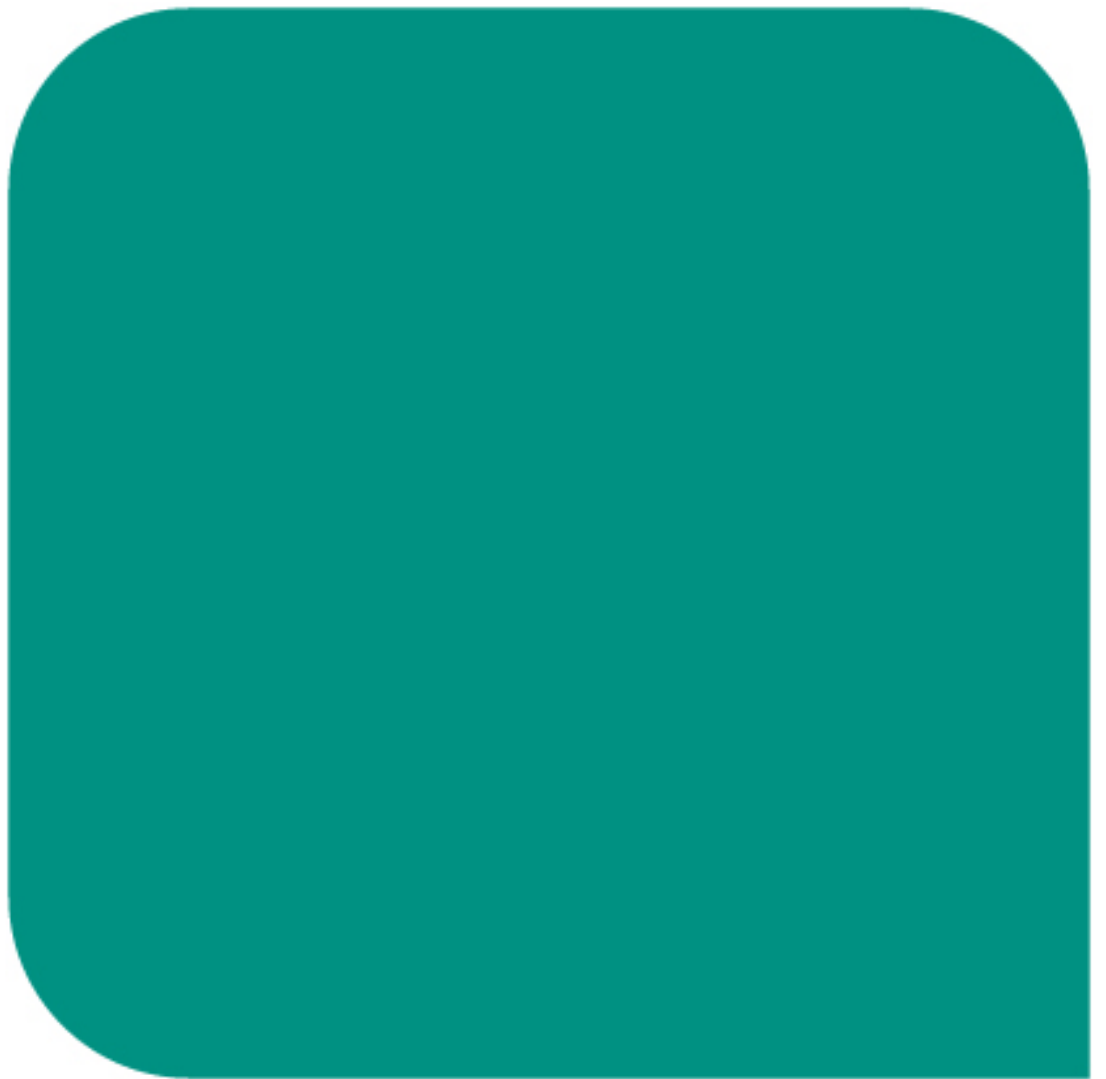




social care
institute for excellence

Coventry Cathedral independent safeguarding audit (October 2019)



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

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

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

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

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE AUDIT PROGRAMME

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

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

1.2 ABOUT SCIE

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

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

1.3 THE AUDIT PROCESS

1.3.1 SCIE Learning Together and our approach to audit

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

1.3.2 Key principles informing the audit

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

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

1.3.3 Supporting improvements

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

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

1.3.4 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

The leadership in each cathedral, as part of the audit process, is asked to supply a brief description of the institution. Coventry Cathedral's is here:

'The new Coventry Cathedral, built in the 1950s [and] designed by visionary architect Sir Basil Spence, sits strikingly beside two ruined buildings: the Priory Church of St Mary destroyed in the Dissolution, and the once Parish Church of St Michael, which was devastated by the Coventry Blitz in 1940. The unique assembly – three Cathedrals in one city-centre location – tells a powerful story of death and rebirth.

A day after the bombing, [the then] Provost Howard delivered a powerful message advocating forgiveness and hope leading the people to reconcile. Accordingly, the Cathedral's Ministry of Reconciliation was born, which has since provided spiritual and practical support and engagement throughout the world. It is this message that makes Coventry Cathedral unique amongst all English cathedrals.

Coventry Cathedral is critically acknowledged as one of the most iconic buildings in the UK complemented by a permanent visual arts collection involving some of the finest British artists of the 20th century. It is also the mother church to the Diocese of Coventry.

Its vision is of a reconciled and reconciling Cathedral which is open and welcoming to all, which serves to glorify God through worship, and reaches out to the world in the reconciliation ministry. At the heart of our understanding lie three core principles:

- Healing the wounds of history;
- Learning to live with difference and celebrate diversity; and
- Building a culture of peace.'

The new Cathedral [hereafter "the Cathedral"] receives approximately 40,000 visitors each year, while the ruined cathedral [hereafter "the ruins"] plays host to about 300,000 people each year. Both the Cathedral and the ruins host occasional large public events.

The cathedrals sit in the heart of Coventry, an economically and culturally diverse city of c.360,000 people. The city is home to about 30,000 university students. The local authority is Coventry City Council, a unitary authority, and the city is served by the West Midlands Police. In 2021, Coventry will be the UK's City of Culture.

The Cathedral's work is focused around seven core values:

- Hospitality
- Faith and spirituality
- Reconciliation
- Art and creativity
- Risk taking

- Excellence
- Community

Coventry Cathedral is a parish church cathedral. It is relatively small, with around 30 whole-time-equivalent staff (bolstered by a similar number of sessional event staff). In financial crisis in the recent past, it remains very restricted in its funding.

2.2 CONTEXTUAL FEATURES RELEVANT TO SAFEGUARDING

Coventry Cathedral is unique in having such extensive ruins as part of its estate. The ruins attract huge numbers of visitors to a largely open access public space, and the Cathedral has to do what it can to maintain the safety of those visitors.

The Cathedral and the ruins sit next to Holy Trinity Church, a large place of worship with a strong focus on supporting homeless and vulnerable people. This mission was cited as reason why the Cathedral itself attracts relatively few vulnerable adult visitors.

The Cathedral's modern design is very open, with fewer side chapels and small spaces than most English cathedrals. This was generally reported as a positive in safeguarding terms, in that conversations with potentially distressed or vulnerable people are of necessity held in the sight of others. Where extra privacy is required, a small, glass-fronted chapel is used, so that confidentiality can be maintained, but people can remain visible.

Bell ringing takes place in the tower of the ruins, which survived the blitz. It is therefore completely detached physically from the Cathedral.

The focus on reconciliation, in place since World War II, means links with Germany remain strong – as seen in choir tours, for example. The Dean in particular expressed an awareness that the notion of reconciliation needs to be carefully handled in the context of safeguarding. Having 'Hospitality' as the first of the Cathedral's core values – the notion that everyone is welcome – also has safeguarding implications, in relation to offenders and others who may pose a risk to the wider community. This value has recently been demonstrated by stopping the requirement to pay for entry to the Cathedral.

