school teacher who has worked for many years in church-based children and family ministry. Prior to the pandemic, activity was mainly focused on Junior Church, which took place in the Chapter House and was led by clergy with the assistance of a rota of parent volunteers. Together with the Canon for Evangelism and Discipleship, the Children and Families Minister recognised the need for a new, safely recruited group of volunteers which would support a refreshed approach.
- 3.1.24** Similar thinking is being applied to the toddlers' group, which was previously run by the Mothers' Union.
- 3.1.25** Children attend all these activities with their parent/carer(s). Auditors were told that basic safeguarding arrangements such as a registration form and attendance register are in place, and a maximum of 30 children and their families are able to attend on any one occasion. Post-lockdown, meetings of Junior Church have been held in the Guy Harlings garden, with up to 100 children having participated over past weeks. All participants are required to book in advance to ensure that maximum numbers are not exceeded.
- 3.1.26** The numbers of children and young people benefitting from the various activities and opportunities were increasing steadily prior to lockdown, so much so that additional groups are being planned to accommodate them.

Analysis

- 3.1.27** Arrangements to support school visits are well established and safe. Safeguarding and administrative arrangements for the separate children's activities are still developing. Systematic engagement by leaders in the Cathedral's safeguarding oversight arrangements would be beneficial.
- 3.1.28** Good procedures are in place for school visits. The additional training for education volunteers and others was a good initiative. The school visits team policy was agreed in January 2018 and is now due for review. The current policy makes no reference to safeguarding, which is a lost opportunity to put safeguarding at the heart of learning activity. The same applies to the role profile for a school visits team member.
- 3.1.29** The decision to start afresh by recruiting volunteers for Junior Church and other activities was commendably bold and provides a useful opportunity to implement safer recruitment practice and introduce safeguarding from the outset into role profiles, induction and training. The initiative taken by the Children and Families Minister to visit the music department and observe how it works was good. She has identified a

need to undertake first aid training to assist her in her role. As her ministry develops, there will be a need to ensure that safeguarding arrangements in all areas are robust and aligned with practice elsewhere in the Cathedral.

- 3.1.30** Neither the Education Officer nor the Children and Families Minister are members of the Cathedral's Safeguarding Working Group (see below). Their participation, should that fit with the terms of reference for this group, would be desirable in helping to ensure consistency of safeguarding arrangements across their areas of activity as well as contributing their experience of good practice.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- What additional measures are needed to support improvements in the safety and wellbeing of children attending the Cathedral's activities?
- How might the leaders of children's activities be engaged in the oversight of safeguarding arrangements in the Cathedral and contribute to developing good practice in all areas?

Adults

Description

- 3.1.31** The Cathedral's Strategic Plan describes its ministry as comprising four themes (see paragraph 2.1.1 above). These include providing a public space for everyone, and being a thriving, outward-facing community. This commitment to be an open, accessible, welcoming community is expressed through many partnerships with local organisations.
- 3.1.32** The Vice Dean is also Canon Pastor. Before taking up his appointment at the Cathedral, he was Chaplain at Anglia Ruskin University. He has worked in different roles in Chelmsford Diocese throughout his life with the church and has developed a wide network of contacts and relationships across agencies, including with the County Council, the members of the Mid Essex Interfaith Forum (which he chairs), the Alzheimer's Society and the Single Homeless Forum (including the Intervention Hub).
- 3.1.33** Within the Cathedral, the Vice Dean oversees the pastoral care team, the Volunteer Manager and the work with volunteers.
- 3.1.34** Traditionally Chelmsford Cathedral has not been on the tourist trail, which means that footfall is less than that experienced by many other cathedrals. However, prior to the pandemic, the number of occasional visitors to the Cathedral was increasing, and the Canon Pastor has led work to develop resources in response.
- 3.1.35** The Cathedral is very reliant on a team of around 250 volunteers, carrying out around 400 roles, to maintain essential services ranging from very public duties of welcoming and guiding to less visible tasks. Volunteers are supported primarily by other volunteers, who take on the role of Group Leader as an additional duty; Group Leaders are in turn overseen by the Volunteer Manager, who chairs the Volunteer Leaders' Steering Group. Members of the clergy and lay staff maintain oversight of volunteers associated with their areas of responsibility.
- 3.1.36** There is recognition that volunteers may themselves be vulnerable or become so during the course of their work in the Cathedral, often by virtue of their age or health. The Volunteer Manager was very aware of the Cathedral's duty of care towards volunteers and gave examples to the auditors of how adjustments were made to enable vulnerable volunteers to continue their work within the Cathedral. The

pandemic has led to an increased appreciation of the vulnerability of some staff and volunteers. Since the national lockdown, many volunteers have not yet felt confident to return to their duties. The Volunteer Manager has been conducting 'remobilisation surveys' to help identify how best to support those volunteers who want to return to active duties.

- 3.1.37** Formal pastoral care activities in the Cathedral and the community are wide ranging, including communions at home and in residential homes, Lego stay and play days in the Cathedral, the visiting and care of the bereaved, an annual baby loss service, an annual trip to the pantomime, a weekly 'Welcome on Wednesday' café for those who are homeless or alone and a Friday lunchtime concert, easily the most popular and well-attended event of the week, often entailing a full Cathedral. Suspended during the lockdown, these are all expected to resume gradually over the coming months, should circumstances permit.
- 3.1.38** A comprehensive Pastoral Care Handbook was written recently (May 2021) and describes the formal and informal pastoral care that goes on, the principles on which the pastoral care strategy is based, the various pastoral structures (including a pastoral care telephone support team which was developed during the pandemic and will continue to operate) and accompanying procedures, including for raising concerns.
- 3.1.39** The day chaplains service was started in 2018 in response to a perceived need for a sacramental ministry to be available to anyone who wishes it. Chaplains are either currently employed or are retired; all have Permission to Officiate (PTO) status, which also requires them to have a current DBS certificate. There are insufficient day chaplains to provide comprehensive daily cover, and the pandemic has seen a reduction in numbers. Some rebuilding of the team will be necessary.
- 3.1.40** The Cathedral vergers and the day chaplains pick up a large proportion of pastoral issues, and, where required, liaise with either the day chaplain on duty or the Canon Pastor. On occasions, a pastoral issue arises when someone comes into the Cathedral and talks to a verger, welcome steward or day chaplain. In the event of a need for follow up or more long-term input, the issue is recorded on a pastoral referral form and kept securely in the Cathedral safe until the Canon Pastor is notified and comes and collects the form in person. A referral may also be made to the Cathedral Safeguarding Officer (CSO).
- 3.1.41** A few years ago, the Cathedral became 'dementia friendly'; working with the Alzheimer's Society, training was organised to help staff and volunteers recognise and manage those living with dementia. Work to ensure the best possible physical environment for those attending the Cathedral who are living with dementia is continuing.
- 3.1.42** Those spoken with by the auditors demonstrated good sensitivity to mental health issues, including amongst children and young people.

Analysis

- 3.1.43** There is good awareness of the vulnerabilities which adults can experience, and evidence of responsive and caring responses, with appropriate signposting to partner agencies and occasional escalation to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA). There is an opportunity for building on the well-developed thinking and understanding about pastoral care by integrating safeguarding and pastoral reporting pathways, record keeping and oversight which may help reduce confusion and improve understanding of safeguarding throughout the Cathedral community.

- 3.1.44** Eighty-three per cent of the adults who responded to the questionnaire said that the Cathedral takes on a role either extremely (57 per cent) or moderately (26 per cent) in helping people who, due to personal circumstances or crises, need help to keep safe. Nine individuals (17 per cent) said that it was not relevant to their role or experience. All individuals spoken with by the auditors showed good awareness of the needs of vulnerable adults, and the potential for staff and volunteers also to become vulnerable.
- 3.1.45** The vergers are adopting an increasingly prominent role, as previously noted, and are particularly responsible for achieving a balance between caring pastorally for individuals whilst keeping others safe. They would welcome further training in how to respond to and assist those with mental health difficulties and problematic behaviour.
- 3.1.46** Whilst the auditors found good understanding of pastoral care, and regular use of the form for reporting pastoral encounters/concerns, they also noted that awareness and understanding of safeguarding matters was less well developed in relation to vulnerable adults. A lack of systematic oversight of the pastoral referrals by someone with safeguarding expertise may mean that safeguarding concerns, and even disclosures of abuse, may be missed.
- 3.1.47** The auditors reflected that the well-developed thinking across the Cathedral in relation to pastoral care could provide a firm foundation for promoting the less developed awareness and understanding of safeguarding, and reduce the tendency to think of it solely in terms of the abuse of children. The planned refresh of the pastoral care handbook is an opportunity to develop this further.
- 3.1.48** Further comments in relation to reporting concerns are made below.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- What needs to be done to ensure that awareness of safeguarding responsibilities is as well developed across the entire Cathedral community as that for pastoral care, and that systems of support, reporting and oversight are integrated?

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

Children

- 3.2.2** Chelmsford Cathedral choir comprises boys and adults who sing regularly at services. The boys are usually aged between six and 15. There are 10 boy choristers at present, drawn primarily from the local Cathedral Primary School. They sing with a 'back row' of around 15 singers, which includes school-age graduates from the boys' choir and up to five paid, post-school, choral scholars, along with more experienced voluntary singers. There is also one part-time lay clerk. All of the adult singers are male, with a female singer due to join them in September. The choir is led by the Organist and Master of the Choristers (OMC), who is also head of the music department.

- 3.2.3** The Cathedral Girls' Choir currently comprises 17 girl choristers, who come from years 6 to 13 in local schools. The girls' choir sings at fewer services than the boys, on their own and with the adults, and are directed by the Assistant Organist and Director of the Girls' Choir (AO). There has been recent progress in recruiting girls at the lower age range, a small number of whom still attend primary school.
- 3.2.4** In total, the full capacity across both choirs is approximately 50 singers, although numbers at present are below this.
- 3.2.5** Rehearsals generally take place in the song school, which is in the vestry block attached to the Cathedral. Singing lessons take place in a room in the same building. Toilets which are normally open to the public are kept for the exclusive use of the children when they are in the Cathedral or song school. Entrance to rehearse or perform is always through the (private) north door of the vestry block, where the choir matron will stand and note their arrival and departure. Where needed, arrangements have been adapted to public health requirements post COVID, such as changing the location of rehearsals from the song school to the nave.
- 3.2.6** Eight child choristers completed and returned a questionnaire to auditors. All but one said that they enjoyed being a chorister extremely (the other enjoyed it moderately). The same proportions responded saying that they felt extremely or moderately safe doing rehearsals, services and performances, felt treated with respect by the adults, felt well cared for on trips, and felt that staff and adult volunteers were observant when they supervise choristers, either in the Cathedral, or on trips.
- 3.2.7** Other questions had a more mixed response. Whilst six children were confident that their worries would be listened to and that people would help, two said they were 'not at all' confident. Six children said that adults involved in the choir or services deal with bullying extremely well, but one said they dealt with it only moderately well and one said bullying was not dealt with at all. Three children were only moderately clear about what would happen if they felt unwell before a rehearsal or service, and one was not clear at all. Two children were not at all clear about who they would speak to if they were worried about themselves or other choristers and another was only moderately clear. Seven out of the eight felt that the balance between choir rehearsals and services, schoolwork, seeing friends and other hobbies that they had was not at all (1) or only moderately (6) good.
- 3.2.8** One child added the comment 'I feel safe at the Cathedral'. When asked if there was anything they would like to improve about the choir, one child said, 'less rehearsals and services and more chance for girls to sing at services.' Another said, 'there is nothing I have in mind to improve the choir, it is perfect in my mind!'

