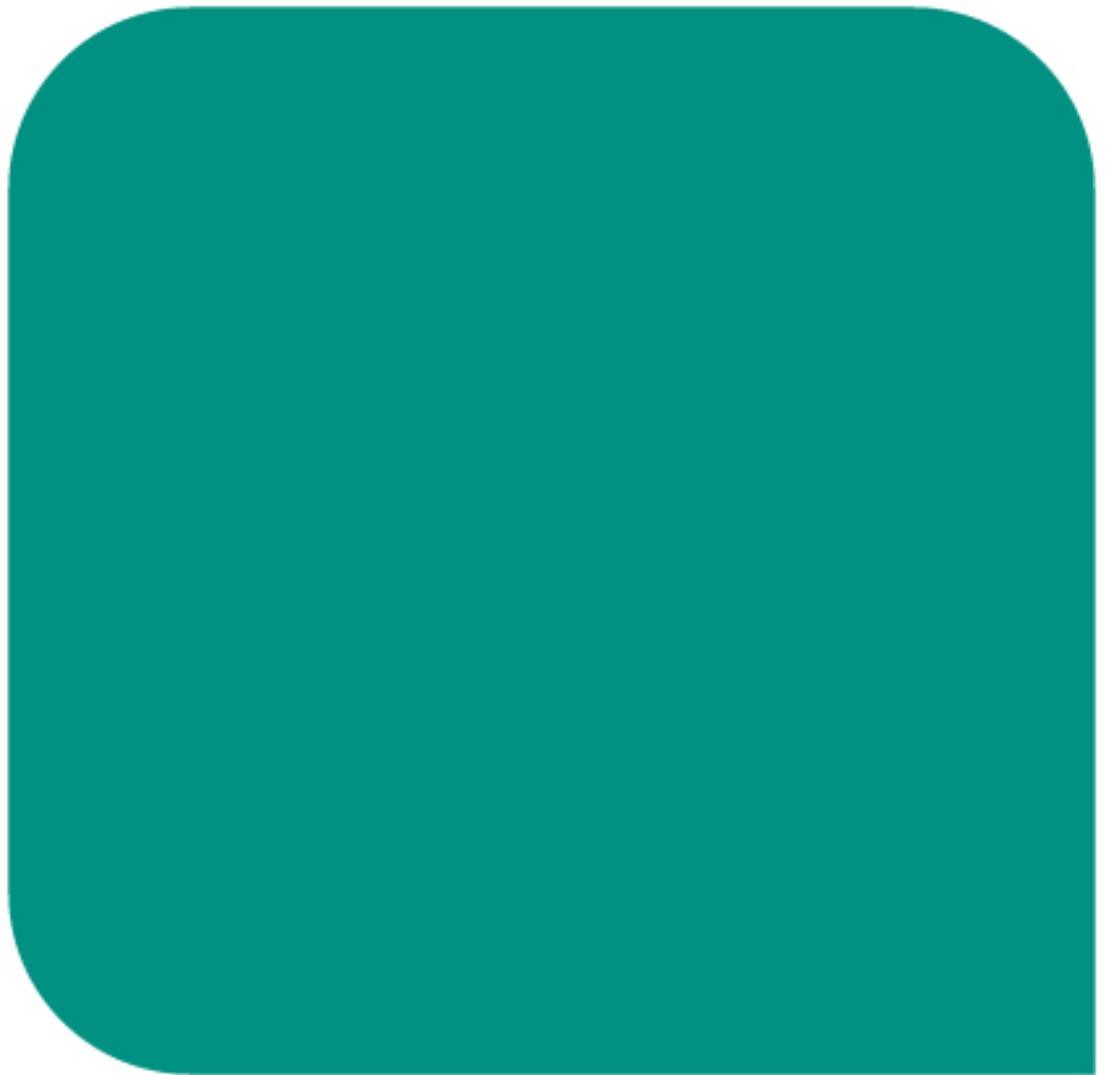




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institute for excellence

# **Diocese of Norwich independent safeguarding audit (March 2017)**



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First published in Great Britain in May 2017  
by the Social Care Institute for Excellence and the Church of England

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Written by Lucy Erber, Leethen Bartholomew and Edi Carmi

**Social Care Institute for Excellence**

Kinnaird House  
1 Pall Mall East  
London SW1Y 5BP  
tel 020 7766 7400  
[www.scie.org.uk](http://www.scie.org.uk)



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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 Norwich was carried out by Lucy Erber (the lead auditor for this diocese) and Leethen Bartholomew on 7, 8 and 9 March 2017.