The 2021 City of Culture events will bring greatly increased numbers of people to the Cathedral, and this will have to be safely managed, while maintaining a sense of welcome.

The Cathedral's budget limits its flexibility in how to respond to any issue, including safeguarding.

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

The Dean of Coventry, as the lead figure in all aspects of Cathedral life, carries the ultimate responsibility for safeguarding. Supporting him in this are:

- The Canon Pastor, who leads on pastoral care in the Cathedral, and who has accountability for the provision of safeguarding support
- The Canon Precentor, who oversees the choir, and therefore has a responsibility for its safety and wellbeing
- The Business Manager, the senior lay person in the Cathedral, with responsibility for all its business functions
- The Cathedral Safeguarding Officer (CSO), a volunteer with a long history of involvement in Cathedral life, who operationally leads on many aspects of Cathedral safeguarding
- The Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA), and her assistants, who provide casework support to the Cathedral

The CSO chairs the Cathedral Safeguarding Advisory Group (CSAG), which is the main safeguarding forum in the Cathedral (see section 5.4 for more details). Safeguarding is also discussed at Chapter, in the Dean's Leadership Team, and at Operational and Extended Operational meetings, all of which are discussed further in section 5.4.

While the Dean and the Bishop of Coventry work closely together, and casework for the Cathedral falls to the DSA and her team, there is no Cathedral representative on the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel. An Assistant Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser does attend CSAG.

2.4 WHO WAS SEEN IN THIS AUDIT

The audit involved reviewing documentation, auditing case files, talking to people at the heart of safeguarding in the Cathedral – such as the Dean, Chapter members, safeguarding staff, music leads, and people managing the floor of the Cathedral – and discussing safeguarding with a number of focus groups. The site visit to the Cathedral lasted 2.5 days. Further details are provided in the appendix.

2.4.1 Any limitations to audit

No Evensong took place during the audit, due to an event in the Cathedral on the evening when it would otherwise have occurred. The auditors were therefore unable to observe rehearsal, chaperoning and performance arrangements in action. Auditors did discuss these issues, however, in conversations with Cathedral staff, choristers, and chorister parents.

3 FINDINGS - PRACTICE

3.1 SAFE ACTIVITIES AND WORKING PRACTICES

3.1.1 Precincts and buildings

Managing the wellbeing of large numbers of worshippers and visitors across the Cathedral and the ruins is a complex task. The auditors judged that the staff and volunteers at Coventry Cathedral do this well.

Description

Coventry Cathedral is located in the centre of Coventry, and therefore easily accessible to workers, shoppers, students and others as they make use of the city.

The management of the site is principally the work of the vergers team, comprising the Head Verger; one other full-time verger; and two part-time and two honorary vergers. The Head Verger lives on site, and is line managed by the Canon Precentor. The Head Verger has completed C0 and C1 safeguarding training [the two introductory levels of the national safeguarding training programme in the Church of England]; other members of his team have done C0. The Head Verger has made good links with the wider city by attending police and community meetings, thereby ensuring the Cathedral is aware of the implications of initiatives such as the city's night-time shelter scheme.

The vergers open the Cathedral at 6.30 am each weekday, and at 8 am on weekends, and are responsible for closing it each evening. They are often working alone, therefore, and there is a lone working policy which covers this. For most of each day, only one verger is on duty at any point.

At fortnightly diary and logistics meetings, the vergers meet with other departments who use the Cathedral floor – such as Education or Events – to plan the effective use of the building. There are quarterly health and safety meetings with the Property department and others, which touch on matters related to safeguarding, such as door security codes.

The vergers carry radios, which link internally, but are also connected to the CV1 network of police, shops and other city-centre buildings, so information about risks, or about missing people, can be shared quickly. There is also a duty mobile system. The Cathedral also has two-way panic alarms, held by vergers and responded to by the Head Verger, meaning people can call for help when in more isolated parts of the building/ruins.

Following a Home Office grant, there will be CCTV installed inside and outside the Cathedral by the end of 2019, with 39 cameras, and monitors in the bell tower, at the welcome desk, and in the vergers' office.

Analysis

The safe management of the premises generally works well. The auditors saw

evidence of relevant issues being well thought through, for example the provision of sharps kits to vergers to clear any drug paraphernalia each morning.

The vergers and other departments who are most present on the Cathedral floor appear to work cohesively, supported by their regular meetings and diary management software. The Head Verger shares an office with the Canon Pastor, which eases links between the vergers and the Cathedral clergy.

The welfare of choristers is dealt with more fully in section 3.2, but those to whom the auditors spoke raised two issues specifically about the building and precincts. One was that occasionally people use an area near the car park for recreational drug-taking, and another was that the security codes to the doors are known to everyone, including them. The Head Verger acknowledged the issue with the car park, but it is monitored by the duty verger, and will soon be covered by CCTV. The auditors did not view this as a significant risk for the cathedral. There is difficulty in coordinating the changes to the door codes, and the Head Verger would prefer an electronic system. There is an issue that people who have not been trained and safely recruited know the access codes; this is looked at further in section 3.6.

There is a widely-understood emergency evacuation procedure, which was evidently well communicated to those who need to know it across the Cathedral. Similarly, the use of sashes and lanyards to readily identify who has what role on the floor of the Cathedral is well-understood by staff and volunteers.

Questions for Coventry Cathedral to consider:

- Is the system of security codes on doors a vulnerability?

3.1.2 Vulnerable adults

Description

Although it recently organised two picnics for homeless families, the Cathedral has no formal ongoing service provision for vulnerable adults. And as mentioned, Holy Trinity Church – immediately proximate to the Cathedral – actively pursues a mission to vulnerable people. Nonetheless, as a city-centre cathedral, with a philosophy of welcome, Coventry Cathedral engages regularly with vulnerable adults. This engagement has increased since the Cathedral scrapped its charging policy.

A number of staff and volunteers are in roles which bring them into contact with vulnerable visitors. As well as the vergers detailed above, there is a team of about 24 voluntary chaplains, who are available on the Cathedral floor, on a rota basis, for anyone who wants support with prayer and guidance. All the chaplains have a DBS check and safeguarding training; without either, they cannot minister.

The Cathedral employs five paid welcomers, who are often visitors' first contact in the Cathedral. These welcomers are supplemented by c.25 volunteers in the tourism team, who work in the main Cathedral, the shop, the tower, and in the Blitz Museum in the ruins. Welcomers have C0 and C1 training, and their voluntary colleagues are expected to do C0 training. As a parish church cathedral, Coventry also has five churchwardens. Vulnerable people will also engage, of course, with the paid clergy of the Cathedral, in particular the Canon Pastor.

In addition to the work in the Cathedral, the Canon Pastor leads a team of home visitors, travelling to people too frail or unwell to come to services themselves.

The Cathedral recently developed some posters to raise awareness of domestic abuse, and to provide contact details of specialist support agencies. These were put up in lavatories around the Cathedral, but were quickly taken down; it is not known by whom.

Analysis

There was a general view expressed during the audit that, even after the scrapping on the entrance charge, Coventry Cathedral attracts relatively few adults who are evidently vulnerable. The work of Holy Trinity was cited as the main reason, as well as the imposing nature of the Cathedral.

Many people to whom the auditors spoke were fully engaged with the concept of welcome for all, and the picnics for homeless families would appear to be evidence of that. The vergers support any rough sleepers they find in the morning, providing a drink if requested, and giving contact details for statutory and charitable support services.

This was balanced with a sense that vulnerable adults pose a risk to the wellbeing of the wider Cathedral community, and the balance between welcome and protection is always a difficult one to maintain. One choir document warns of 'undesirables' in the Cathedral, which sends an unhelpful message.

On the whole, though, the Cathedral is promoting a sense of welcome, and staff have benefitted from training from MIND; training on how best to support rough sleepers; and conflict resolution training. The Canon Pastor and two other members of staff have undertaken dementia training. The auditors heard of examples of good liaison with wider support services, and of the awareness to make such links even when the vulnerability manifests itself on social media, rather than face to face.