Parents

- 3.2.9** Handbooks for the boys' and girls' choirs are issued to the parents of new members of the choir, and to existing members as and when they are renewed. These contain a range of useful information and are supplemented by a choir diary sent to parents at the beginning of each term and a bulletin entitled 'Choir Notes', which is emailed to all chorister parents every Friday. This contains rehearsal and service details, links for music, and highlights anything out of the ordinary in the coming week. It always contains a reminder to notify the choir matron of absence via the choir mobile phone. It also restates contact details for the Music Team. There is no formal schedule of meeting with individual parents to discuss the progress of their children, but an annual social is organised to bring parents more closely in contact with music staff.
- 3.2.10** Each year, choir parents are asked to complete a confidential data and consent form

which contains essential personal, contact and medical information about their child. The form also asks the parent to give (or explicitly withhold) permission for such information to be retained and used by the Cathedral, for their child (if over 11 years old) to make their own way to and from choir rehearsals and performances, for photographs and videos to be taken and used for publicity and pre-recorded services and for staff to give medication for minor ailments.

- 3.2.11** Six adults who returned a questionnaire identified themselves as choir parents. One commented, 'the Cathedral choir is a supportive and safe place for young people. There is a choir matron who ensures the needs of the children and young people are met. I have every confidence leaving both of my children in their care.'

Staff

- 3.2.12** The Cathedral music department is led by the OMC and includes the Assistant Organist and Director of the Girls' Choir (AO), Organ Scholar, Music and Liturgy Assistant and Choir Matron. The department is overseen by the Canon for Worship & Music. Two singing teachers provide singing lessons to choir members. A lay clerk provides mentoring to the school-age singers in the back row (the junior choral scholars). All posts have DBS clearance.
- 3.2.13** The full-time Choir Matron post was introduced some years ago. The current postholder took up her role in 2019 and has a background in school-based learning support. She was also a choir parent. Her role is focused on the wellbeing and safety of the children, working alongside the OMC and AO. A need for further part-time capacity has been identified.
- 3.2.14** A weekly meeting, chaired by the Canon for Worship and Music, acts as a forum for exchanging information. Safeguarding is always an agenda item, and any specific action points are noted in a book which is kept locked in the departmental office. Safeguarding concerns may be raised at this meeting, but it is not a forum for systematically discussing each chorister.
- 3.2.15** In preparation for the audit, and shortly before lockdown, the music department staff undertook their own safeguarding self-assessment, in which they assessed what they were doing well in identifying and responding to potential risks, and areas which needed development. In response to perceived weaknesses regarding policies and procedures, communications and liaison with schools, an action plan was developed which they have been working through during 2021. Actions included developing the handbook for visiting choirs, described below.
- 3.2.16** The self-assessment identified the need for choral scholars to receive induction and safeguarding training specific to their role. This was instituted in September 2020 with a view to being repeated annually. The day's induction involved all departmental staff, and the safeguarding input was delivered by the choir matron. This element included some useful and relevant safeguarding scenarios and reference to a code of conduct.

Visiting choirs

- 3.2.17** Visiting choirs sing at services when the Cathedral's own choirs are on holiday. A Visiting Choirs Handbook has been prepared which includes a range of important information and sets out the Cathedral's approach to safeguarding. All choirs are required to send in a completed visiting choirs' safeguarding form at least one week before their visit. Choirs that include children are required to be aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and confirm that they have their own safeguarding policy, safer recruitment and supervision procedures. The handbook details how long such information will be kept and how it will be stored.

Analysis

- 3.2.18** Arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the Cathedral choirs are reasonably well developed but would benefit from being more explicit, written down and accessible. The highly differentiated responsibilities between departmental staff inhibits the ability of the OMC to maintain oversight of safeguarding and welfare across all music activities. More can be done to align practice across the choirs, improve communication between departmental staff, clarify the respective responsibilities of parents, volunteers and staff, and raise the profile of safeguarding.
- 3.2.19** The auditors found that much thought has been put into many aspects of the music department's safeguarding arrangements. Children evidently feel safe and enjoy their experience of being in the choir. Parents who responded to the questionnaire also expressed confidence in the arrangements for keeping their children safe. The department recognised some years ago that they needed a full-time, paid choir matron. Further actions have been taken in response to the self-assessment, to occasional incidents which have occurred, and to the knowledge and prior experience of staff who have worked in similar and different settings elsewhere.
- 3.2.20** Some basic procedures and guidance are not explicit or are contained in different documents rather than one place, leaving expectations and arrangements unclear at times. This was noted by staff in their self-assessment in relation to both safeguarding and non-safeguarding information. The auditors wondered whether this may explain the uncertainty expressed by some of the children about what to do in certain situations. The choir handbooks would be one place to include a range of relevant information for parents and children, such as expectations around dropping off and collecting children from rehearsals, but in practice they contain little in the way of practical information and are not indexed, meaning that specific information is difficult to locate.
- 3.2.21** Similarly, expectations of staff, adult singers and choristers are either not written down, or are inconsistent. For example, the choral scholars' induction contains a 'Statement of Conduct and Expectations' which the choral scholars are expected to sign. The Visiting Choirs Safeguarding Form contains something different, which is referred to as 'Safeguarding Code of Conduct'. We did not see reference to this in any other departmental or Cathedral documentation. Induction and training for choral scholars, some of whom are very close in age to the older members of the girls' choir, is a sensible development and the content appears good.
- 3.2.22** The sharp differentiation of roles between the OMC and AO and between these two and the Choir Matron left the auditors wondering whether there was anyone who had full and systematic oversight of the choristers' performance and welfare. The weekly meetings are regarded as a useful forum but action notes are not reviewed. There is no systematic and regular discussion of the wellbeing of every chorister, although auditors understand that a regular meeting with the Cathedral Primary School is in the process of being reinstated, which is positive. Regular engagement with the CSO could be useful in considering how to develop this area further whilst remaining proportionate.
- 3.2.23** The differentiation of roles referred to above is reflected in the differences between the demands made of the choirs. The OMC directs the Cathedral choir only, and these sing the majority of services. The AO directs the girls, some of whom are nearly adult. The auditors were told that the girls' choir members are grouped by age, with 'virtual' group meetings having taken place throughout lockdown, and that there is a 'buddy' system in place. Under the leadership of the AO, there have been successful

efforts to recruit younger girls from primary schools, but the auditors observed that more thought is needed about how these young girls can best be supported socially as well as musically as they join a well-established group of predominantly older girls.

- 3.2.24** As the music department is developing its safeguarding practice, the auditors wondered whether there might be benefits in seeking regular feedback from both children and parents – a relatively straightforward matter now that use of electronic communication is much easier and more familiar.
- 3.2.25** The Canon for Worship and Music is responsible for the strategic leadership of the music department; the OMC is the operational leader. The auditors questioned whether the close involvement of the Canon for Worship and Music in some of the day-to-day activities of the music department, such as chairing the weekly meeting, might inhibit the ability of the Canon to be effective strategically and of the OMC to assume full leadership of the department.
- 3.2.26** The auditors reflected that the music department appeared to operate separately from other parts of the Cathedral. As well as having good practice to share, the department could learn from arrangements in other departments, and contribute to the developing safeguarding culture in the Cathedral. Inclusion of the OMC in key operational meetings such as the Safeguarding Working Group, should revised terms of reference permit this, could enable the department to both contribute to and learn from safeguarding practice elsewhere in the Cathedral.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How might the OMC be best supported in his role as head of the music department, and ultimately accountable for ensuring high safeguarding and welfare standards across the entire music department?
- What needs to be done to ensure that the policies, procedures and guidance in the music department are explicit, accessible, understood and consistently observed?
- How might the Cathedral assure itself that arrangements for the safety and wellbeing of choristers are working as well as possible?
- How might the OMC contribute to the development of safeguarding across the Cathedral?

Bellringing

Description

- 3.2.27** Chelmsford Cathedral has a ring of 12 bells, cast in 1913, with the heaviest being some 1.75 tonnes. Their ringing represents, therefore, both an asset to the Cathedral and an inherently high-risk activity that requires safe management.
- 3.2.28** The Chelmsford Cathedral Bell Ringers (Cathedral Ringers) comprise some six individuals, led by a Tower Captain who has been in post for three years and has around 50 years of ringing experience. The Cathedral ringers are also members of the Essex Association of Change Ringers.
- 3.2.29** Chelmsford is a 'teaching tower', offering tuition to those looking to join the band and new to ringing. This therefore means that under 18s may be present in the tower as part of rehearsals and ringing days, and there is an expectation that parents of any children are present throughout their attendance. There are not currently children or young people in the group.

- 3.2.30** The Cathedral Ringers have their own safeguarding policy in place which covers the activities, safeguarding risks and mitigations in place to ensure as safe an experience as possible. This aligns with that of the Essex Association and the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers. All the Cathedral Ringers complete a minimum of basic awareness (C0) training, with the Tower Captain and bellringing trainers (of which there is one at present) completing leadership (C2) training. The Tower Captain and a minimum of one other member of the band have a current DBS check in place – at least one of which is present whenever teaching activities with children or vulnerable adults is taking place. All have completed a confidential declaration, in line with the requirements for other Cathedral volunteers.
- 3.2.31** Rehearsals take place on a Monday evening, with bells being rung on Sundays and at other special events. Rehearsals are conducted outside of the usual opening hours of the Cathedral, and the band members therefore gain entry to the Cathedral building with their own keys, entering the bell tower from the internal access point. A ‘sign in/ sign out’ system is in place, which enables the vergers to be aware of who is in the tower.
- 3.2.32** To supplement the Cathedral Ringers’ own numbers, there is some reliance on the bands of other local churches for services and events. Visiting bands are also welcomed and the policy stipulates that any such visits must be arranged through the Cathedral Office, also requiring the disclosure of any safeguarding concerns relevant to their members before attendance. Confirmation of all safeguarding arrangements and any associated issues are required in writing.
- 3.2.33** The Vice Dean is Chaplain to the Bellringers and chairs the band’s annual general meeting. For the last two years, the Tower Captain has attended the Cathedral’s regular Volunteer Steering Group meetings, at which safeguarding (and any relevant updates) is a standing agenda item.