The audit process incorporated an examination of files and documents, along with meetings with key individuals and a focus group of parish representatives. Unfortunately, the Diocesan Secretary was off sick during the audit, so the auditors were not able to have a conversation with him. Also, the Independent Chair of the Diocesan Safeguarding Management Group (DSMG) was also unwell, and no conversation was possible, although the auditors did meet with most members of the Safeguarding Management Group (SMG).

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 lead auditor for the project.

## 1.2 THE DIOCESE

The Diocese of Norwich covers most of Norfolk (apart from an area in west Norfolk that is within the Diocese of Ely) and includes the Waveney District of north-east Suffolk. There are 650 churches actively used for worship (many also have historical significance) and 577 parishes. The Diocese is also responsible for 110 schools.

Whilst mainly a rural area, the city of Norwich is regarded as the capital of East Anglia (as opposed to Ipswich, the county town of Suffolk), with several large businesses based there (including Aviva) and a thriving university and arts sector. Thetford and King's Lynn are towns with many light industries providing most employment to the working population. The coastal areas continue to attract large numbers of holiday makers during the spring and summer, as do the Norfolk Broads, meaning that tourism in the county is also a significant (albeit seasonal) employer.

Norwich Cathedral was built in 1145 and has one of the largest Cathedral Closes in England. It is also a significant tourist attraction in its own right.

The current Bishop of Norwich was enthroned in January 2000. He is assisted by the Suffragan Bishop of Thetford, and the Suffragan Bishop of Lynn. There are three Archdeacons, of Norwich, Norfolk and Lynn.

The Safeguarding Team is made up of a full-time Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser (BSA) and a 0.5 Assistant Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser (ABSA). In 2015, the BSA dealt with 11 new concerns about children and referred 12 to statutory agencies. She dealt with four new concerns regarding vulnerable adults and referred four to statutory agencies.

### **1.3 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT**

This report is divided into:

- Section 1: Introduction.
- Section 2: 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 in section 2: 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.
- Section 3: Conclusions providing an overview of what is working well, what needs to work better and a summary of considerations for the Diocese.
- Appendix, providing detail of the methodology along with any limitations of the audit

## **2 FINDINGS**

### **2.1 SAFEGUARDING MANAGEMENT**

#### **2.1.1 Leadership**

The Bishop of Norwich is clear that he takes ultimate responsibility for safeguarding within the Diocese. He has been the Bishop for the Diocese for almost 17 years and in that time, has built meaningful partnerships with a range of agencies, and faiths.

The Safeguarding Team is located and managed from the Bishop's Office, rather than the Diocesan Office as the Bishop holds the view that all guidance from the National Safeguarding Team (NST) regarding safeguarding gives the Diocesan Bishop ultimate responsibility for the safety and welfare of children and adults within the Diocese. Thus, his view is that having the Safeguarding Team within his own office is a demonstration of the responsibility he has and of how high he regards this. The Bishop told us that he always has an open door for the BSA and ABSA.

The Diocesan Bishop's appointed lead for safeguarding is the Suffragan Bishop of Thetford, who is the line manager for the BSA and the ABSA. The Bishop of Thetford also line managed the previous safeguarding adviser and is fully committed to the priority given to safeguarding within the Diocese and in its ongoing future development.

The BSA told the auditors that she always has access to the Bishop, whenever she requires it, for both urgent and routine matters. Although the ABSA had only been in post a few weeks at the time of the audit she also said that this is her experience. The auditors felt it may be helpful if a formalised meeting also took place to ensure the Bishop is kept up to date on matters that are important but maybe not urgent.

#### **2.1.2 Structure**

Safeguarding is a standing item on the Bishop's Senior Staff meeting. It is usually presented by the Bishop of Thetford but the BSA also attends as and when required. It is at this meeting that initial proposals for further resourcing are discussed and agreed. The Diocesan Secretary, as a member of the Bishop's Senior Team, will then present the case to the Board of Finance for final agreement.