Evidently, the verger team is well used to monitoring and managing situations in which clergy and others are conversing with people who may be at risk, or may pose a risk, and senior clergy themselves expressed a good understanding of how to safely manage such encounters. But by the Cathedral's own admission, the awareness of good practice is inconsistent among people on the Cathedral floor.

Whilst there is, therefore, good individual practice with vulnerable adults, the auditors felt this practice is not underpinned by a strong system. As an example, no records are kept of engagement with vulnerable adults. Even when the Canon Pastor alerts the CSO when there is an 'alarm bell' after an incident, it is done orally. This makes it harder to track people over time, or make links between incidents. By way of comparison, incident forms are kept after physical accidents, so as to improve health and safety; it may be possible for the Cathedral to log incidents with vulnerable people in a similar way, and see what patterns emerge that may help a wider understanding of the needs of vulnerable visitors, individually and in the aggregate. There is no procedure for if a vulnerable adult becomes separate from their carer.

The Canon Pastor's team of home visitors make no record of where they are going,

and the Lone Working Policy does not cover work that takes place away from the Cathedral. This creates a point of vulnerability.

There is some understanding among volunteers and congregants that people with vulnerabilities will exist within these groups, especially as they age. To date, the Cathedral's organisational efforts towards its own people have been limited, although the posters about domestic abuse are a start in this direction. Other initiatives, perhaps focused on dementia or mental health, may be equally welcomed.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How can the sense of welcome to people with vulnerabilities be embedded across the Cathedral?
- Could improved record keeping of interactions with vulnerable people benefit the individuals concerned, and the Cathedral's overall handling of vulnerable adults?
- Would a procedure for responding to a vulnerable adult who goes missing add to people's safety?
- How can lone working policies and procedures be improved to safeguard home visitors?
- What further efforts can be made to provide support to people with vulnerabilities within the Cathedral's own paid and voluntary workforce?

3.1.3 Children

Description

Currently, there are no child servers at the Cathedral, although were this to change, the servers have DBS checks and the requisite training. There are currently no unaccompanied child bell ringers, and the Cathedral does not operate a Sunday School. This section will therefore focus solely on the management of school children on visits organised by the Education department.

The department is led by a Director of Education – a teacher by background – who has worked at the Cathedral for c.15 years. She manages five staff and nine volunteers, most of whom share her teaching background. The department welcomes c.15,000 children per year, ranging from 3 to 18 years of age, on visits studying art, history, religious education, reconciliation and maths.

A typical school visit lasts two to four hours. Children in groups of 15–20, each overseen by a school teacher and a member of the Education department, receive tours and workshops in the nave of the Cathedral. The Education department currently has no classroom, although this will change as part of Cathedral building works about to get underway. Even then, however, the majority of workshops will take place in the nave.

The department has a well-tested procedure for making bookings with schools, and a template risk assessment each school must complete before arriving. It is made clear to all schools that they remain responsible for the wellbeing of all pupils, and so

details of, for example, any medical needs a visiting pupil might have are not collected. Internally, the Education department liaises with other departments at the fortnightly diary meeting, to ensure the Cathedral has scope to manage each visit.

On occasion, a school party will turn up at the Cathedral unannounced. The procedure is then to take the group details at the welcome desk, and if possible, facilitate the school to visit.

3.1.4 Analysis

The mechanism for welcoming school visits works well, the auditors judged. Systems have been honed over the years, and function effectively. The department recognises the times when risks are heightened: these include when children are in the ruins, and therefore more liable to be approached by strangers; and at schools' events, when the issue of photographing children tends to arise. The Cathedral has a clear policy of not photographing children, and people who do so are asked by Education department staff or vergers to stop. The risks in the ruins are known about, and well managed. The auditors did not judge them to be significant.

The Director of Education reports any events of concern to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser and her team, which is an appropriate reporting line. Issues are further discussed at the CSAG. This means learning can be shared and issues successfully managed, although the group meets only termly. It is not clear whether the weekly operational meeting adequately covers safeguarding, but this may be a better forum for tackling immediate operational issues. This is discussed further in section 5.4.

There is no clear procedure for responding to a situation in which a child gets separated from their school party. This ought to be rectified, and any procedure could usefully cover children separated from their families and other groups.

Questions for Coventry Cathedral to consider:

- What is the best forum for the Education department and others to discuss operational safeguarding incidents?
- How can the Cathedral most effectively draw up a missing child procedure?

3.2 CHOIRS AND MUSIC

3.2.1 Choir

Description

Coventry Cathedral operates a boys' choir and a girls' choir. Boys sing from the ages of 7–13; girls range from 7–18 years. There is no choir school; choristers come from local schools. At the time of the audit, 21 schools were represented.

Girls rehearse on a Tuesday; rehearse and sing Evensong on a Thursday; and rehearse and sing either on a Sunday morning or at Sunday Evensong, alternating with the boys. Boys rehearse on a Monday; rehearse and sing Evensong on a Wednesday; rehearse on a Saturday morning; and rehearse and sing either on a

Sunday morning or at Sunday Evensong, alternating with the girls. Choristers are paid a small fee for each service at which they sing.

There is a clear structure of progression for choristers. They start as probationers, and progress through being freshers, juniors and seniors, depending on singing performance, behaviour and overall contribution to the life of the choir. For both boys and girls, there is a head and a deputy head chorister.

The children's choirs sing, at the weekend, with a line of adult choral clerks. The clerks are not DBS checked. The Cathedral has tried to have them checked; the DBS, however, has decided they are not eligible for an enhanced check, as they are not engaged in a regulated activity, and spend no time alone with the child choristers. The choral clerks have all undertaken C1 training.

The Music department is led by the Director of Music, who reports to the Canon Precentor, and is supported by an Assistant Director of Music. The Director of Music has been at the Cathedral for 13 years, and has worked in choirs since he was 16. At the point of the audit he had just handed in his notice.

Choristers are brought to the Cathedral by their parents, or, if they are older and have parental permission (this in effect only applies to girls), they can travel in alone. There is a clear signing-in process, at which point they become the responsibility of the Cathedral.

In the Cathedral, choristers are supported by two vestry duty parents. These are all chorister parents, and they work voluntarily on a rota basis. The rota is administered by one chorister parent. The vestry duty parents support choristers to get ready for rehearsal and Evensong, and chaperoning them in public spaces of the Cathedral. All vestry duty parents are DBS checked, and trained to C1 level. The Director of Music would prefer there to be a dedicated choir matron role, but this has proved unaffordable.

At the time of the audit, the song school was out of action, due to building works, and the choirs were rehearsing in a lecture theatre. There is a lavatory near the lecture theatre which is not generally accessible to the public, but is used by people with mobility issues, as it is the only wheelchair-accessible toilet. During rehearsals, children go to the lavatory alone. If a child needs to use that lavatory while rehearsing or performing in the quire itself, they are accompanied by a vestry duty parent. In time for the City of Culture year in 2021, the Cathedral is planning extensive building works, which will include a new song school.

The choirs occasionally take part in tours. As part of the Cathedral's reconciliation work, these are often to Germany. These are led by the Director of Music, with paid staff accompanying the choristers.

Child choristers have very little contact with choral clerks, with whom they only sing at weekends. Clerks have separate robing and toilet facilities, and stay in different locations when on tour. A code of conduct for clerks – and other staff involved with the children – is in place. Choristers themselves acknowledged a lack of any meaningful contact with the choral clerks, and auditors judged this aspect of life in the choir to be adequately handled.

Analysis

All cathedral choirs raise a number of potential safeguarding issues. Young children need to be protected from any harm from the general public. Children working towards a highly prized goal in a competitive environment creates the potential for any choristers to be groomed by people in positions of trust within the choir context. Additionally, the demands of elite performance can be in tension with child welfare requirements and expectations. We deal with each in turn below.