Analysis

- 3.2.34** The arrangements in place to ensure the safety of ringers are good and supported by a detailed and clear policy.
- 3.2.35** The addition, in response to the Coronavirus pandemic, of the requirement for ringers to sign in and out on arrival at and departure from the Cathedral, and the introduction of a rota system for members, appear to be bringing some helpful benefit to the safety of those using the tower. This is particularly in relation to reducing the risks of lone working and ensuring evacuations can be conducted safely in the event of fire. It is therefore positive that there is an intention to maintain this system post-pandemic.
- 3.2.36** Whilst a common challenge for Cathedral bell ringers, by virtue of rehearsal times and the relative special isolation of the bell tower, the auditors were reassured to hear that Chelmsford Ringers feel well integrated into wider Cathedral life, and this is helped by strong relationships with the verger team, attendance at the Volunteer Steering Group meetings and by virtue of the Vice Dean chairing the annual general meeting of the band.
- 3.2.37** The auditors did, however, hear of some instances where lone working was unavoidable and whilst sensible mitigations are in place to reduce the risk from such working, there were aspects of the Cathedral building’s security that raised concerns. These are discussed further above in section 3.1.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- There are no considerations under this heading.

3.3 CASE WORK (INCLUDING INFORMATION SHARING)

Description

- 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.
- 3.3.2** Chelmsford Cathedral has not had a dedicated person who is responsible for case work until the recent appointment of a professionally experienced CSO. The previous CSO, who was a volunteer, had no specific experience of such work, and did not see her role as being about case work. When concerns arose, she sought advice from the DSA/ DST. In the absence of any formal SLA, the DSA did not regard it as within the remit of DST to carry out case work on behalf of the Cathedral, and generally confined input to providing advice to whoever from the Cathedral had contacted them. In all cases seen by the auditors, correspondence from DST was copied to the CSO. Such records as were seen were held, until recently, on a private computer rather than in the Cathedral's own system, which is unacceptable practice.
- 3.3.3** Fourteen cases were opened by the Diocese between 2000 and 2020, following contact from the Cathedral. One, concerning a safeguarding agreement, remains open to the Diocese. Two others were opened as case files by the Diocese and subsequently closed. The auditors looked at the files and/or duty records kept by the Diocese in respect of each of these. Two had corresponding records in the Cathedral.
- 3.3.4** A further case was jointly worked at the initiation of the Diocese, concerning the management on a specific occasion, in the Cathedral, of a known offender.
- 3.3.5** A review of numerous 'pastoral encounter' forms kept by the Vice Dean demonstrated evidence of responsiveness, appropriate signposting, and escalation to safeguarding (including the DSA) where appropriate.
- 3.3.6** When the new CSO took up post in April 2021, she carried out a review of all cases about which she could obtain information. Those seen by auditors included three relating to vulnerable adults, and three relating to persons who may pose a risk to others.
- 3.3.7** There has been a great deal of attention paid to raising the profile of safeguarding and promoting the name and contact details of the new CSO. As one respondent to the questionnaire commented: 'There has been a lot of information recently which has provided information on who to contact with concerns and what type of concerns to look out for. I have seen posters everywhere and that says who to speak to if I needed to.' Only one person said they did not know who to go to if they had concerns. Another respondent remarked that there 'has just been a small note in weekly news sheet for a number of years about who the safeguarding officer is. In the last seven days I have had three mailings in the post and three emails, all containing more info than I have ever seen'. This demonstrates the effectiveness of the recent communications.

Quality of recording practice and information sharing

- 3.3.8** Recordings of safeguarding contacts and concerns within the Cathedral was poor. There were no case files as such. Those seen by the auditors had been prepared for the audit and comprised collections of emails, some sent to or from a private computer, with key information – including names of subjects – missing. Whilst there was evidence of prompt and appropriate consultation with the DST from a range of Cathedral staff, and equally prompt and appropriate responses from DST which were copied to the CSO for information, it was rarely possible to see what had happened as a result. The DST did not see it as their responsibility to follow up to establish whether its advice had been followed and seek evidence of the outcome. Had it done so, the need for greater oversight may have been identified earlier.
- 3.3.9** The auditors noted that there appears to be some confusion about what information can be held, how confidential it should be kept, and when it should be shared/ reported. This has been compounded by a lack of clarity on when a pastoral concern may indicate additional risks and vulnerabilities.

Effectiveness of responses to allegations against clergy and people in church-related roles including volunteers, or to information about unsafe people or feedback about unsafe practices

- 3.3.10** Ninety-four per cent (51) of adult respondents to the questionnaire said that they were extremely (83 per cent) or moderately (11 per cent) confident that any concerns they expressed about someone being hurt some way, or behaving inappropriately, would be taken seriously.
- 3.3.11** The auditors were not confident that allegations were being responded to effectively, given the poor quality of recording.
- 3.3.12** Auditors reviewed three cases where allegations had been made about the conduct of church officers. In no case was the recording clear about what had happened as a result. Decisions to dismiss or give warnings were not recorded either in safeguarding or HR files as having been followed through.
- 3.3.13** The auditors were concerned that allegations of past abuse that may arise during a pastoral conversation would not necessarily be reported and followed up and wondered whether consideration of a single means of reporting concerns (without the need to differentiate between ‘pastoral’ and ‘safeguarding’), which could then be overseen systematically by the CSO, may assist.
- 3.3.14** One respondent to the questionnaire commented as follows: ‘In my opinion, institutional reputation is paramount and I would not be confident that allegations would be dealt with fairly or openly if the reputation of the Cathedral or members of chapter was in danger. Whilst I have full confidence in the safeguarding officer and the reporting process through her, I would not feel at all confident that whistleblowing wouldn’t expose me to being treated unfairly or being bullied as an employee by management if it came to their attention. As a result, I would probably hesitate to take action in a whistleblowing scenario.’ Although a single comment, this is of concern.

Effectiveness of responses to vulnerable people or anyone in crises

- 3.3.15** Three records relating to vulnerable adults were seen by auditors. One contained a risk assessment, signed by the subject, which comprised a list of tasks that the individual should and should not be expected to do. There were no details about the adult concerned, other than their name, and no explanation about why the risk assessment was necessary.

3.3.16 A second set of papers concerned a vulnerable adult who was evidently well known to the Cathedral. This showed a compassionate response and good liaison with relevant other agencies involved. The third concerned another vulnerable adult, who was viewed as posing a potential risk to other attendees at the Cathedral. Despite the person's many vulnerabilities, there was no evidence of liaison with external agencies.

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

3.3.17 Safeguarding agreements (SAs) are a key mechanism to support offenders wishing to attend church to do so safely. They should be underpinned by a risk assessment that details the risks posed by a worshipper, the measures in place to manage those risks, and therefore the reasons for the SA. Clarity about the risks that a safeguarding agreement is intended to address, also allows for a robust reviewing process, which allows SAs to be strengthened where needed, or indeed terminated if appropriate.

3.3.18 The auditors were informed that there were no SAs in place within the Cathedral, and this was confirmed by the DST. Auditors did review one case, about which there were papers held in both Diocese and Cathedral. This related to the proposed attendance of a known offender at a single diocesan event within the Cathedral. Records showed clear, prompt communication between the two, initiated by the Diocese, and a detailed and proportionate management plan was agreed, communicated to relevant others and implemented. Records also indicated that the Diocese had insisted that all information should be kept confidential. This meant that key people who were in a position to monitor and assure the overall arrangements, and who had overall responsibility for safeguarding, were not informed of the potential risk. The auditors reflected that more appropriate communication at the outset could have led to improved decision-making and resulted in less of the disruption to other attendees that was spoken of during the audit.

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

3.3.19 An important part of the audit was offering the opportunity for people who had come forward to disclose abuse, share concerns, or expected help from the Cathedral to keep safe for any reason, to give their views on how timely, compassionate and effective they had found responses and support provided by the Cathedral. The Cathedral made this possible by publicising the audit so that people could contact SCIE. Nobody got in touch to share their views.

3.3.20 More broadly, auditors noted a general failure to capture a survivor-centred perspective through casework. This was noticeable in the three cases referred to in paragraph 3.3.12.

Analysis

3.3.21 The Cathedral's understanding of and approach to casework and record keeping has been poor. There has been no management oversight and an unclear delineation of responsibilities between Cathedral and Diocese. Recent actions taken indicate potential for rapid improvement.

3.3.22 Whilst there was little evidence seen by or reported to auditors that significant incidents have occurred which have not been dealt with, they felt a lack of confidence in the system for recording and managing incidents. They noted uncertainty about the differentiation being made between pastoral and safeguarding concerns.

3.3.23 The small number of recorded safeguarding concerns seen by auditors indicated a confused understanding of good practice standards. The early actions of the newly appointed CSO, recognition of the need for clear supervision and accountability, and the continuing discussions regarding an SLA demonstrate the potential for rapid improvement.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- What might be the benefits of a single route for reporting all concerns and how might this be monitored for consistency?
- How might the general understanding of confidentiality, responsibility for reporting concerns, recording and GDPR be improved across the Cathedral?

3.4 CLERGY DISCIPLINARY MEASURES

3.4.1 The auditors did not see any clergy disciplinary measure files as part of this audit.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- There were no considerations under this heading.

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 Since beginning its preparations for the safeguarding audit in late 2019, Chelmsford Cathedral has prioritised safeguarding training. There is recognition of the need to put in place an agreed and funded yearly training programme and to ensure regular review of training requirements.

3.5.3 All senior clergy and staff have joined the new Senior Leaders' Safeguarding Programme, available through the national church, and are appreciating the opportunity this provides to train as a group. Records of training received are kept on a centrally maintained excel spreadsheet and auditors were informed that progress is regularly reported on.

3.5.4 All staff have now undertaken as a minimum online C0 (basic) and C1 (foundation) level training. Training requirements for individual roles are assessed and reflected in role profiles and job descriptions. For example, the role profile for the Day Chaplains Coordinator is required to undertake C3 (now senior leadership) training.

3.5.5 Volunteers have been encouraged to undertake basic level safeguarding training, receiving considerable support from the Volunteers Manager and others to manage this online. Records of training undertaken by volunteers are maintained on a spreadsheet by the Volunteers Manager. This shows that good progress has been

made in supporting many volunteers to complete basic and foundation level training, but there remain large numbers who have yet to complete any safeguarding training.

- 3.5.6** In April 2021, Chapter made the decision to require verification of training records for all volunteers returning to work, and for all newly recruited volunteers to be safely recruited and complete basic level training. This is included in the *Introduction to Volunteering* handbook, which states that 'safeguarding training is mandatory and will need to be completed before you can take up your role'.
- 3.5.7** The auditors were told of additional, bespoke training delivered in other departments; for example, the School Visits team has commissioned additional training (at a more advanced level, with equivalence to levels 2 and 3 in non-ecclesiastical frameworks) from an external provider for its volunteers and made places available to staff in other departments. In the music department, the choir matron delivers safeguarding training annually to the choral scholars.
- 3.5.8** The diocesan safeguarding team (DST) delivers participative training across the Diocese, which Cathedral staff and volunteers have attended in the past. The auditors were unclear about the nature and target of this training, which has not taken place over the last year due to the COVID restrictions. It is understood that the diocesan office holds records of training completed by all connected with the Cathedral. The newly agreed memorandum of understanding (MOU) between Diocese and Cathedral refers to 'the provision of high-quality safeguarding support' but does not specifically mention training.
- 3.5.9** The auditors heard of plans to deliver more bespoke training outside the formal Church of England framework, such as responding to people with dementia, and different staff have expressed the need to receive specialist training relevant to their role, such as mental health first aid.