The Safeguarding Management Group (SMG) holds the Diocese to account for its safeguarding activity. It has an Independent Chair, who is currently indisposed. The last meeting was chaired by the Bishop of Thetford. The Diocese is aware that this is not entirely satisfactory so are in the process of finding a replacement chair, even if only on a temporary basis. There are Terms of Reference in place and the Group meets a minimum of three times per year. Both the Chair of the SMG and the Bishop are members of the House of Lords and use their attendance there to discuss SMG activity. With either a temporary or permanent SMG Chair taking over, the auditors felt that this would present a good opportunity for the Chair and Bishop to meet more formally, for example, after SMG meetings.

The monitoring of safeguarding in the parishes is undertaken by the articles of enquiry (that ask specific questions about safeguarding) and through annual returns.

### 2.1.3 Links with Cathedral

There are strong links with the Cathedral. The BSA and ABSA provide safeguarding advice to the Cathedral and follow up any referrals made to them. Cathedral clergy, staff and volunteers also attend the safeguarding training that is provided by the Safeguarding Team. The Cathedral is also represented on the Safeguarding Management Group.

### 2.1.4 Culture

There is a strong culture that prioritises safeguarding with a desire for continued improvement wherever it can be made. The auditors were told several times throughout the audit, by several key individuals, that they were very keen to learn and make improvements based on the considerations made by this audit. Both members of the Safeguarding Team are highly experienced and knowledgeable professionals who have spent many years working within statutory safeguarding environments. Neither are members of the Church of England and many people said that they felt that this was a distinct advantage as it enabled challenge to take place whenever this was required.

A counsellor is employed by the Diocese to support members of their clergy and their families. Whilst not specifically with a safeguarding brief, the counsellor is made use of sometimes when, for example, there may be safeguarding concerns in an incumbent's parish. The auditors felt that this was a positive initiative.

The location and line management of the Safeguarding Team within the Bishop's Office is not usual in the Church of England. Most often they are based and managed within the Diocesan Office which tends to operate within a more business environment, due to the responsibilities it must undertake (finance, schools etc.). The Bishop was clear that he preferred the model currently operating within his Diocese as it enabled greater accountability on his part as he feels he, as the Bishop of the Diocese, has ultimate responsibility. It is also of note that the title 'Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser' has generally now been replaced by the use of Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. This latter is also used in House of Bishops' guidance and reflects a distinction in the development of the role over time to wider diocesan responsibilities, as opposed to advisor primarily for the Bishop.

The auditors were satisfied that this model worked due to the individuals involved, i.e. a highly experienced and knowledgeable Safeguarding Team and a Bishop and Senior Staff Team who had high regard, respect and trust in the safeguarding staff. However, they were concerned if individuals move on (as they always do) then the model may not be as sound. They are of the view that this should be kept under review and open for ongoing discussion

The growth of Fresh Expressions within the Church of England was discussed during the audit regarding any challenges to safeguarding processes that the movement may present. The auditors accept that this is a national consideration, but were keen to explore if this had been considered within the Diocese, which it has not, yet. However, we were told that any activity connected to any church would be expected to undertake all necessary assessments for any relevant safeguarding implications.

(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**

*The Bishop and the BSA/ABSA to consider organising regular meetings to discuss safeguarding issues that are important, but non-urgent.*

*Future meetings between the SMG Chair and the Bishop to take place regularly after each SMG meeting.*

*The Diocese to keep under review and ongoing discussion the location, line management and job titles of the safeguarding team within the Bishop's Office.*

## **2.2 BISHOP'S SAFEGUARDING ADVISER/S**

### **Roles and responsibilities**

There is a full-time BSA and a 0.5 full-time equivalent ABSA, giving the Diocese of Norwich a safeguarding service of 54 hours per week in total. Both posts are established as permanent posts and are paid for by the diocesan budget. They have job descriptions and person specifications.

Although the ABSA only recently joined the BSA, they appear to be working very effectively as a team. In the future, the ABSA will undertake more training responsibilities, whilst the BSA will focus on casework. The BSA and ABSA both receive referrals and undertake risk assessments (although the ABSA, being new in post, has yet to undertake one).

The safeguarding advisers also have links with the local Methodist and Catholic churches and the local Buddhist Centre. They attend the Eastern Region Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers Network and the national network.