The safe movement of the choristers around the Cathedral is well managed. As mentioned, the auditors did not have a chance to observe this, but the signing-in process seems well understood, and the choristers are from that point with two vestry duty parents and/or Music department staff at all times. At the end of each performance or rehearsal, they are signed back out, at which point the Cathedral's direct responsibility for them ends. Some parents allow their children to go from the car park to the signing-in point alone, but this is a family choice; the Cathedral is not responsible until the children sign in, and this is understood by families.

Choristers reported incidents when they felt anxious as they moved about the Cathedral, or performed, often linked to the presence of people behaving or presenting unusually. In such cases, the person was addressed, typically by vergers or vestry duty parents, and the choristers acknowledged that they do generally feel very safe in the Cathedral. The welcome desk to the Cathedral is staffed in the run-up to Evensong, and so provides monitoring at the point of people entering the building.

The lavatories that the choir use next to the lecture hall are far removed from most members of the public, but there is the potential that they would come across people using them because of their mobility issues. When they use the lavatories near the café, the public does not have access to them. While this will no longer be an issue after the building work, the Cathedral may want to think about whether any risk – however small – can effectively be mitigated, because the choristers did express a degree of discomfort about this.

The photographing of choristers, in Coventry Cathedral as elsewhere, takes place even though it is made clear to the public, and to parents, that it is not allowed. The children acknowledged feeling disquieted by it, but vergers and others handle breaches of the procedure promptly.

In discussions with vestry duty parents about their role, the auditors were told it focuses mainly on the safe movement and welfare of the children. The potential for there to be risks from people in positions of trust within the Cathedral was not mentioned. Good safeguarding awareness recognises that risks arise much more frequently from people who are known than from people who are not. The Cathedral should satisfy itself that the training and awareness of vestry duty parents, and everyone involved in the Cathedral, incorporates this.

The overall welfare of choristers, the auditors judged, is prioritised, and does not appear to be compromised by the demands of their role. Indeed, the choristers reported very high levels of engagement with, and enjoyment of, choir life, stressing the opportunities and friendships that it allowed them to have. The workload of both

choirs appears manageable, and while children did acknowledge that they missed out on other activities as a consequence of their role, the auditors share their view that this is not a particularly major issue.

Breaks from choir, for public exams, school concerts and so forth, are allowed – even encouraged – and the children reported feeling under no pressure to come into choir if they feel unwell. As the chorister role does not, as in some cathedrals, bring with it a substantial scholarship to offset school fees, there is no great financial inducement to stay in the choir (the payment that choristers receive is not felt to be significant in this regard). The risk, therefore, of children being pushed harder than they can manage is, the auditors felt, minimised.

Choristers spoke very positively about the vestry duty parents, as people who cared for them, and to whom they could go with any concerns. Inevitably, different children cited different people that they would approach in the first instance with any worries: as well as vestry duty parents, the Director and Assistant Director of Music were mentioned, as were friends and parents. Choristers were aware of the CSO, and included her in the list of potential supports. The auditors judged that it is positive that there is a range of people that the choristers feel they can talk to, and saw case files which illustrated the benefits of having a number of people to approach.

Whilst it is positive that choristers feel they can approach adults in the Cathedral, no logs are kept of concerns that are raised, in the way that they are if accidents happen. Keeping a record would allow people with a responsibility for chorister welfare to track issues which may perhaps appear low level, but which may signify the beginnings of greater concerns.

Most of the choir parents to whom the auditors spoke were very positive about their relationship with the Cathedral, and the auditors note that there is a Choir Parents' Association which meets regularly with Music department staff. There are forums, therefore, for the sharing of concerns, and choir parents cited examples of when the Music department has listened to their ideas about the safe management of the choristers, such as introducing sign-in sheets. Given there is no scope for a choir matron, it is important that the relationship between the Music department and choir parents remains strong, and is worked at and nurtured accordingly.

While choristers are, in the auditors' view, generally safe and their welfare well managed, there have been a number of recent disputes involving, at different points, choristers, their parents, and Cathedral staff. These include some serious allegations of bullying, which are looked at in more detail in section 3.3, but which have triggered efforts to improve chorister behaviour.

The auditors concluded that the Music department, despite recent progress, remains somewhat operationally detached from the rest of the Cathedral, and therefore from the wider safeguarding effort. It is positive that the Assistant Director of Music sits on the Safeguarding Advisory Group, but the nature and purpose of that engagement is not clear to everyone in the Music department.

The Music department does not attend the weekly operational meetings, or the monthly extended operational meetings which also include the Dean's Leadership Team. This inevitably sidelines them from important decisions, including about

safeguarding. Perhaps as a consequence, the Director of Music was not directly involved in developing the choirs' code of conduct, and felt marginalised by the decision to extend the café opening hours with the result that it clashed with choir rehearsals (although this seems to have been managed safely).

The safeguarding of choristers is perhaps the central safeguarding task in a cathedral, and the Music department needs to be present at operational decision-making forums, and to be – and feel – fully part of a cohesive safeguarding effort.

The action plan drawn up after the choir incidents mentioned above is a positive effort to learn from negative experiences, and to prevent their reoccurrence. This does make efforts to locate the Music department within wider support structures, and the Canon Pastor takes a leading role in the plan, alongside the Canon Precentor. This does suggest a developing understanding of how broad a topic chorister welfare and safeguarding can be.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- Are there practical mitigations to the risk of choristers meeting strangers in the lavatories during rehearsal time?
- Is there a solid understanding among vestry duty parents and others involved in the Cathedral of the multiple nature of risks in the Cathedral environment?
- Is there an effective way of recording chorister concerns?
- How can the Music department more fully be engaged in the safeguarding decision-making of the Cathedral?

3.2.2 Bell ringing

The bell tower in Coventry Cathedral is in the ruins of the old cathedral, having survived the blitz. It is therefore detached from the Cathedral itself. There are 12 regular ringers, 10 of whom are adults. The two children are the grandchildren of the Tower Captain, and are not left unsupervised with other ringers.

The ringers practise on a Thursday evening, when no one else is around in the ruins, and for historical reasons, ring at the end of Sunday service, not at the beginning. As a consequence, they often have little contact with the rest of the Cathedral community. The Cathedral shop is, however, based in the foot of the tower and so there are times when members of the public are blocked from the tower only by a small barrier. The tower is accessed by a code on locked entrances to the ruins and the tower.

The Tower Captain has been in his role for about seven years. He has had the equivalent of C2 training, but this needs refreshing. He is not DBS checked, which struck the auditors as atypical. The reasoning behind this is that the only children are his own family. There have, however, been very vulnerable adults in the tower, and the Tower Captain acknowledged there may be other vulnerabilities of which people are unaware. In the future, there may be other children who wish to ring, and the DBS issue could usefully be looked at again.

Other bell ringers have not had safeguarding training at the Cathedral, on the basis that they have had it in their home parishes. This could not be confirmed, however.

No checks are made of visiting parties of bell ringers whether any of them are subject to any safeguarding agreements, or have similar restrictions. This is a potential vulnerability.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- What are the obstacles to the Tower Captain having a DBS check?
- Can the Cathedral be satisfied that all its bell ringers have had safeguarding training?
- What measures can be put in place to better monitor visiting bell ringers?

3.3 CASEWORK (INCLUDING INFORMATION SHARING)

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

3.3.1 Effectiveness of responses

The auditors looked at five case files, and also heard discussion of a number of other incidents. Many of these cases/incidents involved choristers or choir parents.

There is an acknowledgement internally, shared by some of the parents involved, that these incidents have not been handled well. The auditors noted that matters tended to be promptly and effectively handled by the DSA and her team, but that beyond that there was a lack of confidence in how matters were addressed, with staff in the Cathedral feeling unwilling to raise challenges or ask questions when they were unsure. A slight hesitancy about engaging with statutory services was discussed.

Another emergent theme was that, in the choir especially, problems were somewhat rushed at, without time and due process being taken to handle issues more assuredly. The application of professional safeguarding and human resources knowledge would have enhanced the responses, and may serve to promote the reconciliation agenda, which is a key focus for the Dean and senior leadership.