Analysis

- 3.5.10** There has been good progress in ensuring that staff and volunteers have all undertaken at least a basic level of safeguarding training, and that more advanced training is needed for some roles, including clergy. There are some gaps in training, such as safer recruitment, and areas where bespoke training would be useful. Work is needed to prepare for full implementation of the national Safeguarding Learning and Development Framework from January 2022.
- 3.5.11** Progress in ensuring that all staff and volunteers undertaking an appropriate level of safeguarding training is good, as is the decision that all volunteers should undertake at least basic and foundation level training. The positive views of the focus and quality of the refreshed national training were pleasing to hear.
- 3.5.12** Records seen are comprehensive, and staff records show when refresher training is due. This is not the case for volunteers; the previous CSO and the current Volunteers Manager were reliant on being advised by the volunteers themselves when such training is due. This was highlighted to Chapter in December 2019, which noted the need to check records against those held by the diocesan office. The auditors did not see any records of safeguarding training undertaken by clergy.
- 3.5.13** A number of staff and volunteers highlighted areas where they felt that more specialised training would be desirable, in order to support them in responding to the needs and situations they encounter (particularly around mental health and de-escalation techniques). The auditors also noted that nobody in the Cathedral has undertaken safer recruitment training. Awareness of domestic violence and abuse, and its implications for both children and vulnerable adults, was also low.

- 3.5.14** To date, reporting on training has been to the Safeguarding Working Group (SWG) and has focused on who has and has not received training. The next step will be to consider how to evaluate the quality and impact of training received.
- 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.
- 3.5.16** Consideration of the relative roles of the Diocese and Cathedral in delivering and monitoring training would be desirable, given the continuing discussion regarding development of a service level agreement (SLA).

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- What needs to be done to prepare for full and timely implementation of the national safeguarding learning and development framework?
- What improvements are needed to the ways in which safeguarding training is recorded, monitored, evaluated and reported, and how might these be achieved?

3.6 SAFER RECRUITMENT

Description

- 3.6.1** The oversight and assurance of the safer recruitment of staff and volunteers does not currently sit within the formal remit of any individual role at Chelmsford Cathedral. In the past, the prior Director of Operations took responsibility for many aspects of safer recruitment, though this was not formally part of their job role, and the CSO was involved in overseeing confidential declarations and DBS.
- 3.6.2** In practice, its operationalisation is now fulfilled by several key individuals including the COO, Cathedral Safeguarding Officer, the Volunteer Manager and the Education Officer. There is no formal HR expertise available internally; this is available from the Diocese, albeit outwith any formal agreement as yet.
- 3.6.3** The auditors heard a recognition that safe recruitment prior to the appointment of the current COO, and the subsequent wider improvements in safeguarding, was insufficient, with inconsistent practice, quality and documentation. However, in more recent times, much change has taken place in the implementation of a more robust approach for staff.
- 3.6.4** Staff posts are now advertised with a statement relating to the Cathedral's commitment to safeguarding and indicating the eligibility of the post for a DBS check. Application forms are submitted, including a confidential declaration as appropriate. Interviews include reference to both the application forms (and scrutiny of any gaps or inconsistencies) and safeguarding-specific questions. For successful appointments, two references are taken up and a DBS check prior to starting employment where required by the role.

- 3.6.5** The auditors heard of the impact that the Volunteer Manager has had on the increased robustness of safer recruitment of volunteers, bringing her considerable experience from previous roles in education leadership and governance. All volunteer positions are guided by a role profile document which outlines the requirement for DBS and any safeguarding-specific duties. An application form is completed and discussed at a face-to-face meeting with the candidate. Two references are taken, a confidential declaration completed and a DBS check undertaken where relevant.
- 3.6.6** Induction for both staff and volunteers includes a mandatory element of safeguarding training at a minimum of basic awareness (C0) level, prior to starting their work, and completion is recorded in personnel files. Staff are also supported with probationary reviews at the six-week and 12-week stage.
- 3.6.7** For volunteers, recent improvements now see final sign-off of readiness to begin roles being coordinated through the Volunteer Manager, and only approved once training, pre-employment checks and a confidential declaration have been completed. The auditors heard of how this has helped to bring consistency and oversight from a previous process that meant some were able to start working without training and completed checks, thereby contributing to the current position where many existing volunteers are now needing to be trained retrospectively.
- 3.6.8** At present, no members of staff at Chelmsford have undertaken safer recruitment training.

Analysis

- 3.6.9** The auditors agreed with Chelmsford's own self-assessment that there is evidence of some much-improved process and procedure around safer recruitment. However, it remains an area in which there are some significant gaps in both the oversight and operationalisation of the function.
- 3.6.10** The auditors saw the current lack of HR expertise and oversight as a significant risk to Chelmsford Cathedral going forwards, and a priority for attention. Whilst improvements have been achieved with responsibility being shared by several individuals, there is a general lack of centralisation and consistency that would be greatly benefitted by the introduction of such experience. This may be achieved through the developing SLA with the Diocese, which does have some HR expertise. The auditors reflected that, whilst the new CSO is a very promising introduction to the Cathedral, this function must be separate from their role, and they should not be seen as the solution in-and-of-themselves.
- 3.6.11** The auditors also reflected that wider expertise is now needed for the distributed aspects of day-to-day operational safe recruitment. The availability of safer recruitment training as part of the national safeguarding training framework may offer a key opportunity to further drive quality and consistency.
- 3.6.12** The auditors saw a sample of four staff recruitment files pertaining to the past 12 months. There was evidence of application of a range of checks and some good practice, including a covering checklist, references, identity checks, job descriptions, interview notes and contracts. However, this is not yet consistently applied with some files missing key elements, such as interview records and identity checks that meet the requirement for a right-to-work in the UK check.
- 3.6.13** Volunteer files similarly showed much improvement, and the auditors saw a sample of 10 files covering the last eight years. In more recent examples, role profiles, application forms, references, confidential declarations and training records were all present.

- 3.6.14** However, these records are currently divided up by recruitment stage, meaning that any scrutiny of an individual volunteer's recruitment requires the cross-checking of four different folders. This is complicated where individual application forms make no reference to volunteer role, and where role profiles are stored in alphabetical order of department and not by name. This makes oversight, scrutiny and checking a very manual task and raises wider data-protection issues where individual files effectively 'run-on' into the files of other individuals, often without divider or separation.
- 3.6.15** The introduction of retrospective safer recruitment practices to volunteers who were not originally recruited through this process has not been actively considered.
- 3.6.16** The auditors agreed that whilst volunteer role profiles were a helpful way of clarifying the level of safeguarding training required and DBS eligibility, these do not appear to reflect the wider tone and culture of safeguarding, with safeguarding duties not detailed for most posts, and DBS eligibility statements that appear to be in conflict with the wider practice of the Diocese to only undertake enhanced disclosure checks, and so only for the very limited number of positions that are in regulated activity.
- 3.6.17** The auditors reflected positively on the recent work of the Volunteer Manager to produce a 'single, central record' style spreadsheet to begin to collate all volunteer checks and simplify oversight. This has not yet been replicated for staff files and there is currently no automated means by which to collate recruitment information and easily identify when training and other renewals are due. This is addressed further in section 4.3.
- 3.6.18** The auditors were unsure how decisions have been made about which posts are eligible for a DBS check, whether basic or enhanced, with some anomalies present. A review of all staff and volunteer posts, including Chapter members, is needed to ensure that checks are being undertaken at the appropriate level for each post.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- What experience and skills are required to formalise HR oversight within the Cathedral, and what role (existing or new) would this most appropriately sit within?
- Who would be best placed to attend safer recruitment training?
- How should volunteer recruitment files be reorganised and reviewed (including role profiles) to ensure that they reflect good practice?

4. FINDINGS – ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORTS

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 (2017) Promoting a Safer Church within their own safeguarding policy. The Policy Statement must actively underpin all safeguarding work within the Church and the drive to improve safeguarding practice.
- 4.1.2 This has been supplemented by more recent 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 and 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 On the safeguarding page of its website, it is stated that 'Chelmsford Cathedral adopted the Church of England's policies and best practice on safeguarding which may be found on the policies page of the Church of England website'. The link to the latter website directs the reader to the Policy and Practice Guidance page, which in turn contains links to a range of relevant documents. This is in line with the approach taken by the Diocese of Chelmsford.
- 4.1.5 National policies, procedures and guidance have been supplemented in some instances by local policies (for example, relating to volunteers, school visits, lone working, social media, health and safety, photography). There are also policies relating to data security and privacy.
- 4.1.6 The staff handbook does include a statement about safeguarding and contact details for the CSO and ACSO but contains no reference or links to safeguarding policies or related procedures such as whistleblowing. The volunteer policy also references policies relevant to safeguarding, such as safer recruitment, but does not contain details of or links to these relevant policies.
- 4.1.7 Different departments and teams (e.g. the School Visits team) have developed their own procedures and guidance, some – but not all – of which reference safeguarding.
- 4.1.8 The pastoral handbook contains a 'safeguarding statement' which goes into some detail about the Cathedral's approach to meeting its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. It references adoption of the diocesan policy on safeguarding, makes a statement of commitment (covering areas such as culture, safe working practices, safer recruitment and training) and enabling and encouraging the raising of concerns.
- 4.1.9 The music department has produced various documents which contain policies, procedures and guidance. The Visiting Choirs Safeguarding Form includes 'the Cathedral's safeguarding policy statement' (which is different from the one reproduced in the Pastoral Handbook) and a 'safeguarding code of conduct' which visiting choirs are required to agree with. The induction for choral scholars contains a 'statement of conduct and expectations' which is different from the code of conduct reproduced on the Visiting Choirs Safeguarding Form.

- 4.1.10** Chapter signs off and reviews policies, which usually contain the date of approval and when review is due. The majority of those seen by auditors were signed off or reviewed during the last 12 to 18 months (which coincided with the period affected by COVID and lockdowns).
- 4.1.11** Auditors did not see an information-sharing protocol and do not know whether there is one in place.
- 4.1.12** Auditors did not see or hear of any specific committee where the terms of reference specify oversight of the implementation and impact of the various policies and procedures relating to safeguarding, although both the Safeguarding Working Group and the Executive Team have been working to address gaps and progress over the past 18 months, in preparation for the audit.

