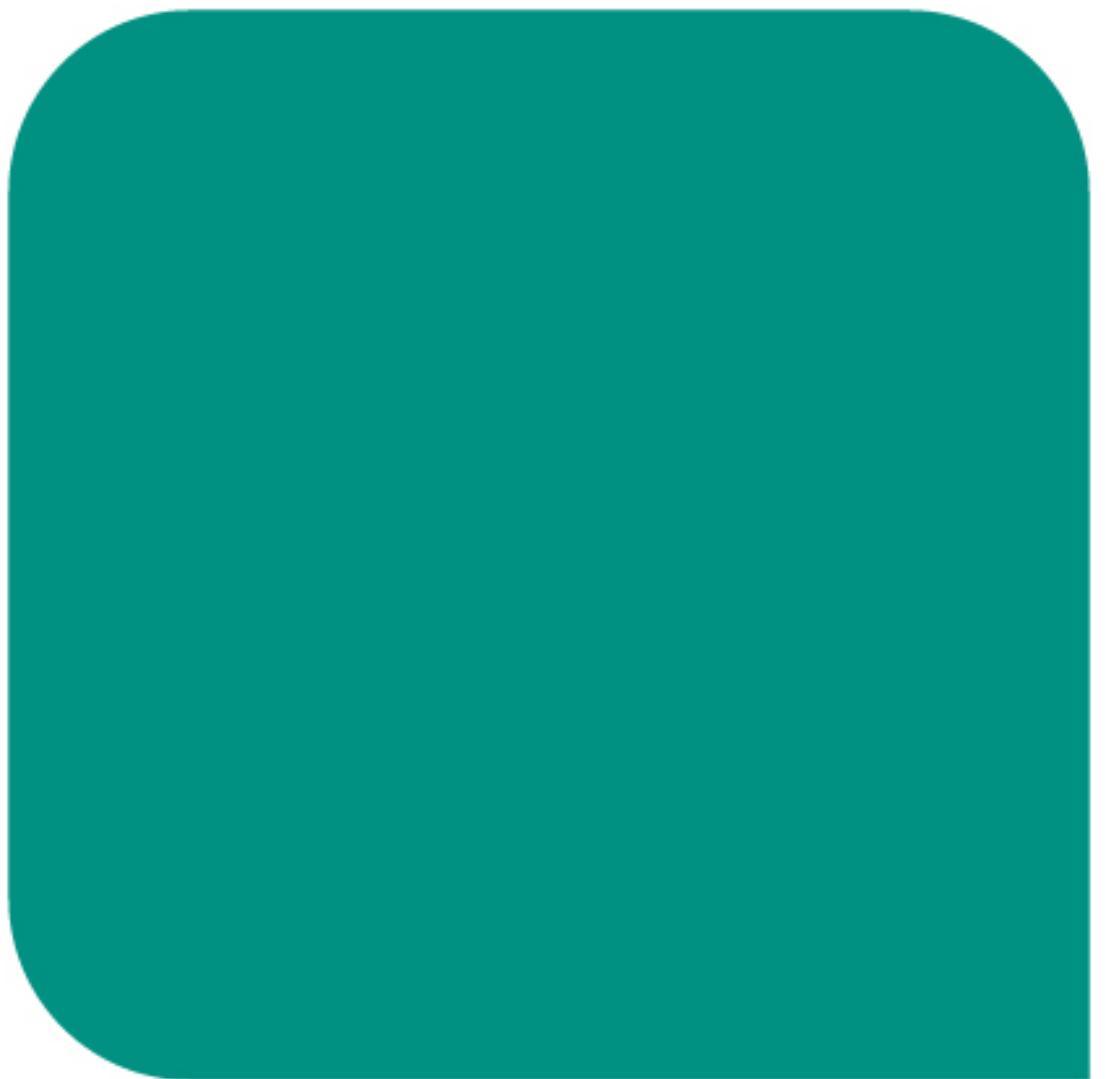




social care
institute for excellence

Diocese of Leeds independent safeguarding audit (October 2016)



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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTEXT

The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) has been commissioned to undertake an audit of the safeguarding arrangements of each diocese of the Church of England. The aim of these audits is to work together to understand the safeguarding journey of the diocese to date and to support the continuing improvements being made. Following pilot audits of four dioceses in 2015, an agreed audit model is being applied nationally during 2016 and 2017.

The audit of the Diocese of Leeds was carried out by Lucy Erber (the lead auditor) and Leethen Bartholomew on 11, 12, 13 October 2016.

The audit process incorporated an examination of files and documents, along with meetings with key individuals and a Focus Group of parish representatives. Details of the process are provided in the appendix.

This report was written by Lucy Erber with support from Leethen Bartholomew and quality assurance provided by Edi Carmi, the overall auditing lead.