It is positive that Cathedral staff are aware of, and have reflected on, these shortcomings. The incidents have led to the development of an action plan to improve the handling of complaints and disputes in the choir, and the drafting of new codes of conduct and anti-bullying advice. The very enthusiastic feedback on life in the choir from the choristers indicates these measures have had some effect, although some girl choristers felt the anti-bullying policy was unrealistic. As discussed, there remains the slight detachment of the Music department from the rest of the Cathedral, which means the inherent challenges of embedding and maintaining a positive safeguarding culture are increased.

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

The auditors saw one Safeguarding Agreement. It took several weeks to establish, once the person involved had declared their conviction, in part due to the absence of important signatories. This indicates slight limitations in the safeguarding systems in the Cathedral, in that matters can be delayed when one person is away.

The agreement itself, however, is robust, and appears well managed. The auditors spoke to the person involved, who expressed a great degree of satisfaction with how the support and controls are handled.

3.3.3 Quality of recording

The content of case notes was generally good. On some files all records had the same date, or had incorrect dates. The auditors cannot know whether this is an error with the IT supporting the recording, or human error, but it makes tracking the timeliness of responses impossible. Other files ended abruptly with no recording of the final outcome.

Each file opened with a precis and a RAG-rated risk assessment, which demonstrated good practice. The underpinning thinking that got the DSA and her team to the risk assessment conclusion, however, is not included, and it may minimise the risk of knowledge and learning being lost when the DSA retires (see section 4.2) if the reasoning behind the decision is also on the file.

3.3.4 Information sharing practice

Within the Cathedral generally, the auditors noted, safeguarding concerns are typically shared promptly and effectively. There are, though, areas in which this can be improved. The auditors looked at cases in which referrals to statutory services were delayed, and more consistent practice would be of benefit here. Some files lacked any record of outcomes.

There are, in and around the Cathedral, a CSO, a Canon Pastor, a DSA and two ADSAs, all of whom may be contacted with potential safeguarding information. In addition, there is a member of the congregation who some people see as an assistant to the CSO. The implications of this, and considerations arising from it, are explored in section 4.2, but of note here is that it does create the potential for confusion as to whom information should be shared with; the auditors noted a tendency for people to discuss information with whatever individual they personally felt most comfortable with as a colleague. This creates a weakness in the safeguarding system.

3.3.5 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

The Cathedral, by providing a well-established and well-known CSO and Canon Pastor, and by having links with the DSA team, has the building blocks in place to provide a good quality response to people who come forward to disclose abuse or

raise concerns. Beyond the issues in the choir, however, the auditors saw no cases where this provision was tested, and in the cases involving the choir pastoral care and restorative effort after the fact was somewhat lacking.

The Diocese has arrangements for accessing Authorised Listeners, and the Cathedral could make use of this resource.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How can the Cathedral actively promote and monitor chorister welfare and anti-bullying initiatives, in ways which actively involve the choristers themselves?
- How can trained and expert safeguarding/HR advice be most effectively brought to bear when handling bullying or other disputes within the Cathedral?
- How can strategic/informal links be developed between the Cathedral and statutory services, so that when incidents occur, different organisations can work comfortably together?
- Can the full risk assessment process be kept on case files?
- What mechanisms – such as a case closure checklist – might help the routine recording of outcomes?

3.4 CLERGY DISCIPLINARY MEASURE

The auditors saw no cases involving the use of the Clergy Disciplinary Measure in a safeguarding context, and did not hear of any such cases.

3.5 TRAINING

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 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

As with any cathedral, Coventry faces a challenge to train its staff, and its many volunteers, in safeguarding. The House of Bishops' national training programme is used. All senior clergy and the Business Manager have received C4 training, and it is clearly laid out which roles need to do which level of training.

All staff and volunteers are required to do online C0 training. For staff, the expectation is that this is done in the first week of employment. There appears to be no equivalent timescale set for volunteers. C1 and C2 courses depend on people's roles. C1 and C2 sessions are delivered by the DSA and her team. The CSO delivers C0 training to those unable to do it online, or anxious about doing so.

The Cathedral has recently invested in software called Harlequin, which is improving staff's ability to track who has done training, who has not, and whose needs refreshing.

As Cathedral staff readily acknowledge, the figures for who has done training need to improve, especially among volunteers. The auditors noted progress over the last three months, but in August 2019, 80 out of 225 volunteers had done C0. For staff the figure was 40 out of 60, with most of those who had not done it being sessional event staff, the irregular and fleeting nature of whose contact with the Cathedral poses a distinct challenge.

Analysis

There is a marked contrast between the requirement that staff do C0 training in their first week, and the lack of any clear timescale for volunteers to do it. The auditors concluded that there is a general lack of clarity about when volunteers need to do their training; a situation exacerbated by an understanding that the National Safeguarding Team are no longer making C0 training mandatory for everyone, but leaving it to local discretion.

Positive efforts have been made to support the uptake of C0 training, notably the effort to provide a face-to-face version for people uncomfortable with e-learning. But the auditors heard from some volunteers – and the figures reflect this – a reluctance to do it, and a sense that to be asked is, to some, perceived as an insult. There was an explicit generational aspect to this reluctance. A more concerted communication effort, highlighting the advantages to children, vulnerable people, and to volunteers, of doing the training appears necessary. All practical steps to facilitate training, such as varying the times and days, should be considered. An unequivocal application of the rule that without C0 training, volunteers are not issued with a lanyard identifying them as a person with a Cathedral role, may be helpful.

The auditors generally noted a lack of a clear message that without doing basic safeguarding training, one cannot volunteer. Some senior volunteers have recently had a date set to complete the required training, after which they lose their roles if it is not done. But this stance is not widespread. The auditors recognise the vital importance of not alienating the volunteer workforce, and any more rigorous enforcement of the requirement to do training should run alongside the communication and access efforts mentioned above, but the experience of our audits backs the view that training does heighten awareness, and thus is an important tool in making everyone safer. The auditors believe C0 training is useful for all staff and volunteers, whatever their role.

The Harlequin database should be a useful tool in tracking training, and efforts should be made to track refresher dates as well. Keeping on top of training will always be a challenge – like 'chewing an elephant', as it was vividly expressed – and an action plan with clear targets and accountability may be useful to focus ongoing attention on the task.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- What further efforts need to be made to improve the take-up of training? How can sessional events staff be effectively included?
- How can the requirement to do training be more rigorously enforced?
- How can the training challenge more effectively be tracked and monitored?

3.6 SAFER RECRUITMENT

Description

The Safe Recruitment of staff and volunteers is the responsibility of each head of department, backed by the Head of Human Resources (HR). Safe Recruitment is underpinned by a policy drawn up by the Diocese. This calls for an application form, references and an interview/discussion for all paid and voluntary roles, a confidential declaration from everyone interacting with children and vulnerable adults, and the DBS checking of people in all eligible roles.

Like many cathedrals, Coventry is noticing a tightening from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) on who is eligible for a DBS check. The Cathedral has faced a challenge having vergers checked, and choral clerks no longer have enhanced DBS checks. The Cathedral has a policy of asking for a confidential declaration about any past criminal or safeguarding concerns from staff where a DBS is not required.

DBS checks are logged on the Harlequin database. Blemished DBS checks are passed to the DSA and her team for a judgement as to whether the person can be safely brought into the Cathedral team.

Analysis

As Cathedral staff acknowledge, the Safe Recruitment of volunteers is patchy. The picture with paid staff is better, and the request for a confidential declaration from staff who fall outside the auspices of the DBS is good practice. The recruitment files of paid staff looked at by the auditors revealed some gaps in paperwork, but were generally good. With volunteers, many have served since before Safe Recruitment procedures were in place, but even with new starters, there is no guarantee that people will have been properly taken on, with applications, references and an interview, as per the policy.