Analysis

- 4.1.13** There is a range of policies, procedures and guidance which complement the national framework. A review of what is in place to ensure that there are consistent messages, with no gaps or overlaps, is needed. Attention should be paid to ensuring the accessibility of such documents, and their consistent implementation.
- 4.1.14** The auditors noted that much work has been done in recent months to develop new policies and review those already in place. Policies such as the Photographic Policy for Services and Events are explicit in the attention they give to safeguarding children. The Social Media Policy is reasonably comprehensive, and it is good that attention is paid to wider issues than reputational. It could be strengthened further by clarifying that there should be no direct communication by adults with children and young people.
- 4.1.15** Auditors concluded that the message about the overall safeguarding policy for Chelmsford Cathedral is unclear. As noted above, the website says one thing (about the national policy framework); other safeguarding documents give different messages, which are themselves contradictory. This confusion is unfortunate. A short policy statement which makes clear the Cathedral's approach to safeguarding, and which is supported by documents such as a single code of conduct for staff, and relevant procedures, all accessible in one place, may be helpful. Such a policy can then be incorporated into the relevant handbooks and guidance for all those undertaking a role in the Cathedral community yet would still allow scope for the development of department-specific practice guidance.
- 4.1.16** There are some gaps in policies/procedures, e.g. lost children, managing electronic communications technology such as Zoom, and procedures to follow in case of external threat.
- 4.1.17** In too many documents, safeguarding is referred to only in the context of reporting concerns. On the safeguarding page of the website, there is a very lengthy and detailed description of types of abuse rather than a more general statement of commitment to promoting safety and wellbeing and responding to concerns. The auditors wondered whether this may discourage reporting, given that the likelihood of anyone directly witnessing or hearing about such specific abuse is probably low.
- 4.1.18** The limited reference to safeguarding (and any other specific policies relevant to staff) in the staff induction handbook is unfortunate and could possibly be remedied when the document is next reviewed.
- 4.1.19** Although reviews of policy and procedures appear to happen regularly, the auditors did not see evidence of a systematic approach to assuring that staff and volunteers

understand the procedures, know where to access them, and are confident to use them. Due to the limitations of the methodology, the auditors were not able to check this out as part of the audit.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- What steps could be taken to clarify the Cathedral's overall approach to safeguarding, and align all policies, procedures and practice guidance to reflect this?
- What system could be put into place to ensure that policies, procedures and guidance are comprehensive, accessible to and understood by all clergy, staff and volunteers, consistently implemented and regularly reviewed?

4.2 THE CATHEDRAL SAFEGUARDING OFFICER/ DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING ADVISOR

Description

- 4.2.1** The House of Bishops' practice guidance *Key Roles and Responsibilities of Church Office Holders and Bodies* (December 2017) requires cathedrals to appoint a safeguarding professional as cathedral safeguarding officer (CSO) to work with the Dean, the Chapter and cathedral staff to implement House of Bishops' policy and guidance. Until April 2021, Chelmsford's CSO function was delivered by a volunteer. A paid officer took up her (part-time) post in April 2021.
- 4.2.2** The former CSO was a retired teacher who took up the role of CSO in January 2016, at the request of the Dean and Chapter. This was before the publication of the national *Key Roles and Responsibilities* guidance. She did not have a specific role description, nor was there any formal accountability structure in place at first, the only expectation being an annual safeguarding report to Chapter. Latterly, the Dean became her line manager. The accountabilities became more complicated when the CSO herself became a member of Chapter in her role as Cathedral Warden.
- 4.2.3** The CSO's initial focus appears to have comprised the oversight of DBS checks. Engagement with national training and the national safeguarding network was helpful in supporting a broadening of focus to include the promotion of safeguarding training.
- 4.2.4** The CSO did not see herself as having any responsibilities for casework. She would signpost individuals as appropriate, sometimes to the DST, and consult the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) on occasions, albeit this arrangement was not set out in a formal agreement between the Diocese and Cathedral. In turn, the DST would ensure that the CSO was copied into any responses made to contacts from the Cathedral.
- 4.2.5** The interim COO quickly recognised the need for a professionalised safeguarding service and secured the support of the Dean and Chapter to proceed with an appointment of a part-time (14 hours per week) CSO. The current CSO took up her post in April 2021. She is a former police officer with wide experience in areas relevant to safeguarding children and adults and managing people who may pose a risk to others. The appointment has been widely welcomed and extensively promoted.
- 4.2.6** The CSO job description sets out the purpose of the role as follows: 'The Cathedral Safeguarding Officer is the key link between the Diocese and the Cathedral, concerning safeguarding matters. She/he will have an overview of all the Cathedral's

activities involving children, young people and vulnerable adults and will seek to ensure the implementation of the Cathedral's safeguarding policy.'

- 4.2.7** The job description includes the provision of 'regular, professional supervision from the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser'. The DSA was involved in the recruitment process for the CSO. The CSO is employed by and based in the Cathedral, is line managed by the COO, and is not a formal part of the DST. Consideration of the future relationship between the CSO post and the DST is part of the wider discussion about the proposed SLA.
- 4.2.8** At present, there is no dedicated administrative support for the CSO in place, and no provision for oversight of the safeguarding mailbox in the absence of the CSO. The auditors understand that there is potentially scope for increasing the hours of the post, subject to discussion with the postholder and a review of the role itself.
- 4.2.9** The role of assistant safeguarding lead was given to an associate priest who was already involved with the Cathedral. She is a primary school head teacher with long experience of safeguarding arrangements in education settings. Her role description is that of an associate priest, and includes the following: '...[X] has a specific role as deputy Safeguarding Officer at Chelmsford Cathedral, supporting the Cathedral Safeguarding Officer and deputising for her.' The photograph, name and contact details of the postholder are included on posters alongside those of the CSO.
- 4.2.10** The DST comprises two DSAs (one of whom is head of safeguarding), a caseworker and two administrators, whose tasks include delivering training alongside the DSAs. The auditors were told that the DST did not work formally with the Cathedral in its role as a parish church, although the DST had in practice provided a range of services including training and developing risk assessments and safeguarding agreements if required.
- 4.2.11** The DSA also provided advice to the CSO and others on request about specific cases, but there was no system of follow up to check that this advice had been followed.

Analysis

- 4.2.12** Until recently, the Cathedral's safeguarding service was not meeting the expectations set out in national guidance. The appointment of a paid CSO is a significant step forward. Work is needed to agree the SLA with the Diocese, formalise the support and accountability structures around the CSO, and manage what are currently unrealistic expectations of a part-time post.
- 4.2.13** The auditors heard and saw the concerns around the volunteer CSO role but viewed this as an inevitable product of its set-up and the then culture. A volunteer with an unclear role profile, working with little formal support, guidance and accountability, cannot be expected to achieve a great deal. Supervision, support and challenge could have been introduced earlier. The auditors were struck by the apparent confusion between all spoken to about who was the formal line manager for the CSO, which was indicative of the wider oversight and accountability issues noted. Progress in areas such as safer recruitment and training has nevertheless been achieved, which is creditable.
- 4.2.14** When, finally, there was recognition of the need for a professional CSO, swift action followed, and it was pleasing for the auditors to see such a positively regarded appointment. A professionalised safeguarding service is an important step forward for the Cathedral in its progress to meet fully its responsibilities. Early signs are that the CSO has moved swiftly to make herself known, and to assess key areas of risk. She

has reviewed all available information on cases and is focusing on the development of a system for recording future concerns, pending the long-awaited introduction nationally of an electronic casework management system.

- 4.2.15** The auditors were concerned that expectations of what is inevitably a very limited role, given the time allocation of two days per week, are unrealistically high. The job description is highly operational and gives responsibilities to the CSO which, in the view of the auditors, should sit with clergy and managers. This includes the future chairing of the Safeguarding Working Group (see paragraph 5.5.25).
- 4.2.16** The job description would benefit from being aligned more closely with the national *Key Roles and Responsibilities* guidance. Close attention to this guidance would also be helpful in clarifying the boundaries and areas of necessary cooperation between the Cathedral and the Diocese. There is no mention in the CSO job description of casework responsibilities. This is a significant omission and risks perpetuating the existing confusion over who is responsible for what.
- 4.2.17** The auditors reflected that there is a risk that the appointment of a CSO may be being seen as the solution to all difficulties, given the very high and diverse expectations of the role – both written and assumed.
- 4.2.18** The auditors reflected that the ACSO, whilst undoubtedly an asset to the Cathedral in terms of capacity and expertise, has an unclear role and remit. This could lead to overlap, blurred accountability and confusion of staff and volunteers. A review of their role profile and practical working arrangements would complement a parallel process for the CSO.
- 4.2.19** It is important that the CSO is seen as only one element of a much larger group of leaders and managers, who each have a clear part to play in the delivery of a safer church. To be most effective, the CSO will need proper administrative support, and work within a framework of clear accountabilities and reporting structures. The auditors wondered whether mentoring from an experienced CSO in another cathedral where safeguarding is more firmly embedded could be helpful.
- 4.2.20** The SLA between the Diocese and the Cathedral is a critical opportunity to negotiate mutual responsibilities and agree the interface between the DSA and the DST. Agreement of a comprehensive out-of-hours duty and oversight system would be a desirable element, alongside clarity over human resources (HR) and DBS responsibilities. This could be accompanied by a revision of the job description, to ensure that the totality of safeguarding responsibilities of both Cathedral and Diocese are fully reflected, with accompanying clarity over who is responsible for what.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- What additional adjustments are needed to enable the CSO to work effectively and ensure that operational leaders take on their full responsibilities for safeguarding?
- How might the Cathedral work with the Diocese to ensure that its requirements for a safeguarding service are adequately assessed, provided and reflected in the SLA?

4.3 RECORDING AND IT SYSTEMS

- 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** Chelmsford Cathedral has both electronic and paper-based systems. The Diocese provides IT support, albeit without a formal agreement being in place.
- 4.3.3** Individual HR files for staff have not been kept systematically. Records are paper based and comprise different folders for different aspects of the recruitment and employment process. For example, confidential declarations and DBS records have been kept separately from each other and separately from the individual's other records. This practice appears to have been based on a misunderstanding about confidentiality and GDPR requirements. It was unclear to the auditors how concerns that had been raised with the CSO were recorded on an individual's HR record.
- 4.3.4** The Volunteer Manager has recently developed a single spreadsheet of essential recruitment and training information for all volunteers, in an attempt to bring previously disparate records into one document to allow for tracking and more automated reminders of renewals. Apart from this, there is as yet no central collection of volunteer records.
- 4.3.5** This is not the case for staff. The Cathedral has recently recognised that this is not acceptable and is taking steps to establish and maintain a single central record for both staff and volunteers, to more effectively digitise it and enhance the functionality that such a system can bring.
- 4.3.6** On taking up post, the interim COO concluded that some of the IT systems –the main one being the communications software and database –were not particularly fit for purpose, and the next planned IT project is to update the Cathedral's systems. Some aspects were prioritised during lockdown, to enable staff to work effectively from home and support live streaming of services. Discussions with the diocesan office regarding an SLA include IT support. This is already noted in the recently agreed MOU.
- 4.3.7** Records relating to clergy are held in the diocesan office. The DSA's casework files are also kept within the diocesan office, where the DSA is based. Access to all the various files is restricted to specific, named people. Records relating to Cathedral casework have been discussed in section 3.3 above. They have been unsatisfactory, and the auditors understand that this is being addressed as a matter of urgency.
- 4.3.8** A recent innovation has been the introduction of an electronic means of raising safeguarding concerns, together with a 'safeguarding@' email address which will facilitate monitoring in the absence of the (part-time) CSO.
- 4.3.9** The music department keeps information on individual children as a paper record, and parental consent is recorded and renewed annually. The auditors were informed that these are kept securely in the music department office and are accessible on a 'need-to-know' basis. Notes of the weekly safeguarding meeting, which on occasions includes reference to individual children, are kept locked in the same departmental office.
- 4.3.10** Different groups elsewhere within the Cathedral keep records for their own use, for example, regarding visitors to the bell tower, or incidents of pastoral concern (kept in a book in a locked cabinet by the vergers).
- 4.3.11** The auditors were unable to check out the understanding of the requirement to seek consent for keeping personal information, other than in the music department, where it is clearly recorded.
- 4.3.12** The auditors examined a sample of different paper files held by the Cathedral (including staff, volunteers, casework, risk assessments, pastoral concerns) and those relating to aspects of Cathedral life which were held within the Diocese. These

comprised relevant casework files. Evidence of consent being sought and given by subjects was evident on a small number of files.