1.2 THE DIOCESE

The Diocese of Leeds, came into being during Easter 2014, the first new Diocese created by the Church of England since 1927. It was made up of the former Dioceses of Ripon and Leeds, Wakefield and Bradford. In September 2016, the new Diocesan Office opened near Leeds City Centre.

It is one of the largest dioceses in area in the country, covering some 2,630 square miles. It has a population of 2.3 million and is served by 656 Anglican churches. The Diocese covers a mixed area of rural and farming land, cities (Leeds, Bradford, Wakefield and Ripon) and towns such as Halifax, Harrogate and Keighley. The area has been affected by the closure of coal mines, steel works and mills, resulting in areas of high unemployment and a significant number of people who work earning low/minimum wages. The towns and cities have diverse populations with a mixture of newly arrived migrants and those who settled some years ago.

The Diocese is led by the Bishop of Leeds, assisted by the Bishops of Ripon, Wakefield, Huddersfield, Bradford and Richmond. There are five episcopal areas: Bradford, Huddersfield, Leeds, Ripon and Wakefield, and three cathedrals in Ripon, Bradford and Wakefield.

In 2015, the safeguarding team dealt with 15 new referrals relating to children and 18 regarding vulnerable adults. Alongside the new referrals, they worked with a further 13 ongoing cases regarding children and one adult.

1.3 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

This report is divided into:

- Introduction.
- An overview of what is working well, what needs to work better and a summary of considerations for the Diocese.
- The Findings of the auditors: the auditors have made links with the S. 11 (Children Act 2004) audit form completed by the Diocese in preparation for the audit.
- Considerations for the Diocese are listed, where relevant, under each finding section.
- Appendix, explaining the details of the review process.

2 OVERVIEW

This section provides the headline findings from the audit, in terms of what is working well and the areas for improvement. The detail behind these appraisals are in the Findings in section 3.

2.1 WHAT'S WORKING WELL?

The culture in the Diocese of Leeds is open to learning and taking safeguarding forward. Section 3 provides the detailed findings, but the following provides the headlines of the strengths in safeguarding practice:

- There is a strong safeguarding lead from the Bishop and his staff team.
- The Diocesan Secretary's management of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers (DSA) plays a critical part in the collaborative functioning of the safeguarding service, providing clear direction and support to the team and involvement in team meetings and some core groups.
- Despite the significant challenges of three dioceses becoming one in 2014, safeguarding is high on the agenda and has developed during this time.
- The Bishop keeps himself very well informed about safeguarding activity without micro-managing.
- Clear message to all newly appointed clergy, and where Permission to Officiate (PTO) is up for renewal that safeguarding is the highest of priorities as all are expected to have current safeguarding training before commencing their duties.
- The three Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser's with their range of skills gathered from their previous professional experience are providing a good quality service.
- The Focus Group fed back that the DSAs are well known to them, are approachable, knowledgeable and supportive. Their case advice was felt to be very helpful and quality of training provided said to be of a high standard.
- The DSAs on an operational level have good contacts with relevant partner safeguarding agencies.
- There is good information sharing to/from DSAs and partner safeguarding agencies. A formal information-sharing protocol is in place for MAPPA and formal agreements are being pursued with the police and children's services.
- Due to the combination of three dioceses into one and staff changes, all cases are being reviewed to ensure that risk assessments are undertaken and safeguarding agreements put in place where they may be required.
- The online recording system that has been set up for the DSAs to record their case activity (SharePoint) is a good development, and it is positive that this is available to relevant individuals on a need-to-know basis (i.e. the Bishop of Leeds, Diocesan Secretary etc.).
- Case files are neatly kept, in line with relevant procedures.

- Extra resources have been put into safeguarding where this is required and the need recognised (i.e. an extra DSA post, supervision for DSAs).
- Good use of the Articles of Enquiry to support safeguarding, with active thinking about how to further improve this.
- The Diocese has developed a comprehensive complaints policy. This includes both informal and formal stages of complaint resolution and states clearly that it applies to safeguarding procedures and processes, but excludes concerns or allegations about abuse of children or vulnerable adults.
- Having a specific day and time each week set aside for core group meetings is a model of good practice.

2.2 WHAT NEEDS TO WORK BETTER?

The auditors and Diocese have identified a number of areas where further improvements could usefully be made to safeguarding practice:

- The strategic plan to specifically include a quality assurance programme.
- Continue to pursue further external membership for the Strategic Safeguarding Committee from local authority children's and adults' services.
- Plan for parish audits to continue to gain a greater understanding of safeguarding at a parish level, the outcome of which can be considered by the Strategic Safeguarding Committee.
- The Authorised Listeners Service is not well known and needs further promotion.
- The person being risk assessed needs to be seen by the DSA, who in turn should be professionally supervised on the assessment.
- DSAs to sign safeguarding agreements to emphasise ownership by the Diocese.
- Develop greater clarity about the purpose of supervision with respect to case supervision and how this fits into the line-management structure.
- Evidence of current DBS were missing from a few Blue Files and from one non-clergy recruitment files audited.