As it stands therefore, some volunteers, taken on without references and without having done C0 training, have lanyards which mark them out of people with trusted positions, and have access, for example, to security codes designed to keep the choir away from people who are not known. This is a point of vulnerability. It is also a risk for the volunteers, because there are people for whom the Cathedral has no emergency contact details.

There is a lack of clarity about who is ultimately responsible for the Safe Recruitment of volunteers. Here, the diocesan policy – generally very helpful – falls short, because it gives that role to the PCC, which does not apply readily to the Cathedral context.

Some teams appear to place a higher priority on this than others, with the Education and Verger departments being cited as particularly strong. The Music department safely recruits any girl choristers who turn 18, but it may be that even some 16- and 17-year-olds, if they support younger choristers in a formal role such as being a head chorister, are eligible for a DBS check.

The backdating of Safe Recruitment was discussed, with the Cathedral needing to decide to what extent existing volunteers should be asked to go through a Safe Recruitment process, and how far into the past the effort should extend. Even without backdating of Safer Recruitment practice to before this became a requirement, it would be good practice for the Cathedral to record emergency contacts for volunteers.

Not many people on the Cathedral staff have done the House of Bishops' Safer Recruitment training, which leaves the process thinly staffed.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- Who is responsible for the Safe Recruitment of volunteers, and how can more people be trained to support the Safe Recruitment effort?
- What lessons can be learnt from more consistent departments which may help Safe Recruitment in other parts of the Cathedral? Is there a role for a clear message from the Dean about the importance of safeguarding and its related processes?
- Are there 16- and 17-year-old choristers who need a DBS check?
- How should rigour and proportionality be balanced in the question of backdating Safe Recruitment?

4 FINDINGS – ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORTS

4.1 POLICY, PROCEDURES AND GUIDANCE

Description

In its own right and as part of the wider diocesan safeguarding effort, Coventry Cathedral has since March 2018 adopted all House of Bishops safeguarding policies and procedures. There is no specific, overarching Cathedral safeguarding policy, although safeguarding is covered in various Cathedral publications such as the Choristers' Handbook, and there is a safeguarding section in the employee handbook. The Cathedral does publish a safeguarding statement, setting out key commitments, actions and contacts. This is readily available on the Cathedral website.

Some specific policies and procedures – such as Safe Recruitment – are borrowed from the Diocese, quite appropriately. There is a safeguarding policy for external organisations wishing to hire the Cathedral.

The Cathedral's employee handbook covers safeguarding-related issues such as lone working, the use of social media and the internet, whistleblowing, and a staff code of conduct.

A number of recent documents have been pulled together or revised in relation to the choir, responding to issues that have arisen there. These include codes of conduct and anti-bullying information. These have been drawn up by the CSO, which is in line with the role description for the post.

Analysis

The CSO, by her own admission 'not a natural policy person', has nonetheless committed a good deal of time and effort in developing documents for the Cathedral, and the choir in particular. The Cathedral is thus better served in this regard than it was even a short time ago, and the documents are illustrative of a positive desire to learn and improve.

It is striking that the Director of Music seemingly had little input into some of the choir documents. It is a truism that policies are only ever the very start of any culture change, and for these new initiatives to have an impact, they have to have the commitment of everyone to whom they relate.

The auditors noted certain shortcomings in various documents:

- The Choristers Handbook cites only the Director of Music as the person to go to with concerns. This leaves people with a difficulty if their concern relates to the Director of Music
- The reporting flowchart does not adequately cover vulnerable adults
- The social media policy needs updating to reflect the ever-changing challenges of social media

- The choir’s anti-bullying policy is not a policy; it is very useful information, but the two are distinct. It also indicates the challenge of pitching difficult information at an age range of 7–18 years old.

Policies and procedures, to be effective, should be kept under regular review, with a timetable to structure the work. Maintaining and updating policies will always be a time-consuming and challenging aspect of the CSO role.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How can the Cathedral best update its policies and procedures, to ensure they stay relevant and useful?
- Does the CSO need additional support in this aspect of the role?

4.2 DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING ADVISER/S AND CATHEDRAL SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

Description

The Cathedral Safeguarding Officer (CSO) role is a lay, voluntary position, with a remit, based on the role description, to:

- put policies and procedures in place, promote and review them
- receive any safeguarding concerns, alongside the Canon Pastor
- oversee DBS checks, and keep a record of who has DBS checks
- ensure people do safeguarding training, and maintain a training log
- act, alongside the Canon Pastor, as a link between the Cathedral and the DSA team
- be in any monitoring groups of people subject to a Safeguarding Agreement.

The role description states that the person ideally would be independent, in that they hold no position in the Cathedral or the Diocese.

The current CSO has fulfilled the role since 2015. She has been involved in Cathedral and diocesan life in various roles, including that of choir parent, since 1957. She is a health visitor by profession, and worked in the NHS for almost 50 years before retiring in 2015. Her last role was Head of Children, Young People and Family Services for Warwickshire, and she thus has suitable experience for the CSO post.

She fulfils the role description requirement to be independent of the Cathedral, in that she has no paid role in it, and while her engagement with the Cathedral is a long one, it is not clear who would fulfil the role who had no established links with it.

The CSO estimates she commits about 12 hours each month to the role, although this represents an average; she has work commitments abroad which mean some months see her involved for less than that, while at other times she is able to commit more hours. When she is away, a member of the congregation covers some of her duties.

The CSO reports to the Canon Pastor, although both saw the relationship as a partnership, rather than a conventional manager-member of staff one.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) is a qualified, registered social worker. She works three days per week, and is supported by two assistant DSAs, each working a similar number of hours, and a safeguarding assistant, who works 30 hours per week. One ADSA sits on CSAG, but there is no particular expectation that this ADSA handles Cathedral casework more than anyone else in the team. The DSA has appropriate professional supervision, and in turn provides it to other members of her team.

The DSA team provides the Cathedral with casework support, the management of blemished DBS checks, and the creation and monitoring of Safeguarding Agreements, as well as higher-level training. This is covered by a memorandum of understanding. No payment is provided for the services, and hours spent on Cathedral work are not separately logged.

The DSA is shortly to retire, and will be replaced by a full-time appointment. The others posts in the team will remain the same.

Analysis

It is evident to the auditors that the CSO has been a driving force in much of the recent improvement in the Cathedral's safeguarding systems, with the establishment of CSAG (see section 5.4) as a key element. She is respected and valued by Chapter, and the wider community, and is well known as a person who can be approached with safeguarding concerns. She described herself as strong enough to challenge the Cathedral hierarchy when necessary, and certainly she has a degree of expertise and knowledge that ensures she brings an important independent voice to Cathedral safeguarding.

Because of her long service, and her expertise, the CSO has become involved in cases involving safeguarding, or which potentially involve safeguarding. The voluntary nature of the role – with implications such as there being no formal supervision, or requirements for continuing professional development – and the very part-time nature of it, means that the role itself (as distinct from the current incumbent) is ill suited to casework. In the cases audited, there were instances of delays being caused by the unavailability of the CSO, and this seems an inherent risk in a three to four-hour-a-week role.

The CSO does discuss cases with the Canon Pastor, and at times (albeit suitably anonymised) with friends. No notes are taken of these discussions, and this is problematic in terms of accountability and transparency for how decisions are made.

Different people have differing views on whether the CSO has a deputy, in the form of a member of the congregation, like the CSO a health visitor. This lack of clarity is an issue, as it raises potentially conflicting expectations of what can be achieved, and the person in question works full time, and so has very limited availability.

A clear, shared understanding of different functions is a key element of any well-constructed system, and across the staff and volunteers across the Cathedral, there

are perhaps too many perceived safeguarding referral points: the CSO, the DSA, the Canon Pastor, and both ADSAs were all cited as the best first point of contact. This increases the risk of miscommunication.