- 4.3.13** Comments have been made elsewhere on the difficulty of ascertaining whether a concern is 'pastoral or 'safeguarding'. Whatever steps are taken to resolve this, any system must enable systematic oversight and monitoring to ensure that consistently good safeguarding standards are applied.
- 4.3.14** The very small number of concerns raised in what is a large community which includes many people with vulnerabilities raised questions in the auditors' minds about the culture and understanding of individuals' responsibilities to recognise and act on concerns. The different systems referred to above (for reporting pastoral and safeguarding concerns) may contribute to this, as might the public messages about recognising abuse (as opposed to raising a concern). The auditors concluded that this is an area which safeguarding leaders will wish to address.
- 4.3.15** As safeguarding activity increases, and more information is expected for monitoring and quality assurance purposes, the current recording systems are likely to prove increasingly unwieldy and demanding of administrative time. As commented above, any replacement system will need to be easily completed, overseen and monitored, facilitating the ability to share important information, spot patterns of concerns and respond appropriately.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- What would a single, centralised HR record (covering both staff and volunteers) look like, and who would need to have access to it to ensure more coordinated oversight and standardised practice?
- How might the current system of locally held records and incident books be combined to enable oversight of low-level concerns?
- What does the Cathedral need to do to satisfy itself that all potential safeguarding concerns are identified and reported promptly?

5. FINDINGS – LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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 enables an organisation to understand its strengths and weaknesses. Potential sources of data are numerous, including independent scrutiny. Quality assurance needs to be strategic and systematic to support accountability and shed light on how well things are working and where there are gaps or concerns.

Description

- 5.1.2** Chapter maintains oversight of safeguarding arrangements across the Cathedral and has safeguarding as a standing agenda item at every meeting. The former CSO was a member of Chapter and so was able to contribute at each meeting. This is not the position with the new CSO. The single example of a written safeguarding report to Chapter from the CSO seen by the auditors was very brief and did not contain specific information that would provide the basis for quality assurance.
- 5.1.3** An annual safeguarding report is presented to Chapter in December and forwarded to the Bishop, with an accompanying letter from the Dean highlighting specific details. In the example seen, covering the year to April 2020, the report itself was brief and the letter from the Dean highlighted steps taken to strengthen governance through key appointments and an improving relationship between Cathedral and Diocese.
- 5.1.4** Chapter is assisted by the Executive Team, which is chaired by the Dean. In the Dean's absence on a short sabbatical in late 2019/early 2020, following notice of the independent safeguarding audit, the Executive Team commissioned a 'dialogical workshop' with the National Safeguarding Team (NST) to help assess its current position and agree priorities for action.
- 5.1.5** A Safeguarding Working Group (SWG) was established by the executive team post-lockdown to coordinate the preparation for the audit. A role for the SWG post-audit was envisaged, with the task of 'ensuring that the recommendations resulting from the audit are actioned and report monthly through the Safeguarding Officer and Chief Operating Officer to the Executive Team'. The SWG was chaired by the COO pre-audit, with a plan for this role to be taken over by the CSO.
- 5.1.6** The Cathedral has a risk register which includes aspects of safeguarding. The risk register is kept by the Executive Team and reviewed regularly by the Audit and Risk Committee, Finance Committee and Chapter. Auditors noted from meeting minutes that the Audit and Risk Committee scrutinised closely the safeguarding information provided to it and asked pertinent questions about aspects of performance.
- 5.1.7** There is an independently chaired Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel (DSAP) in place. The Canon for Evangelism and Discipleship has been the Cathedral's representative for the past year. The DSAP has the responsibility assigned to it in *Key Roles* for scrutinising the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements across the Diocese, including the Cathedral.
- 5.1.8** There is further information about the DSAP in section 5.4 below.
- 5.1.9** There is no overarching safeguarding strategy and delivery plan in place which sets out how the Cathedral is responding to the national policy *Promoting a Safer Church*.

- 5.1.10** There are a few examples of data being gathered and held for monitoring purposes, for example, in relation to training, safer recruitment, DBS checks. This information is held on spreadsheets or in paper form. The SWG has kept a degree of oversight as part of the preparation for the audit, but in general, data is not yet used systematically to demonstrate progress or focus activity.
- 5.1.11** There is no formal mechanism in place for systematically gathering feedback from those who are engaged with the Cathedral, in whatever capacity, or who receive a safeguarding service. The good response from across the Cathedral community to the audit questionnaire (2021) is an indication that there may be a general willingness to provide feedback if asked.

Analysis

- 5.1.12** There are several elements in place which could be developed into a comprehensive framework for assessing the Cathedral's progress in achieving the objective of promoting a safer church.
- 5.1.13** The auditors found that elements of a framework for scrutinising and evaluating performance and impact are in place, comprising Chapter, Executive, SWG and DSAP, and annual reporting to the Bishop.
- 5.1.14** Chapter has recently agreed that undertaking safeguarding training to a specified level is a prerequisite for volunteers who wish to return to their roles post-lockdown. Basic databases exist in relation to important aspects of safeguarding such as safer recruitment, training and DBS but need to be brought together into a form which will enable forward planning (e.g. for when DBS or training needs to be renewed) as well as ease of reporting for monitoring purposes.
- 5.1.15** The focus to date has been on promoting awareness of safeguarding across the Cathedral through a range of methods of communication, supported by a focus on training, particularly for volunteers. Effort has been put into rectifying gaps in policies and procedures and embedding safer recruitment practice. Understandably, there has also been much activity and attention devoted to responding to the changed circumstances arising from the pandemic and accompanying lockdowns. This has meant that many of the more recently developed policies and procedures have not been tested and evidence of understanding, compliance and impact is absent. This will need to be addressed.
- 5.1.16** The current strategic and operational structures could be refocused to provide a strong framework for assuring the development, quality and impact of safeguarding arrangements. To be most effective, this would require clarity over strategic direction, operational priorities and desired outcomes, supported by improved arrangements for collating and reporting on data and 'soft' information, such as complaints.
- 5.1.17** The Church of England safeguarding policy statement Promoting a Safer Church contains six overarching policy commitments:
- Promoting a safer environment and culture
 - Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the Church
 - Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation
 - Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons

- Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons
- Responding to those that may pose a present risk to others.

5.1.18 These could be used to provide a framework for Chelmsford's own safeguarding strategy and delivery plan, which in turn could be operationally 'owned' by the Executive Team, delivered through a refocused SWG, used for evaluating risk by the Audit and Risk Committee, and provide the basis for reporting to Chapter, DSAP and the Bishop.

5.1.19 Building a quality assurance framework with supporting systems that will give feedback on progress against the delivery plan, coupled with proportionate, written reporting at all levels, will enable Chapter to monitor how well it is fulfilling its commitment to promoting a safer church for all.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- 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?
- What needs to be done to put in place a comprehensive framework for quality assurance which will be able to evidence progress in creating a strong safeguarding culture and compliance with the expectations of Promoting a Safer Church?
- How might the Cathedral seek regular feedback from a range of children and adults, including survivors of abuse, as part of its commitment to its mission and ministry?

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 Chelmsford Cathedral does not have its own complaints policy; a search via the website reveals no results. Auditors were told that complaints from members of the congregation and others are usually directed to a member of clergy or the Chief Operating Officer and an appropriate response made. A reference in the *Introduction to Volunteering* document assumes complaints are from a visitor and directs the volunteer to contact the Volunteer Manager rather than to a specific procedure.

5.2.3 The Diocese of Chelmsford has a complaints policy, dated August 2018, but the Cathedral has not chosen to adopt this, and so it is not signposted from the Cathedral website.

'The diocesan policy defines what a complaint is and includes a number of areas which are not covered by the policy. These include "matters relating to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults (which) are determined according to national policies. Complaints relating to safeguarding will only be considered if they relate to the conduct of CDBF staff in their compliance with national policies and practices". A link to the relevant national guidance is included in the document. There is no specific distinction made between making a complaint

about the safeguarding service (by using the policy and procedures) and reporting a safeguarding concern.'

- 5.2.4** The diocesan procedures provide for a three-stage process, comprising informal and formal stages, and provision for an appeal. Explanation of the right to involve the Charity Commission at any stage is included. The formal stage makes provision for independent investigation but none for external assistance in achieving resolution. The policy references the use of the Diocesan Whistleblowing Procedure by staff with concerns but does not explain the distinction between making a complaint and whistleblowing.
- 5.2.5** The auditors saw and heard of no complaints, although it was evident from some recording that correspondence and communications are regularly received by the Dean and clergy, in particular, which cause anxiety and, occasionally, distress. The auditors reflected that discussion about the nature of the culture that the Dean and Chapter are striving to create could usefully include consideration of the degree to which complaints are invited, proactively identified and positively received.
- 5.2.6** The formal adoption of the diocesan complaints policy, or the development of a Cathedral-specific complaints policy, might assist in this process. A good policy would enable distinction to be made between concerns and complaints, and in turn support organisational learning. Whichever course of action is chosen, the audits considered it advisable to include specific reference to making complaints about the safeguarding service, and how this is different from reporting concerns.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- What benefits might there be for the Cathedral in either developing its own complaints procedure or incorporating the diocesan complaints policy alongside its own policies and procedures and how might its use be promoted?

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 the fear that their disclosures will lead to any harassment or negative impact on their personal work role/environment.
- 5.3.2** Chapter approved a whistleblowing policy in April 2021. The policy defines whistleblowing, and states that it is in place 'to ensure that an internal process is available to encourage and enable staff and volunteers to raise serious concerns which would not meet the criteria for a complaint or grievance; in confidence and without fear of reprisals; to ensure that the Cathedral continues to provide the highest standards of integrity and accountability'. The policy specifically references potential barriers to disclosure, including feelings of misplaced loyalty to colleagues or the Church, or fear of harassment or victimisation.
- 5.3.3** The process to be followed (which involves reporting to a line manager or more senior person) is set out, and there is information about what could happen, albeit without timescales or any sense of a staged approach. The policy could be strengthened by the inclusion of details of external organisations which provide advice and support, and assistance in circumstances where the whistleblower is not satisfied that suitable remedial action has been taken.
- 5.3.4** A number of examples of possible scenarios are contained within the policy, and there is a distinction made between whistleblowing and raising a concern about a child,

which is helpful. A review of the policy to ensure that contact details for the CSO are up to date and including a link to the safeguarding reporting form would be helpful.

- 5.3.5** The whistleblowing policy has only recently been approved and so has had little time to become known about or embedded. The auditors heard of no examples where it has been used and did not see any evidence of how it has been promoted. It is not contained within the staff induction handbook or the *Introduction to Volunteering*, for example.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How might the Cathedral whistleblowing procedure be promoted and its use encouraged?

5.4 DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING ADVISORY PANEL

- 5.4.1** Based on the national guidance in Roles and Responsibilities for Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panels (DSAP), 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. For its part, a cathedral is required to nominate 'a senior cathedral representative' to attend the DSAP.