2.3 CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE DIOCESE

The term 'considerations' instead of recommendations is used in the SCIE Learning Together methodology. The reason for this is that it is important that each diocese decides exactly how to implement the improvements indicated; this is likely to be different from place to place. Some considerations will be around taking specific types of action, whilst others will be alerting the diocese to develop its safeguarding planning in the future.

These considerations are to be found at the end of each of the sections in the findings (see section 3). They are listed below for ease of reference, but the detail behind each of these is in the Findings section.

- Consider clearer written, arrangements regarding the purpose and role of the professional supervision of the DSAs, particularly in relation to safeguarding, the supervision of casework and specifically including when undertaking risk assessments.
- Consider the potential role of social work in future arrangements for safeguarding in the Diocese.
- Continue to try and recruit a representative from Children's and Adult Services onto the Strategic Safeguarding Committee (SSC).
- Review the Terms of Reference for the SSC.
- Review the Terms of Reference for the operational safeguarding group, and its role and relationship with the SSC.
- Consider developing a quality assurance programme for the SSC.
- Consider the need for the DSA to always meet the individual of concern when undertaking risk assessments.
- Consider the adoption of the DSA signing safeguarding agreements to demonstrate diocesan ownership.
- The current internal audit of cases to include examining practice in relation to the above issues raised around risk assessment.
- The Diocese to continue to develop the electronic system that can produce reports, email reminders etc.
- The Diocese to continue to develop its monitoring of parish officers and volunteers and their safeguarding training attendance.
- Evidence of a DBS clearance to be kept on all recruitment files (i.e. for both clergy and lay officers).
- Review the expectations laid out in Safer Recruitment 2015 regarding the references required when employing either a member of the clergy or a lay officer and consider how this is then implemented in all recruitment.
- Consider providing information in the complaints policy of how a parent can complain about the service received by their child or a carer/responsible person about the service received by someone with limited capacity.
- Consider undertaking the parish audits, that can then be considered by the SSC.
- Continue to explore ways to develop an out-of-hours safeguarding service.
- Consider more ways to publicise the Authorised Listening service, i.e. through leaflets, putting information on the diocesan website etc.

3 FINDINGS

3.1 SAFEGUARDING MANAGEMENT

This is a new diocese that involved three dioceses becoming one under a brand new structure. Safeguarding has not been lost amongst what has been a very significant change management process. Indeed, this audit took place three weeks after the move into the new diocesan offices (whereby the three former diocesan offices all moved together into one new office in the centre of Leeds). At no point would this have been obvious to the auditors, had they not been informed about it prior to the audit. Overall, the culture in the Diocese of Leeds is open to learning and taking safeguarding forward however it can.

The Bishop of Leeds identifies himself as having ultimate accountability for safeguarding. His appointed lead for safeguarding is the Diocesan Secretary, who is also the line manager for the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers (DSAs), manages staff performance, oversees casework and works with DSAs on policy development. This arrangement provides a clear structure and accountability for safeguarding. The experience of the Diocesan Secretary, having set up the safeguarding service in Bradford in 2002, is a benefit.

The Bishop is also a member of the Strategic Safeguarding Committee (SSC), and the Independent Chair described him as a regular attendee, engaged and active in meetings. The Bishop is copied into all emails regarding core groups that are held, and has access to the electronic recording system for casework, on a need-to-know basis. He regards safeguarding training as a professional expectation of the clergy role. Clergy appointments will not be confirmed until there is a DBS in place, and the appointee has booked safeguarding training, or proved they have recently undertaken it. Safeguarding is a standard agenda item on the Bishop's Staff Team agenda, and is reported on by the Diocesan Secretary, who line manages the DSAs. The three DSAs have ready access to the Bishop whenever required. There has been very recent agreement to also have twice yearly meetings between the Bishop and the DSAs, in order that access can be formalised.

The strategic oversight of safeguarding in the Diocese is undertaken by the SSC (see section 3.3).

There is a team of three part-time DSAs who undertake safeguarding responsibilities for casework, allegations, risk assessments etc (see 3.2).

The monitoring of safeguarding in the parishes is undertaken through the Articles of Enquiry and the three to four yearly visitations. There are several questions on the Articles of Enquiry that relate to safeguarding.

There are strong links with the three cathedrals in the Diocese. All three are represented on the SSC, by the Dean of Bradford, and the DSAs provide both training and casework for the cathedrals.

(Reference: part 1 of S.11 audit: Provide a structure to manage safeguarding in the Diocese. Also to part 2: The Bishop appoints a member of his senior staff to be the lead person for safeguarding.)