The arrival of a full-time DSA will increase capacity in the DSA team. There may be scope therefore for a recognition in the DSA team and across the Cathedral, that the DSA team is solely responsible for safeguarding casework in the Cathedral.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- What is the proper scope of the CSO role?
- What, if any, role in the safeguarding structure does the congregation member mentioned above play?
- How can a clear, shared understanding of safeguarding referral routes be established and disseminated?
- What discussions need to take place with the Diocese to establish respective roles in terms of Cathedral safeguarding cases?

4.3 RECORDING AND IT SYSTEMS

The DSA team use a case management system for case files, which the auditors saw work well in some cases, but which appears to have the capacity for glitches. The CSO, appropriately, does not keep separate case files.

The Cathedral makes use of a diocesan system to track key safeguarding performance indicators in each parish, such as the numbers of people trained, and whether policies and procedures are up to date. This has worked well in focusing attention on areas for improvement.

To track training, and DBS checks, the Cathedral has invested in the database software, Harlequin. The Diocese uses a different system, which means potential economies of scale have not been realised, and the Diocese cannot readily support the Cathedral as it might.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- Are there potential advantages in sharing HR databases with the Diocese?

5 FINDINGS – LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

5.1 QUALITY ASSURANCE

A safe organisation needs constant feedback loops about what is going well and where there are difficulties in relation to safeguarding, and this should drive ongoing cycles of learning and improvement. Robust quality assurance enables an organisation to understand its strengths and weaknesses. Potential sources of data are numerous, including independent scrutiny. Quality assurance needs to be strategic and systematic to support accountability and shed light on how well things are working and where there are gaps or concerns.

There are some useful mechanisms in place to support quality assurance within Coventry Cathedral. Signing up to the Diocese's parish key performance indicator system has already proved beneficial as a clear quantitative measure of where performance is good, and where extra efforts are needed.

The establishment of the Cathedral Safeguarding Advisory Group (CSAG) brings a measure of scrutiny to the safeguarding work in the Cathedral, and the CSO's regular reports to Chapter serve a similar function.

Genuine efforts to learn from recent problems in the choir indicate a willingness internally to explore and address organisational shortcomings; this suggests to the auditors a mindset in which a more comprehensive quality assurance system could be beneficial. At the moment, quality assurance focuses primarily on data; as performance figures improve, more thought could be given to qualitative analysis, for example on the benefits of training, the outcomes of casework.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How can a more comprehensive quality assurance framework, incorporating qualitative as well as quantitative measures, be developed?

5.2 COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE SAFEGUARDING SERVICE

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

Whilst there is a complaints section within the employee handbook, there is currently no complaints procedure in the Cathedral that is useable by, for example, volunteers or other stakeholders such as choir parents. Cathedral staff recognise this as a gap.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- Given the acknowledged need for a complaints procedure, what priority can this be given?

5.3 WHISTLEBLOWING

There is a whistleblowing section within the Cathedral's employee handbook, which is positive, and includes good features such as details of the charity Public Concern at Work (although it has recently changed its name to Protect), and the right to union or other support. There are no timescales included.

It is not evident that the policy extends to volunteers.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- Do volunteers have similar rights to protection as whistleblowers?

5.4 DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING ADVISORY PANEL

Based on the national guidance in *Roles and Responsibilities* for Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panels (DSAPs), the panel should have a key role in bringing independence and safeguarding expertise to an oversight, scrutiny and challenge role, including contributing to a strategic plan.

Description

No one from Coventry Cathedral currently sits on the Coventry DSAP, although discussions have begun about rectifying this.

Internally, there is a Cathedral Safeguarding Advisory Group (CSAG). This is chaired by the CSO, and meets termly. Membership includes the Canon Pastor, Business Manager, one ADSA, Education, Human Resources, the Assistant Director of Music, the clergy lead for St Clare's (a new missionary project in the Cathedral), and Churchwardens. Minutes of the meetings go to Chapter, and the ADSA feeds back to the diocesan safeguarding team meeting, and discusses issues that arise in her supervision.

The group is credited with an important role in breaking down departmental silos. It has developed into a proactive group, devising new policies, and pushing improvements in training and Safer Recruitment.

The terms of reference for the CSAG, drawn up in 2015, focus mainly on oversight functions, but also include operational tasks such as policy development.

Analysis

It is a missed opportunity for cohesive working, shared systems, and improved liaison that the Cathedral is not represented on Coventry's DSAP. It also breaches House of Bishops policy.

CSAG has proved to be very effective in promoting improvements in Cathedral safeguarding. From very small beginnings, it is now well attended, and most key aspects of Cathedral life are represented. It straddles an oversight and an operational function. Operational features include, as mentioned above, the development of policies, and given CSAG is producing those, it cannot also have

oversight or quality assurance of them. Given it has an operational element, the auditors question whether it meets often enough.

If the Cathedral does take a place on DSAP, which has an oversight function, it may be that the role of CSAG changes, to more explicitly focus on operational issues, and leaving the strategic scrutiny of Cathedral safeguarding to the DSAP. There is already an operational meeting in the Cathedral (see section 5.5), and the function of that in terms of day-to-day safeguarding decision-making may also be affected.

Vergers play an important role in safeguarding, perhaps especially in terms of vulnerable adults, and the auditors believe their input should be included in CSAG.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- Who is the best person from the Cathedral to sit on the DSAP, and how can engagement with DSAP be of most use to the Cathedral?
- What is the right balance for CSAG between oversight and operational issues? If operational, how frequently should it meet?
- Would a new/revised terms of reference clarify its function?
- Is there a role for vergers on CSAG?

5.5 LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

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.

5.5.1 Theological leadership

Description

As the leader of every aspect of the Cathedral's life, the Dean of Coventry has overall theological responsibility for promoting safeguarding. He has been in post since 2013. He is part of the Bishop of Coventry's Core Staff, and describes having a close working relationship with the Bishop. The Dean set out his role as one of setting the safeguarding culture; establishing that the Cathedral is a safe place to be. The Dean is a keen advocate of the Cathedral's seven values:

- Hospitality
- Faith and spirituality
- Reconciliation
- Art and creativity
- Risk taking
- Excellence
- Community

and evidently gives thought to how safeguarding is applied through the prism of these.

Two residentiary Canons, the Canon Pastor (in post since 2014) and Canon Precentor (in post since 2010), support the Dean. There is no longer a Canon for Reconciliation.

The Canon Pastor is recognised as having a lead role in safeguarding; she was described by the community as ‘our parish priest’, and the senior clergy member most available to talk to about safeguarding. She described her role as managing the blurred line between safeguarding and pastoral care. The Canon Precentor, with overall charge of the choir, is responsible for perhaps the central safeguarding challenge of any cathedral: the safety and welfare of the choristers.

Analysis

The auditors recognised that the residentiary Canons are very visible presences in the Cathedral, and the community is reassured by the availability for safeguarding discussions of the Canon Pastor. The Canons have a shared responsibility for the implementation of the choir action plan, which is positive.

The Dean’s commitment to better safeguarding was evident to the auditors. He acknowledged, however, and this was cited too by members of the Cathedral community, that he does not typically express this commitment publicly. Given the prominence of his role, some form of public messaging about the theological importance of safeguarding, and its centrality to the wider Christian message, may be helpful, and useful in tackling some of the training and Safe Recruitment logjams.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- What public messages – sermons, introductions to policies, introductions to training etc – can the Dean provide to raise the profile of safeguarding in the Cathedral?

5.5.2 Strategic leadership

Description

The Chapter of Coventry Cathedral consists of three clergy (the Dean and the two Canons); three lay members, and four representatives of the congregation. The Business Manager, in charge of all lay aspects of the Cathedral’s operation, attends Chapter, without being a member.

Chapter’s work is shaped by a five-year strategic plan, from which are developed annual action plans. Much of the focus in recent years has been on the Cathedral’s financial position, but safeguarding is discussed at every Chapter meeting, and twice a year the CSO attends Chapter to discuss it in more detail. Chapter receives CSAG minutes for consideration.