Description

- 5.4.2** The DSAP has a particularly experienced independent chair, who has held the position for the last five years. Representation at the panel includes professionals from Essex County Council, Essex Police and Essex Safeguarding Adults Board, as well as an independent member and clergy from around the Diocese. The previous Bishop attended regularly until his departure last year. Until 2020 there was no representation from the Cathedral. The Canon for Evangelism and Discipleship was invited to attend in early 2020, since when she has attended two meetings and sent apologies for the most recent.
- 5.4.3** To date, the DSAP for Chelmsford has had no role in relation to the Cathedral. There is no standing agenda item relating to the Cathedral. The DSA provides a report to each meeting concerning safeguarding across the Diocese, which includes mention of the Cathedral on occasions. In recent meetings, this has included reference to the recruitment of the CSO and the early discussion of an SLA. The DSA reports do not contain performance information about the Cathedral's safeguarding arrangements. The Cathedral representative has made no contribution in the meetings she has attended.

Analysis

- 5.4.4** More work is needed to strengthen oversight and scrutiny of the Cathedral's safeguarding arrangements.
- 5.4.5** DSAP has not met its responsibilities for scrutiny, support and constructive challenge in relation to the Cathedral; nor has the Cathedral made efforts to enable this. The lack of engagement with and by the Cathedral appears to have reflected a distance between the Diocese and Cathedral which has not been effectively addressed. The attendance of the Canon for Evangelism and Discipleship as Cathedral representative appears to have been the result of a casual encounter rather than a strategic decision

and, from the Cathedral's perspective, does not make sense in that she does not have a specific role within the Cathedral in relation to safeguarding; nor does she have the 'scaffolding' around her which would provide her with the information that the DSAP would expect from the Cathedral.

5.4.6 The DSAP chair made it clear that closer engagement with the Cathedral would be welcomed and is happy to help facilitate this as necessary.

5.4.7 Alongside changes to structures within the Cathedral (see section 5.5 below), consideration could also be given to reviewing representation at DSAP with a view to supporting and strengthening its scrutiny role in relation to the Cathedral and contributing to its wider diocesan responsibilities. A further step could be to request a regular assessment from the independent chair of the Cathedral's safeguarding arrangements.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How might the Cathedral best work with the Diocese to enhance the effectiveness of the scrutiny and challenge role of DSAP in relation to the Cathedral?

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 be determinative in how well-led the safeguarding function is.

Theological leadership

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

5.5.3 The Dean is fully aware of his responsibilities for 'holding the ring' in relation to safeguarding and seeks to model this through his own behaviour as a leader as well as by ensuring that the correct policies and procedures are in place.

5.5.4 The questionnaire used by the auditors asked questions about the priority given to safeguarding in the Cathedral, how active is the Dean in communicating the importance of safeguarding within the Church and to what extent does safeguarding, and the safety and wellbeing of others, form part of the message of sermons. Responses varied considerably. Whilst all respondents said that safeguarding was an obvious priority either extremely (87 per cent) or moderately (13 per cent), slightly fewer (85 per cent) said the same about the Dean's communication of the importance of safeguarding, whilst 11 per cent said he did not communicate its importance at all.

5.5.5 In response to being asked to what extent does safeguarding, and the safety and wellbeing of others, form part of the message of sermons, 31 per cent replied 'not at all' (11 per cent) or 'not relevant to my role and experience' (20%). Given that a number of these identified themselves variously as volunteers, congregants, members of staff and Chapter, the auditors found this surprising. That said, additional comments indicated a positive view of the pastoral activities of the Cathedral under the leadership of the Vice Dean and a welcome for the changes have been happening recently (including the appointment of the CSO).

Strategic leadership

- 5.5.6** The provisions of the new Cathedrals Measure have been anticipated with the Chapter as the single governing body in Chelmsford. It directs and oversees the administration of the Cathedral's affairs and has responsibility for leadership, policy, strategy and vision. Chapter has primary responsibility for reviewing performance against strategy, the implementation of policies and standards and delivery against plans. The Finance, Works and Audit and Risk Committees report to Chapter and the risk register is regularly monitored by the Executive Team.
- 5.5.7** The provisions of the new Cathedrals Measure have been anticipated with the Chapter as the single governing body. Chapter comprises the Dean, Vice Dean and the two residentiary canons, the Archdeacon of Harlow, and three lay members. The former CSO is just completing her term of office as a Chapter Member, in her role as a Cathedral Warden. The COO attends all meetings of Chapter. Other officers attend by invitation.
- 5.5.8** Having identified a lack of professional knowledge about safeguarding at Chapter, a lay member (who is the deputy head at a local primary school) was appointed during 2020 as the member for safeguarding, in order to strengthen Chapter's ability to meet its responsibilities and scrutinise its safeguarding performance.
- 5.5.9** The House of Bishops' *Key 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 (see paragraph 5.1.17). 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.
- 5.5.10** Members of Chapter have both strategic and executive management responsibilities. The Vice Dean oversees the Cathedral's pastoral care arrangements and supervises the Volunteer Manager; the Canon for Worship and Music has responsibilities which include the line management of the organist and master of the choristers (OMC) and the Head Verger; the Canon for Evangelism and Discipleship line manages the Children and Families Minister and the Education Officer, and oversees the marketing and communications functions. Each of these roles has safeguarding elements. The COO also manages a number of roles which contain safeguarding-related responsibilities, e.g. for safer recruitment and DBS checks, and is the manager of the CSO.
- 5.5.11** The interim COO has worked with Chapter to separate out the strategic and operational responsibilities of its members, and to clarify the same in relation to lay staff. This has brought helpful clarity.
- 5.5.12** The self-assessment completed in preparation for the audit was prepared by the COO on behalf of Chapter and comprised a statement of actions taken to date to strengthen arrangements, and areas in need of improvement and development. These include recognition that systems such as communications and IT are not yet fit for purpose and that safeguarding awareness is not yet embedded.
- 5.5.13** The self-assessment noted that there is no SLA in place between the Diocese and the Cathedral which sets out relative roles and responsibilities, although one now exists in the form of an MOU covering IT, HR and property support as well as safeguarding.

Operational leadership

- 5.5.14** Operational leadership sits with the small Executive Team, which comprises clergy and lay staff and is chaired by the Dean. Minutes of its weekly meetings indicate discussion of a wide range of topics, including safeguarding. The auditors did not see its terms of reference.
- 5.5.15** Some departments/teams, such as the School Visits team, are well developed in their approach to safeguarding, and have good practice to share across other areas of activity. The SWG has clearly been useful in coordinating preparations for the audit.
- 5.5.16** The brief audit initiated by the Chapter safeguarding lead together with the (also newly appointed) ACSL, laid the foundation for a number of recent initiatives, such as the introduction of mandatory safeguarding training for all volunteers prior to their return post lockdown.
- 5.5.17** The role of the CSO in receiving concerns is extensively promoted and well understood. A recently introduced electronic mailbox makes reporting more straightforward. Ninety-six per cent of people returning the questionnaire said they were extremely or moderately confident that they knew who to go to if they had concerns that someone is being hurt in some way, or that someone is behaving inappropriately.
- 5.5.18** The management of the 250+ people who volunteer for the Cathedral sits with different individuals (group leaders), some of whom are themselves volunteers. The Volunteer Steering Group (VSG) is chaired by the Volunteer Manager and is attended by group leaders as well as the Dean and the COO. Individuals who attend it told the auditors that it is a valuable means of keeping them and their fellow volunteers engaged with and in touch with what is happening across the Cathedral. The VSG maintains a degree of oversight, and group leaders relate to different individuals within the overall structure, both clergy and lay. Since her appointment in April 2020, the Volunteer Manager has worked to clarify the full range of volunteering within the Cathedral, ensure that groups are aligned appropriately to group leaders, and collate information about all volunteers.
- 5.5.19** The SWG was established in 2020 by the Executive Team to coordinate preparations for the audit, meeting at least monthly and chaired by the COO. The terms of reference confined it to ensuring that all materials relevant to the audit are reviewed and available for inspection by the audit team. Post audit, it was envisaged that the SWG would be chaired by the CSO and 'ensure that the recommendations resulting from the audit are actioned and report monthly through the Safeguarding Officer and Chief Operating Officer to the Executive Team'.

Analysis

- 5.5.20** There has been good progress recently in raising the profile of safeguarding and addressing some of the more problematic areas. More visible leadership by the Dean and Chapter, accompanied by the development of a clear strategic plan, will provide a firm basis for the next phase in the development of safeguarding in Chelmsford.
- 5.5.21** The auditors found that the COO has worked purposefully with the Dean and Chapter to raise the profile of safeguarding across the Cathedral, and to improve the relationship with the Diocese. The recognition of the need to appoint a paid professional as CSO was timely.
- 5.5.22** The appointment of a Chapter member for safeguarding and the inclusion of safeguarding as a standing agenda item at Chapter are both positive indications of its increasing priority.

- 5.5.23** The operational leadership of the Executive Team is a significant help in clarifying roles and responsibilities and should enable Chapter to exercise its strategic leadership and scrutiny functions more effectively. At present, the auditors consider that the underdeveloped quality assurance framework and lack of a strategic safeguarding plan could mean there is a risk of Chapter not fully meeting its responsibilities for strategic leadership of safeguarding, as set out in Promoting a Safer Church.
- 5.5.24** The Cathedral leadership had already planned a limited role for the SWG post-audit. In the view of the auditors, there is an opportunity to reconsider the focus of the SWG and charge it with leading, on behalf of the Executive Team, the coordinated delivery of a Cathedral safeguarding strategy (see section 5.1 above) and monitoring its impact. This could then be reported to both Chapter and DSAP in their roles as leaders and scrutineers respectively. For this to be effective, a review of the terms of reference would be required, to ensure that the leadership and membership of the group is appropriate.
- 5.5.25** The auditors questioned whether the chairing of the SWG should sit with the CSO, as currently proposed. Leadership of safeguarding is a whole team effort, and not simply the remit of the CSO. The latter would, however, be important in contributing professional expertise to the group.
- 5.5.26** Currently, the SWG is attended by some members of the Executive Team and a small selection of other operational Cathedral leaders. However, this group does not include others with key roles in the delivery of a safeguarding strategy, for example, the Director of Music, Volunteer Manager and Head Verger.
- 5.5.27** It is positive that there is now an MOU between the Diocese and Cathedral in place, and commitment to agreeing an SLA. Key personnel changes in both Cathedral and Diocese will hopefully enable this to be progressed as a matter of urgency, in order to clarify the interface between the two bodies and the foundation for an overall safer system.

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 church life?
- What adjustments to the structures and systems within the Cathedral are needed to ensure that the relative responsibilities for strategic and operational safeguarding leadership are clear and that there is proper accountability for activities and progress in delivering the Promoting a Safer Church policy?
- How might the Cathedral work with the Diocese to agree an SLA which sets out relative roles and responsibilities, including the interface between the CSO and the DST, within a reasonable timeframe?