3.2 DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING ADVISER/S

The Diocese of Leeds currently employs three part-time DSAs on a salaried basis. Each DSA works 21 hours per week, meaning that there is a total of 63 hours per week safeguarding activity. Until a year ago there were two DSAs both working 21 hours per week, but a further 21 hour DSA post was created due to the recognised need for extra capacity following the formation of the new Diocese, and in recognition of the need to reconfigure training within one of the former diocesan areas. There is a job description and person specification in place for the DSA posts.

The DSAs all cover specific episcopal areas: Bradford and Huddersfield, Wakefield and Leeds, and Ripon. They also work generically with both children and vulnerable adults' cases, and deliver training. Whilst all are busy, they do not feel there is a lack of capacity.

The three DSAs are very highly regarded by diocesan clergy and staff. The Parish Focus Group was also unanimous in its regard and respect for the DSAs. The auditors got a real sense that they work together well and effectively as a team – this was also stated in several of the conversations held and by the Parish Focus Group. All the DSAs work together on Wednesdays, which is also the day that they hold their team meeting. Whilst all three DSAs have a professional background in safeguarding, they each come from different previous work experiences – education safeguarding at local authority level (including significant management experience in that field), the police (including experience working in a Police Child Protection Unit), and leading a team of Early Help practitioners within local authority children's services. This means that the experiences and knowledge of the team members complement each other well, in the view of the DSAs.

The Diocese also employs the services of a safeguarding consultant, who undertakes specific pieces of work and small projects on an 'as and when' basis, such as a review of policies, providing an independent professional voice in case discussion, updating the safeguarding section of the diocesan website, gathering together data for returns and reports, and drawing together feedback following training. She is regarded as an integral part of the safeguarding team and there is a formal agreement in place for the provision of her services, for which she is paid. Her professional background is that of a lawyer, and she worked for a considerable period undertaking various roles in the Crown Prosecution Service.

There are several hours of dedicated administrative time available to the team per week. Much of this time is used in organising the safeguarding training, along with other administrative tasks.

Positive feedback was received from three Local Authority Designated Officers (LADOs) based within the diocesan area regarding their working relationships with the DSAs.

3.2.1 Management and supervision

The Diocesan Secretary line manages the DSAs and has ongoing casework input, assist them with prioritising, making decisions and being part of the core group (most case decisions are taken). Regular performance appraisals are carried out with the

DSAs. The Diocesan Secretary attends the weekly DSA team meetings where casework issues are routinely discussed and participates in some core groups. This management input into the work of safeguarding is a real positive factor and mitigates against the potential for DSAs to feel they are working in isolation.

In the last few months the services of a psychotherapist have been employed to undertake three supervisions per year with each DSA, plus one group supervision. There is a formal supervision agreement, which helpfully refers to supervision notes and a link with the line management structure in the case of disagreements. The auditors felt that this was a significant step in the right direction, but that further consideration could be given to the work needed to be done about the role supervision plays in relation to all types of casework and the recording of casework decisions. The auditors felt that section 5.33 of Risk Assessment of Individuals who may pose a risk to children of adults (2015)¹ was not covered by this arrangement. The guidance states that when a Type A Risk Assessment is being undertaken the DSA needs to be supervised throughout the assessment. The current supervision agreement with a psychotherapist is proving very helpful in giving the DSAs the opportunity to talk through how they are/have handled things and allows them space to consider further action, as well as therapeutic support. However, what is missing is supervision from safeguarding professional.

3.2.2 Multi-disciplinary experience of team

The team benefits from the diverse background of the members, but misses the experience of a social worker with specific child safeguarding experience, albeit one of the team has a background of education social work and management. Nor is there currently any social work representation on the SSC (see 3.3).

Whilst current policy does not specify the need for a social work qualification, this is the only profession where safeguarding is the core of its function and experience. The overview report of the pilot audits commented that:

'... given the complexity of the DSA task, the need to understand the different roles in the multi-agency safeguarding system and in particular the child protection system, such a background is likely to be an advantage. This is particularly relevant in the cases where there is insufficient information to refer to statutory services, but more direct work is required to assess the risks.'

Given the size of the team, it might be helpful to give consideration to the need for social work input into the team in the future, either by the use of social work case supervision or a social work qualified and experienced DSA.

(References: part 1 of S11 audit: Appoint a suitably qualified DSA, and provide financial, organisational and management support. The adviser must have full access to clergy files and other confidential material.

¹ www.churchofengland.org/media/2254753/risk%20assessment%20guidance.pdf

Part 6: The DSA's role is clear in the job description and person specification. And

The DSA has sufficient time, funding, supervision and support to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities, including local policy development, casework, advice, liaison with statutory authorities, training, personal and professional development and professional registration.