Analysis

As with other cathedrals, there is a blurring of function between strategic and operational leadership, with the clergy members of Chapter providing key executive as well as oversight functions. This places a particular onus on non-executive

Chapter members to hold the executive function to account. This is always a difficult role, perhaps particularly in safeguarding when the lay members do not have particular safeguarding experience; but evidence from Chapter minutes and elsewhere suggests that there could be a greater robustness in the challenge function.

The result is that the CSO is the main focus for holding Chapter to account on safeguarding. Whilst the current role holder is well placed to do that, it is asking a lot of such a part-time, voluntary role. Engaging with DSAP would be of benefit here also, as the independent chair would provide a degree of scrutiny of safeguarding leadership in the Cathedral.

Chapter's five-year strategic plan contains no mention of safeguarding, which risks creating the perception that it is not a key priority. Safeguarding systems are typically more robust when there is visible, tangible senior leadership of them.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How can internal challenge in Chapter be strengthened?
- How can external challenge to Chapter be strengthened?
- How can Chapter more plainly demonstrate collective strategic leadership of the safeguarding adventure?

5.5.3 Operational leadership and management

Description

Aside from the senior clergy, the pivotal figure in operational leadership, and the senior lay person in the Cathedral, is the Business Manager, who has held her role since 2016. She brings to the Cathedral a long experience of local government work, with senior level responsibility for safeguarding. Within the Cathedral, she has accountability for everything other than music, vergers, and the clergy, and therefore has a lead safeguarding role. The Business Manager reports to the Dean.

The Business Manager sits with the Dean and the two Canons on the Dean's Leadership Team, which functions as the executive arm of Chapter. Safeguarding is well represented at it, in the form of the Business Manager and the Canon Pastor, but it is not clear what safeguarding decisions it takes.

Day-to-day management of life in the Cathedral falls to the operational meeting, which takes place weekly. Every month there is an extended operational meeting, when the regular attendees – heads of department – join with the Dean's Leadership Team. Following a successful first event, one extended operational meeting per year is to be dedicated to safeguarding, and ongoing operational safeguarding decisions get made at the weekly meetings.

The operational and extended operational meetings are not minuted. No one from the Music department attends, as the time does not fit with their working hours.

Coventry's is a small Cathedral, with stretched resources, and this affects what can be achieved.

Analysis

The operational and extended operational meetings seem on the face of things to be practical ways of getting business done in the Cathedral. The lack of minuting does mean there is reduced accountability and transparency for how decisions get made. To the extent that those decisions involve safeguarding, this is a concern to the auditors, as is the absence of the Music department, as they are so integral to safeguarding.

The Dean's Leadership Team is another forum in which operational safeguarding decisions are made, and yet it seems to have a slightly nebulous position within the governance structure. It has no formal place in the Cathedral's constitution, and the Dean is keen that it does not detract from the accountability either of Chapter or of the individuals within it.

The Business Manager is effective, and the departments for which she has responsibility appear to function well together. A part of the system in the Cathedral which lacks clarity, as mentioned earlier, is who has final responsibility for the Safe Recruitment and training of volunteers: the view is held by some that this falls to the HR department, whilst others think responsibility lies with the Canon Pastor. Within that confusion lies the scope for progress on these challenges not being made as promptly as it might.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How can the operational and extended operational meetings improve the scope and transparency of their safeguarding decision-making?
- Does the Dean's Leadership Team blur the accountability of safeguarding decision-making in any way which causes concern?

5.5.4 Culture

The most critical aspect of safeguarding relates to the culture within any organisation. In a Church of England context, that can mean, for example, the extent to which priority is placed on safeguarding individuals as opposed to the reputation of the Church, or the ability of all members of the Church to think the unthinkable about friends and colleagues. Any cathedral should strive for an open, learning culture where safeguarding is a shared responsibility, albeit supported by experts, and which encourages people to highlight any concerns about how things are working in order that they can be addressed.

The auditors note a definite shift in safeguarding awareness within Coventry Cathedral over recent years. The work of the CSO is central to this. Community members talked of being much more attuned to risks, and to how to engage safely with children and vulnerable adults. Encouragingly, people spoke of safeguarding being more frequently discussed; there is a sense in which it is no longer a topic of conversation with which people are too nervous to engage.

Recent counter-terrorism work was cited as something which, while not a safeguarding issue, has generally heightened people's awareness of risk, and the

need for alertness. The auditors note this, but also that historically, most safeguarding harm in cathedrals has been done internally.

No one to whom the auditors spoke felt the Cathedral was at a point at which engagement and commitment to getting safeguarding right is shared equally across all departments, staff and volunteers. This suggests a lack of complacency, which is a positive, but also reflects that more work needs to be done to embed this fully. This is no criticism of the Cathedral's efforts: the development of a fully robust safeguarding culture will always be a work in progress, in any organisation. Much of what might support Coventry Cathedral make progress has been discussed in previous sections, but the clearer setting out of a cohesive, cross-departmental safeguarding plan, with visible leadership from the Dean and other senior clergy, may bring a focus to the many efforts being made to improve safeguarding.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How can the various efforts to make continued progress on developing a safe culture be made more cohesive?
- What role does clear Chapter leadership have in this?

6 CONCLUSIONS

This section provides the headline findings from the audit, drawing out positives and the areas for improvement. The detail behind these appraisals are in the Findings.

Staff at all levels across Coventry Cathedral are committed to improving safeguarding. There are already examples of very strong practice.

The CSO has had a significant impact in the fostering of better safeguarding practice, through awareness-raising, training, and policy development.

The reporting and monitoring of safeguarding is embedded in Chapter, and the CSAG is an effective mechanism for promoting improved practice.

There are aspects of work, such as recording and reporting of concerns, where a tightening up of processes would be helpful. The need to have casework led by paid professionals with the scope to carry out the work is important.

Improvements in the Safe Recruitment and training of volunteers in particular is, as the Cathedral recognises, a priority.

Fully engaging the Music department in all aspects of safeguarding would enhance the safety and wellbeing of the Cathedral choir.

More generally, a clear and cohesive overview of safeguarding, with an explicit plan for its ongoing development, endorsed at a senior level, would further embed safeguarding, and build on Coventry's recent improvements.

APPENDIX: REVIEW PROCESS

DATA COLLECTION

Information provided to auditors

In advance of the audit, staff at Coventry Cathedral sent through:

- Safeguarding self-assessment summary
- Summary of Cathedral organisation and governance
- Cathedral organisational structure charts
- Cathedral safeguarding statement
- Details of volunteer's safeguarding training
- Safer Recruitment policy
- Cathedral's safeguarding dashboard results
- Cathedral's employee handbook
- Staff induction checklist
- Education department policy on visiting children
- Hiring policy for external organisations
- Pro forma for recording allegations
- Reporting flowchart
- Choristers' handbook
- Choir parents' handbook
- Choir code of behaviour and expectations
- Chapter minutes (last three meetings)
- Cathedral Safeguarding Advisory Group minutes (last five meetings)
- Cathedral Safeguarding Advisory Group terms of reference
- Role description for the Cathedral Safeguarding Officer
- Safeguarding Agreement between the Diocese and Cathedral
- Diocesan safeguarding information leaflet

During the course of the audit, or afterwards, the Cathedral further supplied:

- Choir safeguarding action plan
- Learning log following choir incidents
- Choir anti-bullying policy
- Job descriptions for the Canon Pastor and Canon Precentor

Participation of members of the Cathedral and Diocese

The auditors had conversations with:

- Dean of Coventry
- Canon Pastor
- Canon Precentor

- Business Manager
- Cathedral Safeguarding Officer
- Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser
- Head Verger
- Director of Music
- Tower Captain
- Director of Education
- Tourism and Visits Manager
- Human Resources and Administration Manager

Focus groups were held with:

- Girl choristers
- Boy choristers
- Choir parents
- Volunteers and community members

After the site visit, the auditors spoke to three people who in various ways had made use of the safeguarding service.

What records / files were examined?

The auditors explored five case files and five recruitment files.