### **Qualifications and experience**

The BSA began her career as a qualified nurse and moved on to specialise in learning disabilities and autism. She then trained as a Probation Officer, gaining promotion to become a Senior Practitioner within the service with responsibility for running a victim's unit. She subsequently became a Public Protection Officer, based within a police force. Due to her probation background, much of her role was spent teaching police officers how to undertake risk assessments. It was in this role that she came into contact with parishes when they had a person subject to the Sexual Offenders Register in their congregation, and she became aware of the progress that the Church of England was making in ensuring safeguarding was a core priority. Hence her interest in the BSA post when it became vacant just over three years ago.

The ABSA began her role several weeks before the audit. She holds a Certificate of Qualification in Social Work (CQSW) and worked for some years as a Probation Officer, eventually becoming a Senior Probation Officer, and a Practice Development Assessor. She was also a practice teacher for social work students. She then joined

the Children and Families Court Advisory and Support Services (CAFCASS), working in private law cases. From here she then moved into the voluntary sector and worked for Inquest (an organisation campaigning for and supporting families of prisoners who have died in custody). She subsequently became an independent consultant, mainly undertaking Serious Case Reviews, including as a SCIE Learning Together Accredited Reviewer, which she continues to do when not working for the Diocese.

Neither the BSA or the ABSA are members of any church, thus there is no conflict of interest for them in undertaking their responsibilities.

### **2.2.1 Management and supervision arrangements**

Both the BSA and the ABSA are line managed by the Bishop of Thetford.

The ABSA is in the process of beginning to find an external professional supervisor. The BSA has monthly external supervision from a systemic therapist. This supervision was arranged and paid for by the BSA and is then reclaimed. This is clinical supervision which does not include case advice and is not recorded. Discussions take place regarding the emotional dynamics of working on cases and working relationships and there is no guidance on safeguarding matters. There is no contract outlining the expectations and terms of the supervision

Whilst the auditors feel it is a good step to have external professional supervision, they felt that how it is delivered needs to be also focused on the issues of risk that the BSA is having to manage, and where challenge is provided to the thinking and reflection needed when considering risk and how to address it. They also felt that the supervision of the BSA needs to be linked to her overall management, in order that areas covered in supervision can inform the performance management responsibilities of her line manager. The arrangements for how this could be done could be contained within a formalised contract between the supervisor and the line manager.

As the ABSA is now in the process of trying to identify a supervisor for herself, this could be an opportunity to re-assess the supervisory needs of both the BSA and the ABSA. The auditors also felt that the social work model of supervision, delivered, for example, by someone with team management experience within a safeguarding team, may be worth exploring. The qualifications and experience of the supervisor should, as a minimum, be consistent with the new DSA regulations which came into force in January 2017 and state:

*'The Bishop of a diocese must make arrangements for ensuring that any person appointed as diocesan safeguarding adviser receives professional supervision at an appropriate level from a person with experience of work that is concerned with the safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults'.*

The auditors were also told that the BSA and her line manager would meet before the Safeguarding Management Group (SMG) with the Independent Chair and she would discuss current risk assessments with them, which the BSA reported as being

very helpful, as well as at times, challenging. The BSA indicated that the insight and advice provided by the Chair offered the professional challenge and guidance to review and implement appropriate steps in cases. According to the BSA, this has been extremely effective. This is not continuing as the Chair is currently unable to undertake her duties.

## 2.2.2 Adequacy of resources

The ABSA was recruited to support the BSA as she was finding it impossible to deliver all the required training, alongside her casework responsibilities. They will provide cover for each other during periods of holiday/sickness. The BSA answers her work mobile phone outside working hours, during evenings and weekends.

However, there is no administrative support, which means that the BSA and ABSA spend considerable time organising training, keeping training records up to date, dealing with issues that arise with DBS checks etc. The auditors were of the view that it would be more cost-effective if such activities were undertaken by dedicated administrative support, which would then free up the BSA and ABSA to spend more time on their core responsibilities.

*(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.*

*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**

*Explore identifying a supervisor for the BSA and ABSA in line with the new DSA regulations and ideally with a background in managing a social work team that had responsibilities for safeguarding.*

*Consider formulating a contract between the supervisor/s and line manager of the BSA and ABSA in order that their supervision can inform the management process.*

***Consider dedicated administrative support for the safeguarding team.***

## 2.3 SAFEGUARDING MANAGEMENT GROUP

### 2.3.1 Chair

The auditors were not able to meet with the Independent Chair of the Safeguarding Management Group (SMG) as she was indisposed. The role is undertaken on a voluntary basis. The Chair was appointed by the Bishop and has a very lengthy career working in both the statutory and voluntary sector of children's services. She has been both a Director of Social Services in a London Borough and was for many years the Chief Executive of a major children's charity that gives advice to children who feel that they are at risk.