Part 8: The DSA should be given access to professional supervision to ensure their practice is reviewed and improves over time.)

Considerations for the Diocese

Consider clearer written arrangements regarding the purpose and role of the professional supervision of the DSAs, particularly in relation to safeguarding, the supervision of casework and specifically including when undertaking risk assessments.

Consider the potential role of social work in future arrangements for safeguarding in the Diocese.

3.3 STRATEGIC SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE

The SSC in the Diocese of Leeds has been chaired for the last 18 months by an Independent Chair, whose professional background was in the field of education, latterly serving as Director for Education in a county council. The Chair is paid for his duties, and there is a job description for the role. Through his work in the education sector, the Chair gained considerable knowledge in the field of safeguarding. The Chair is of the view that this is a relatively new group of people who are beginning to work together effectively, and challenge each other when necessary. He is pleased that the Bishop of Leeds sits on the SSC and says that he is an active and engaged member.

Most membership is drawn from the Diocese, including the Bishop of Leeds, an area Bishop, a Dean, the Lead Archdeacon for Safeguarding (Archdeacon of Halifax), the Bishop's Chaplain, the Diocesan Secretary, the Diocesan Registrar and the three DSAs. Additionally, there are two external representatives from the police and the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) coordinator.

There is no input from any of the children's and adult services located within the Diocese. This has been followed up but with no success to date. The auditors are of the view that this needs to be continued to be followed up, and with one of the DSAs joining a Local Safeguarding Children Board recently, this may be the opportunity to make relevant links and recruit someone to join the SSC.

The SSC meets three times per year, and there is a Terms of Reference, and a Strategic Action Plan, but no annual work plan in place. The Committee oversees the implementation of the training programme, the effective implementation of new policies/procedures, and reviews the work of the operational safeguarding group. The auditors feel that it would assist in the focus of the SSC if an annual work plan was developed for the Committee to direct its work. The auditors also felt that the SSC could consider taking a more active role in quality assurance and include this in its new work plan.

There is also an operational safeguarding group, and the auditors did struggle to understand its role and relationship with the SSC. Its Terms of Reference are very like that of the SSC. It considers safeguarding issues based at parish level, and gives feedback on cases/high profile cases, where this is relevant. Its membership is made up of the DSAs and the Archdeacons.

(Reference: part 1 of S.11 audit: Provide a structure to manage safeguarding in the Diocese. Also to part 2: The Bishop appoints a member of his senior staff to be the lead person for safeguarding.)

Considerations for the Diocese

Continue to try and recruit a representative from children's and adult services onto the SSC.

Review the Terms of Reference for the SSC.

Review the Terms of Reference for the operational safeguarding group, and its role and relationship with the SSC.

Consider developing a quality-assurance programme for the SSC.

3.4 GUIDANCE, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Diocese of Leeds uses all the relevant safeguarding guidance, procedures and training programmes produced by the National Safeguarding Team. There was a keen culture in the Diocese to be up to date with all expected practice and requirements. The Leeds Synod re-adopted all relevant safeguarding procedures in March 2016 to ensure its commitment to safeguarding.

The diocesan website contains links, and some commentary, to all relevant safeguarding guidance and procedures, in a clear and easy-to-use manner. Safeguarding newsletters and posters are also used to disseminate any new information about newly published policies and procedures.

3.5 CASEWORK

The Diocese is new, with a change of one DSA shortly after its formation and an increased capacity in the service. The auditors were told by the DSAs that they are auditing all open cases to check if they need to remain open. This process also includes a review of previous case decision making and the quality of risk assessments and safeguarding agreements. This is a positive way to deal with a situation where many cases are not known to the current staff group.

The auditors looked at 13 cases. Twelve were in relation to children and one to a vulnerable adult. Many of the files concerned were old and the Diocese has advised are not reflective of current practice. The auditors did observe improvements in practice that have occurred more recently.

Although most casework continues to be based around children's safeguarding, the DSAs reported a significant increase in referrals and concerns regarding adult

safeguarding. They report that concerns about mental health issues are the most common being reported to them.

Risk assessments in the Diocese of Leeds are undertaken in line with current guidance. Some less recent Type A Risk Assessments appear to have been written down in note form, but the auditors found that recent ones were greatly improved and following the correct format, and were generally of a good standard. However, the auditors were concerned to note that in some, less serious, cases (i.e. blemished Disclosure and Barring Service clearances), the DSA had undertaken the risk assessment by gathering information via the Parish Safeguarding Officer, and, at times, had never met directly with the person of concern. The auditors also viewed several Type B Risk Assessments that had been undertaken by external safeguarding professionals, and these had been appropriately commissioned, with expectations and purpose clarified.