5.6 CULTURE

- 5.6.1** The most critical aspect of safeguarding relates to the culture and the extent to which priority is placed on safeguarding individuals as opposed to protecting the reputation of the Church. Also integral is the ability of all members of the Church to 'think the unthinkable' about their friends and colleagues. SCIE's experience of auditing safeguarding in faith contexts more broadly, suggests that in areas where there is

direct experience amongst senior clergy of previous serious abuse cases, a culture of openness and humility in approaching safeguarding issues can be stronger, alongside 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. 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 about how things are working so they can be addressed.

Description

- 5.6.2** The four themes of the Cathedral's Strategic Plan (see paragraph 2.1.1) provide the context for developing a culture of safeguarding.
- 5.6.3** The Dean is conscious of the importance of getting the culture right and valued the emphasis this is given in the recently revised national training for safeguarding leaders.
- 5.6.4** Everyone who returned a questionnaire said that it was obvious to them that safeguarding is a priority in the Cathedral.
- 5.6.5** The promotion of safeguarding through extensive communications, using a range of means, has raised the profile of safeguarding and many favourable comments were made directly to the auditors or via the questionnaires about this.
- 5.6.6** It was striking how well known the CSO had become in the short time since her appointment, which was widely welcomed.

Analysis

- 5.6.7** Recent progress in promoting safeguarding is good. More can be done to embed safeguarding as 'everybody's business'.
- 5.6.8** The recent focus on addressing gaps and shortcomings in safeguarding arrangements has been good. Although not explicit within the Cathedral's statement of mission and ministry, the auditors judged that safeguarding is a commonly understood priority. Chapter has made decisions, such as the appointment of a paid CSO and, previously, of a choir matron, which underline the priority they are increasingly giving to safeguarding (whilst acknowledging that they are not yet sufficiently 'on it').
- 5.6.9** Feedback via questionnaires indicates that there has been significant success in promoting safeguarding awareness. Less evident is how the Cathedral learns from the experiences of survivors and others who have received a safeguarding response.
- 5.6.10** The auditors found that there is not yet a coordinated approach to safeguarding, and a tendency by some to view safeguarding as the job of the CSO. This needs vigorous and continuing challenge, reinforced by structures and systems which emphasise both individual and collective responsibility. As one interviewee put it: 'we've got the expertise, now we need the structure'.
- 5.6.11** Chelmsford Cathedral has been fortunate in not having to deal with one of the major safeguarding incidents which have been the focus of the recent IICSA hearings into the Anglican Church. In the view of the auditors, this may have contributed to the sense of 'it won't happen here' which has meant that it has been slow to develop a sense of what good safeguarding in Chelmsford Cathedral could look like.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- What needs to be done to promote and embed a culture across the Cathedral in which safeguarding is owned as 'everybody's business' and which puts the experiences of victims and survivors at its heart?

6. CONCLUSIONS

After a slow start, Chelmsford Cathedral is moving at an increasing pace to strengthen its safeguarding arrangements in line with national expectations and guidance.

- Arrangements for overseeing the safety and security of the Cathedral and associated buildings, and those who use them, are generally good but over-reliant on a very small team of vergers who 'do a lot with a little'. More could be done to strengthen security arrangements, particularly through the use of technology.
- Arrangements to support school visits are well established and safe. Safeguarding and administrative arrangements for the separate children's activities are still developing. Systematic engagement by leaders in the Cathedral's safeguarding oversight arrangements would be beneficial.
- There is good awareness of the vulnerabilities which adults can experience, and evidence of responsive and caring responses, with appropriate signposting to partner agencies and occasional escalation to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA). There is an opportunity for building on the well-developed thinking and understanding about pastoral care by integrating safeguarding and pastoral reporting pathways, record keeping and oversight which may help reduce confusion and improve understanding of safeguarding throughout the Cathedral community.
- Arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the Cathedral choirs are reasonably well developed but would benefit from being more explicit, written down and accessible. The highly differentiated responsibilities between departmental staff inhibits the ability of the OMC to maintain oversight of safeguarding and welfare across all music activities. More can be done to align practice across the choirs, improve communication between departmental staff, clarify the respective responsibilities of parents, volunteers and staff, and raise the profile of safeguarding.
- The arrangements in place to ensure the safety of ringers are good, and supported by a detailed and clear policy.
- The Cathedral's understanding of and approach to casework and record keeping has been poor. There has been no management oversight and an unclear delineation of responsibilities between Cathedral and Diocese. Recent actions taken indicate potential for rapid improvement.
- There has been good progress in ensuring that staff and volunteers have all undertaken at least a basic level of safeguarding training, and that more advanced training is needed for some roles, including clergy. There are some gaps in training, such as safer recruitment, and areas where bespoke training would be useful. Work is needed to prepare for full implementation of the national Safeguarding Learning and Development Framework from January 2022.
- There is evidence of some much-improved process and procedure around safer recruitment. However, it remains an area in which there are some significant gaps in both the oversight and operationalisation of the function.

- There is a range of policies, procedures and guidance which complement the national framework. A review of what is in place to ensure that there are consistent messages, with no gaps or overlaps, is needed. Attention should be paid to ensuring the accessibility of such documents, and their consistent implementation.
- Until recently, the Cathedral's safeguarding service was not meeting the expectations set out in national guidance. The appointment of a paid CSO is a significant step forward. Work is needed to agree the SLA with the Diocese, formalise the support and accountability structures around the CSO, and manage what are currently unrealistic expectations of a part-time post.
- There are several elements in place which could be developed into a comprehensive framework for assessing the Cathedral's progress in achieving the objective of promoting a safer church.
- More work is needed to strengthen oversight and scrutiny of the Cathedral's safeguarding arrangements.
- There has been good progress recently in raising the profile of safeguarding and addressing some of the more problematic areas. More visible leadership by the Dean and Chapter, accompanied by the development of a clear strategic plan will provide a firm basis for the next phase in the development of safeguarding in Chelmsford.
- Recent progress in promoting safeguarding is good. More can be done to embed safeguarding as 'everybody's business'.

APPENDICES

Information provided to auditors

- Dean Introduction – undated
- Letter from Vice Dean – undated
- Safeguarding Checklist – undated
- Safeguarding Self-Assessment – 15 May 2021
- Cathedral Org Chart.pptx – 7 April 2021
- Template Job Description – undated
- Regulated Activity Flowchart
- Staff Induction Handbook
- Chapter member for safeguarding – role profile – undated
- Internal safeguarding arrangements
- Safeguarding Working group – undated
- Annual Safeguarding Chelmsford Cathedral Safeguarding Report 2019 – April 2020
- Annual Safeguarding Letter to the Bishop – 2020
- Memorandum of Understanding – undated
- Safeguarding Arrangements Chart – undated
- Letter from Vice Dean on Safeguarding to Congregation – 6 May 2021
- Safeguarding Leaflet Chelmsford Cathedral – undated
- Flow Chart – safeguarding – undated
- Recording Safeguarding Incidents – undated
- Cathedral risk register
- Internal safeguarding audit – April 2021
- Job description – safeguarding lead officer
- Role description: Associate Priest/ assistant safeguarding officer
- Staff training log

Music department

- Music department introduction
- Worship and Music Department Chart

- Scholars' Safeguarding Training
- Scholars' induction – 8 September 2020
- Visiting Choirs Handbook – undated
- Visiting Choirs Safeguarding Form
- Confidential Data Chorister Information Form General – dated as signed
- Choir notes – 26 March 2021
- Chelmsford Cathedral Choir – Information for chorister parents – spring 2021
- Cathedral Girls' Choir Information – Guidelines – 2021
- Returning to Rehearsals – 9 April 2021
- Music department self-assessment
- Ascension-Day – 13 May 2021
- Ascension-Day-Eucharist – 13 May 2021
- Seventh Sunday of Easter Evensong – 16 May 2021
- Seventh Sunday of Easter – 16 May 2021

Pastoral care

- Pastoral Encounter Flow Chart – undated
- Pastoral Handbook – May 2021
- Executive Minutes – 23 February 2021
- Intervention Hub paper – 30 August 2020

Volunteers

- Volunteers Management Chart
- Introduction to Volunteering
- Volunteer Application Form
- Confidential Declaration – October 2020
- Safer Recruitment Checklist (for Volunteer Leads) – undated
- Day Chaplains Coordinator Role Profile – undated
- Day Chaplains Profile – April 2021 (002)
- Breakfast with the Bible – 14 January 2021 (002)
- Pastoral Care Coordinator
- Social Fund Raising Member – May 2021 (002)

- Social Fundraiser Leader Role Profile
- School Visits Member and Coordinator
- School Visits Leader, Provision – 11 January 2021
- Returning to Volunteering
- Volunteer Agreement
- Volunteer Leaflet
- Volunteer safer recruiting database – March 2021, May 2021
- Volunteer Engagement Groups revised – 29 March 2021
- Volunteer Steering Group Meeting Minutes – 6 July 2020, 2 November 2020, 8 March 2021
- Volunteer Steering Group Meeting - agenda – 10 May 2021

Schools

- School Visit Leader
- School Visits Team Job Desc – April 2020
- School Visits Policy-edited – January 2018
- Booking Form for Schools
- Planning for Cathedral Day for 471 children over 2 days
- Risk Assessment Form – 2 March 2020

Bell Tower

- Bellringers Safeguarding Policy – 1 April 2020

Policies and procedures

- Volunteer Policy – November 2016, reviewed March 2021
- Data Holder Security Agreement v1.0 – June 2020
- Lone Worker Policy – April 2021
- Privacy Information Notice – March 2020
- Social Media Policy Approved by Chapter – April 2021
- Whistleblowing Policy Approved by Chapter – April 2021
- Chelmsford Cathedral Health and Safety policy Approved by Chapter – April 2021
- Photographic Policy for Services and Events Approved by Chapter – April 2021

Leadership

- Audit and Risk Committee minutes – January 2020, April 2021
- Chapter minutes – 3 December 2019, 28 January 2020, 2 June 2020
- Safeguarding Report to Chapter – June 2020
- Chapter minutes – 26 January 2021, 27 April 2021
- Executive Meeting minutes – 4 February 2020, 10 March 2020, 5 May 2020
- Executive awayday – 1 September 2020
- Executive Meeting minutes – 9 March 2021, 6 March 2021, 30 March 2021, 13 April 2021, 20 April 2021, 27 April 2021, 11 May 2021, 18 May 2021

DSAP

- Minutes of meeting – 4 March 2020, 20 November 2020, 3 March 2021

Participation of organisation staff

The auditors had conversations with:

- Dean
- Vice Dean
- Interim Chief Operating Officer
- Organist and Master of the Choristers
- Education Officer
- Volunteer Group Manager
- Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser
- Cathedral Safeguarding Officers (former and current)
- Assistant Safeguarding Officer
- Canon for Evangelism and Discipleship
- Children and Families' Minister
- Choir Matron
- Assistant Safeguarding Officer
- Canon for Worship and Music
- Chapter Safeguarding Lead
- Head Verger

- Tower Captain
- Independent Chair of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel.

What Records/ Files Were Examined?

The auditors reviewed:

- Nine case records (of which three were from the Diocese)
- Ten volunteer HR files
- Four staff HR files

Limitations of Audit

No survivors responded to the invitation to speak directly with the auditors.



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