The last meeting of the SMG was chaired by the Bishop of Thetford, and the Diocese is actively trying to identify either a temporary or permanent new Independent Chair. The auditors were advised that the Chair is also a churchwarden. We felt that this could present a possible conflict of interest and that any future appointee should not hold any formal role within a church.

### **2.3.2 Composition of Group**

Aside from the Independent Chair, the SMG has the following membership:

- Bishop of Thetford
- BSA
- ABSA
- Diocesan Secretary
- Archdeacon of Lynn
- Diocesan Children, Youth and Families Development Manager
- An incumbent
- Cathedral Safeguarding Lead
- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Norfolk County Council
- Safeguarding Adult's Coordinator, Norfolk County Council
- Detective Superintendent, Police Safeguarding and Harm Reduction Team, Norfolk Constabulary

The auditors felt that the membership was a good representation from the Diocese, alongside the presence of key statutory safeguarding agencies, representing both children and adults. Members of the SMG reported to the auditors that the presence of such a range of professionals enabled greater clarity about the roles and responsibilities of the agencies represented, which, in turn, strengthened its work.

### **2.3.3 Clarity of purpose and function**

The SMG meets at least three times per year. There is a Terms of Reference in place, which reflects the minutes that were made available to the auditors. However, there is no explicit reference to safeguarding training in the terms of reference, which the auditors felt was an omission bearing in mind its importance, as well as the poor training figures for the Diocese. With the employment of a further 0.5 member of staff to cover safeguarding, with a brief for delivering training, it will be important that the SMG hold the Diocese to account for delivery of the training strategy.

The Terms of Reference also state that a summary report of the work of the Group will be submitted to the Bishop's Council annually. The auditors were told that this has yet to happen, and they would suggest this is a good way to ensure Bishop's Council becomes integrated into safeguarding, so would recommend this is addressed as soon as possible.

The SMG is provided with a data dashboard at each meeting that outlines safeguarding activity regarding numbers of referrals, risk assessments undertaken etc. The auditors felt that this was a good way for them to be able to keep in touch with, and compare over time, levels of safeguarding activity.

At present the SMG does not undertake any quality assurance role. The auditors were told that the Chair would often discuss risk assessments with the BSA and her line manager prior to SMG meetings. The BSA reported these discussions as being both challenging and useful. The auditors wondered if a dip sample of risk assessments could be considered by the SMG (or a sub-group), in order to satisfy itself that they are being done to standard, but also to provide the challenge that the BSA has valued from the Chair.

The auditors felt that now would be a good time to review the Terms of Reference of the SMG to ensure the specific inclusion of training and quality assurance.

The Bishop told the auditors that he met the Independent Chair when they were both sitting in the House of Lords, and she would brief him on the work of the SMG. With either a new temporary or permanent Independent Chair coming into post it may be timely to formalise the feedback arrangements to, for example, meet after each SMG meeting.

*(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**

*Consider that any future independent chairs do not hold any formal position within any church in the Diocese.*

*Review the terms of reference to include monitoring of training, quality assurance etc.*

*Consider presenting a report of the work of the SMG to the Bishop's Council as soon as possible.*

*Consider a quality assurance role for the SMG regarding risk assessments.*

*Consider formalising feedback arrangements to the Bishop by the Independent Chair.*

## 2.4 GUIDANCE, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The House of Bishops' safeguarding policies and guidelines are widely used and adhered to. It is intended to take the new guidelines, when issued, for adoption by the Diocesan Synod.

Some policies and guidance have been localised, others directly adopted. They are available on the diocesan website, that has a page specifically for safeguarding, and other pages directly linked to it containing a range of relevant policies and guidance relating to safeguarding. The pages are all easy to access and written in easy-to-understand language.

The auditors were particularly impressed by the recently published diocesan policy on preventing bullying and harassment (Dignity in Ministry) and felt that this was a positive approach to tackling these issues. The Synod has agreed ways of disseminating the document and the document itself talks about how allegations should be addressed.

*(Reference: part 1 of the S. 11 audit: Ensure the Diocesan Synod adopts the House of Bishops' safeguarding policies, together with any additional diocesan procedures and good practice guidelines.)*

### **Considerations for the Diocese**

*Plan for the implementation of the diocesan policy on preventing bullying and harassment, if not already in place.*

## 2.5 CASEWORK

The auditors looked at 13 case files. Nine cases related to children and four related to adult safeguarding.