The DSA works with parishes to ensure that safeguarding agreements are based on the outcomes of the risk assessment undertaken, and that relevant people are involved to monitor and review them. The DSA does not actually sign the safeguarding agreements: this is not a requirement in national guidance, but the auditors considered this would be best practice to demonstrate ownership by the Diocese.

The auditors found that there were timely responses to allegations. Local Authority Designated Officers (LADOs) were consulted promptly and when appropriate. There was liaison with all relevant agencies when this was required, and appropriate information sharing.

Some areas of concern were identified by the auditors during the case file audits. These were shared with the DSAs and their line manager, with recommended actions to be taken where appropriate. The following were the particular issues raised in the cases that were examined:

- The lack of a risk assessment in two cases.
- Need for a new risk assessment and safeguarding agreement whenever there is a planned change of circumstance around a new volunteering role (one case), whether this be in the UK or abroad.
- Placing the duty of monitoring safeguarding agreements on parish members, who may have a close relationship with supervisees (the Diocese has advised that they do now support incumbents on this).
- Lack of clarity of the outcome of the Clergy Disciplinary Measure (CDM) that was instigated in one case, where there was a significant abuse of a position of trust.
- All audit forms have been shared with the Diocese, and, where required, corrective action identified. Any cases of concern were discussed with the DSAs and their line manager, the Diocesan Secretary, whilst the auditors were onsite.

The Diocese has recently moved over to an electronic system of recording (SharePoint). This is a secure system that can only be accessed by the DSAs, the Diocesan Secretary, the Bishop of Leeds and the Diocesan Registrar. This has been developed so that key individuals can readily access files in an emergency.

For the purposes of the audit, paper files were reviewed. These were very neat and tidy, and easy to access and find relevant information. They were in line with relevant guidance Safeguarding Records: Joint Practice Guidance for the Church of England and the Methodist Church 2015².

The auditors felt that an example of good practice is how there is an identified day and time each week put aside for the holding of core groups, where this is required, in order that key individuals can diarise this time and keep it free to attend. The auditors were reassured, when there was a need for an emergency core group (which must be held within 48 hours), one would be convened as required.

(Reference: part 1 of S. 11 audit: Provide access to a risk assessment service so the Bishop and others can evaluate and manage any risk posed by individuals or activities within the Church.)

Considerations for the Diocese

Consider the need for the DSA to always meet the individual of concern when undertaking risk assessments.

Consider the adoption of the DSA signing safeguarding agreements so as to demonstrate diocesan ownership.

The current internal audit of cases to include examining practice in relation to the above issues raised around risk assessment.

² See

<https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2254792/safeguarding%20joint%20practice%20guidance%20-%20safeguarding%20records.pdf>

3.6 TRAINING

Training within the Diocese of Leeds is delivered by the DSAs within their episcopal areas, and is undertaken in line with the recent Learning and Development Practice Guidance 2016. The Diocese was used as one of the pilots for the new training before it was formally introduced. There would not appear to be any resource issues regarding the delivery of training.

The DSAs have started to introduce Train the Trainers, to develop training capacity within the parishes. They are keen to introduce e-learning when this becomes available.

Feedback from training is very positive, where attendees are almost unanimous in the high standard of the way it is delivered and what they feel their learning outcomes to have been. These views were also supported by the Focus Group, which also said that there seems to be a real sea change in the Diocese now, in that safeguarding training is recognised as important and central to church activity. It was also stated by the Focus Group that it feels this has taken place due to the knowledge and high profile of the DSAs throughout the Diocese regarding the training programme.

Dedicated administrative support based in the diocesan office undertakes the organisation of training. In March 2014, the Diocese undertook an exercise to identify all those holding the Bishop's Licence, and, working with the Archdeacons, ensured that all those that needed to have their training updated were booked onto a course. Considerable progress has been made, as illustrated by the fact that, in 2014, 300 members of the clergy in the episcopal area of Ripon (for example) required training, yet when checked in 2016 there are none outstanding in the Diocese, except people booked onto courses. This is commendable.

Any new clergy appointee/ PTO is required by the Bishop of Leeds to have booked on safeguarding training or have shown that they have recently undertaken it before they can commence their duties.

The Diocese is now using an electronic system that has potential to produce reports and email reminders to attendees regarding safeguarding training, although further work is required by the IT support team in the diocesan offices to enable these functions

(Reference: part 1 of S.11 audit: Select and train those who are to hold the Bishop's Licence in safeguarding matters. Provide training on safeguarding matters to parishes, the Cathedral, other clergy, diocesan organisations, including religious communities and those who hold the Bishop's Licence.

And to part 8: Those working closely with children, young people and adults experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect ...have safeguarding in their induction and are trained and have their training refreshed every three years.)

Considerations for the Diocese

The Diocese to continue to develop the electronic system that can produce reports, email reminders etc.

The Diocese to continue to develop its monitoring of parish officers and volunteers and their safeguarding training attendance.

3.7 SAFE RECRUITMENT OF CLERGY, LAY OFFICERS AND VOLUNTEERS

The auditors reviewed 14 clergy Blue Files and three non-clergy files. No volunteer files were reviewed. The Diocese has adopted the 2015 Safer Recruitment Practice Guidance³.

In all cases where there had been safeguarding concerns regarding members of the clergy, there was very clear reference to this at the beginning of the file. Evidence of DBS clearance was more variable in the Blue Files, although the more recent files did record if a DBS had been undertaken. Evidence of references was also variable in these files, although every file did have at least one reference. However, there was evidence in all the Blue Files reviewed that relevant identity and work status checks had been undertaken. In one case, where a Clergy Disciplinary Measure had been initiated, neither the outcome nor any decision-making process was clear (this was understood to be on the safeguarding file, but needs to be in the Blue File).

There was evidence of safer recruitment on the files of lay officers. Evidence of DBS clearance is not kept on the file but is recorded elsewhere. The auditors felt the DBS does need to be evidenced on file. In one case, there was only one reference on file.

(Reference to part 7 of S.11 audit: The Diocesan Secretary has implemented arrangements in line with the House of Bishops' policy on Safer Recruitment 2015. And to part 1: Keep a record of clergy and church officers that will enable a prompt response to bona fide enquiries...where there have been safeguarding concerns, these should be clearly indicated on file.)

Considerations for the Diocese

Evidence of a DBS clearance to be kept on all recruitment files (i.e. for both clergy and lay officers).

Review the expectations laid out in Safer Recruitment 2015 regarding the references required when employing either a member of the clergy or a lay officer and consider how this is then implemented in all recruitment.

³ www.churchofengland.org/media/2254766/safeguarding%20practice%20guidance-%20safer%20recruitment.pdf

3.8 DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE (DBS)

The Diocese of Leeds keeps records of all those who have, and require, a DBS, although a record is not always kept on the individual employment/HR file (as discussed under 3.7).

The Diocese commission an online system, from Churches Advisory Service, for all the DBSs required. In 2015, the Diocese applied for 1569 DBS checks, of which 18 were blemished.

3.9 COMPLAINTS AND WHISTLEBLOWING

3.9.1 Complaints

The Diocese has developed a comprehensive complaints policy which states clearly that it includes the safeguarding procedures and processes, but excludes concerns or allegations about abuse of children or vulnerable adults. It is clearly written and helpfully provides a choice of ways to complain, distinguishes between formal and informal stages, sets out the timeframe and what the complainant might expect.

The policy could be improved if it explained that a parent can complain about the service received by their child or a carer/responsible person about the service received by someone with limited capacity.

3.9.2 Whistleblowing

The Diocese of Leeds has a whistleblowing policy that relates specifically to concerns about children and young people. It is readily available on the diocesan website within the safeguarding pages. Concerns can be reported to DSAs, the Diocesan Secretary or the Chair of the SSC. Contact details are also provided for the whistleblowing charity Public Concern at Work should people not feel able to raise direct with the Diocese

(Reference: part 1 of S. 11 audit: Provide a complaints procedure which can be used by those who wish to complain about the handling of safeguarding issues. Also, part 4: There is an easily accessible complaints procedure including reference to the Clergy Disciplinary Measures and whistleblowing procedures.)

Considerations for the Diocese

Consider providing information in the complaints policy of how a parent can complain about the service received by their child or a carer/responsible person about the service received by someone with limited capacity.

3.10 QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES

The three DSAs have recently started to have professional supervision, which is a form of quality assurance.

The DSAs are also currently reviewing all cases still open and over 18 months old to

ensure that any intervention is relevant and required, and that the correct intervention is taking place.

The Diocese has recently introduced an annual Case Review, whereby the Bishop's Staff Team considers a case that has been ongoing throughout the year. It has also introduced a process by which, following the conclusion of what is deemed as a serious case, the core group has a session together to learn any lessons. At present, the Diocese uses an external consultant or an independent reviewer to facilitate such sessions.

The auditors noted that the parish audits had been postponed by the February 2016 SSC meeting, to prepare for this audit. We feel that the Diocese should consider undertaking these audits as soon as possible to get a clearer picture of the position of safeguarding in the parishes.

As mentioned in 3.3, there is scope for the SSC to consider in its work plan its role in the quality assurance process.

Considerations for the Diocese

Consider undertaking the parish audits that can then be considered by the SSC.

3.11 MONITORING OF SAFEGUARDING IN PARISHES AS PART OF ARCHDEACON'S RESPONSIBILITIES

In the Diocese of Leeds, Archdeacons undertake annual Articles of Enquiry with the parish, and undertake formal Visitations every three to four years. Safeguarding is a vitally important part of these processes.

Specifically, the Articles of Enquiry ask if a parish safeguarding officer is in place, what safeguarding training they have undertaken, whether they operate safer recruitment and are using and implementing the correct safeguarding policies and procedures. The auditors were told that the DSAs are alerted whenever a parish does not have a safeguarding officer in place. The DSAs can then monitor the situation, pending the appointment of a new one. The auditors felt this was a good use of the Articles of Enquiry process. Until this year, information gathered from the Articles of Enquiry was collated as per the former diocesan areas. This has now changed and will be collated together to have a clearer analysis and understanding of safeguarding at parish level.

When formal Visitations take place, they include an interview with the safeguarding officer.

3.12 RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

The Diocese recognises that it does not provide a 24-hour safeguarding service, and is keen to offer this level of cover. Having said this, each DSA carries a mobile phone and all, at times, have been contacted out of hours and have responded appropriately. Whilst this is by no means a regular occurrence, the Diocese does recognise that DSAs are not employed to undertake a 24-hour service. Its aim is to

develop a service that will not involve any extra hours of work/duties for the current DSAs. This development has yet to be taken forward but is recognised as a required extra resource.

A Bradford-based counselling organisation is commissioned to provide the Authorised Listening Service. It does not appear to be a well-known service as only two members of the Focus Group had heard of it. There is also no mention of this facility on the diocesan website. The DSAs reported that two people have been referred to it and both found it to be very helpful. The auditors were concerned that the huge geographical size of the Diocese could make it difficult for all to access a service based in only one location. The auditors were told that there are early plans to reconsider the service next year, with the direct recruitment of Authorised Listeners by the Diocese.

The Diocese is also currently recruiting a Children's Advocate who will be in their Children & Young Persons team. Although this role will not be within the safeguarding team, the plan is that the voice of children will be better promoted, and heard, within the Diocese and, specifically, within safeguarding.

Considerations for the Diocese

Continue to explore ways to develop an out-of-hours safeguarding service.

Consider more ways to publicise the Authorised Listening Service, i.e. through leaflets, putting information on the diocesan website etc.

3.13 INFORMATION SHARING

The DSAs share information appropriately, and when required, with relevant external agencies. A formal information-sharing agreement is in place with MAPPA, and is currently being pursued with the police and children's services.

The Diocese of Leeds is represented in an ecumenical safeguarding group based across the region. This enables networking and information sharing across the various faiths represented in the Diocese.

Internally, information sharing is on a need-to-know basis, to ensure both confidentiality, but also to enable key decisions to be made promptly and easily whenever this is required (i.e. the Bishop of Leeds, Diocesan Secretary and Registrar having access to the electronic record keeping system, the Bishop of Leeds being copied into core group meeting minutes etc.).

3.14 LINKS WITH NATIONAL SAFEGUARDING TEAM

The safeguarding team has very strong links with the National Safeguarding Team (NST). One of the DSAs has spent a period seconded to the NST, and continues to mentor a member of that Team. The Diocese also piloted the new safeguarding training programme before its national introduction.

The DSAs all view the NST as a resource that they can draw on when required, and

understand its leadership role in leading and developing safeguarding within the Church of England. They are fully aware of, and engaged with, the NST's direction of travel, and are linked in with the national and regional DSA network.

3.15 NATIONAL SYSTEMIC SAFEGUARDING ISSUES

The auditors have suggested that DSAs sign all safeguarding agreements, to demonstrate the involvement and ownership of the Diocese in such arrangements. This would appear to be good practice, but is not currently part of national guidance.

APPENDIX: REVIEW PROCESS

DATA COLLECTION

Information provided to auditors

- Spreadsheets on clergy safeguarding training
- Job descriptions of the DSAs and SSC Independent Chair
- Feedback information from training
- Safeguarding statistical returns 2014 and 2015
- Training delivery statement
- Information on Authorised Listening Service
- Terms of Reference for the SSC and OSC
- Minutes of last three meetings of the SSC
- Minutes of the last four meetings of the OSC
- Notes of a Case Review
- Reports on the Deceased Clergy and Past Cases Reviews
- Risk assessment guidance
- Social media guidelines
- Safeguarding newsletters and posters

Participation of members of the Diocese

- Bishop of Leeds
- Archdeacon of Halifax
- Diocesan Secretary
- Independent Chair of the Strategic Safeguarding Committee
- Diocesan Safeguarding Officers

Parish Focus Group comprising:

- three incumbents
- three Churchwardens
- two Children & Youth Workers
- two Parish Safeguarding Officers
- one Parish Administrator
- member of the congregation Wakefield Cathedral

The audit: what records / files were examined?

- 13 casefiles (12 relating to children, one relating to a vulnerable adult)
- 14 clergy Blue Files
- three lay diocesan officers