### 2.5.1 Quality of risk assessments and safeguarding contracts

The auditors looked at risk assessments relating to individuals of concern to both children and adults. All risk assessments followed a clear format, incorporating information from other agencies, and were undertaken when a possible risk was presented, not just when someone had been convicted. They were thorough, balanced and fair and differentiated between fact and opinion. The auditors found them to be of a very good standard, but not always updated when a new event of significance had occurred (i.e. someone has returned to prison for a period after breaching their licence).

The BSA had undertaken all risk assessments, including when the assessment had concerned a member of the clergy (i.e. a Type B Risk Assessment). Such assessments should be undertaken by an independent person, but the auditors were told that it had not been possible to find independent assessors, hence the BSA undertaking them. One had involved serious allegations regarding possible financial exploitation of an elderly person, and the national team had been approached for advice regarding a suitably qualified person to undertake this, but they had not suggested anyone. The auditors now understand that a list of preferred providers

(held by the NST) able to undertake Type B Risk Assessments is now in place, as the new regulations regarding Type B Risk Assessments re-iterates that they cannot be done by the BSA.

The auditors also viewed several safeguarding agreements. It was clear that they were based on the risk assessment. All, safeguarding agreements were also signed by the BSA. A record is kept of safeguarding agreements and when they are due for renewal by the BSA/ABSA.

*(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.)*

## **2.5.2 Quality of response to allegations**

Auditors noted a timely response to referrals, with prompt action taken in both referring on to outside agencies, such as the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), and also referring to senior members of the clergy if Clergy Disciplinary Measures (CDM) needed to be considered. This was also fed back by members of the Focus Group and by the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) team at Norfolk County Council.

Core Groups were also held, with appropriate people attending, but were not always convened in a timely way. They sometimes took several weeks to take place, (and there was no recording on the file as to the reason/s for the delay), meaning that some momentum in planning of an investigation got lost.

## **2.5.3 Recording systems**

The safeguarding records of the Diocese of Norwich are kept in paper files. The Diocese plans to move over to an electronic system when a national system is proposed by the National Safeguarding Team.

The auditors found the paper files to be very well ordered and in line with national guidance. There was a front sheet in each file where basic information was recorded. The rest of the file was subdivided with clearly marked sections files in chronological order, making it easy to locate information. A running record of contacts with other professionals, the person of concern etc. is also kept, meaning that it was also easy for the auditors to 'understand' the progress on a case.

The case files are stored in fire-proof secure cabinets within the Bishop's office, where the BSA/ABSA are based.

### **Considerations for the Diocese**

*Consider what actions need to be implemented to achieve:*

- a) Updated risk assessments and safeguarding agreements whenever there is a significant new event*
- b) Core Groups being convened within a timescale in line with national guidance.*

## 2.6 TRAINING

### 2.6.1 Delivery

The training delivered within the Diocese and parishes has been adopted from the national guidance. Until recently, safeguarding training was being delivered by the BSA. She has recently been joined by the ABSA who will take the lead with training, and also have some input from the Diocesan Children, Youth and Families Development Officer, although the DSA will continue to deliver training as well. There was very positive feedback from the Focus Group and others that the auditors had conversations with about the quality of the training. It was felt to be delivered in a meaningful way that also encouraged debate and discussion.

### 2.6.2 Who is trained?

There are some variations in the numbers receiving safeguarding training. Almost 100 per cent of licensed clergy have received training, along with the majority of those with Permission to Officiate. Likewise, almost all Lay Readers have had training but only a third of lay officers/volunteers in the parishes have. There is a strategic plan in place to address this, with the aim that all should have had training by the end of 2017. The auditors felt that the SMG could usefully monitor this to hold the Diocese to account for its delivery.

The Focus Group told the auditors that parishes also have budgets that enable the incumbent and safeguarding officer to attend other relevant external training, if required.

The Bishop will not confirm any appointment until a satisfactory DBS has been received. The person appointed is then required to attend safeguarding training on taking up the post.

### 2.6.3 Organisation and recording systems

All training record-keeping and organisation, including who has/has not undertaken safeguarding training, is kept by the BSA/ABSA. Despite the recent increase in capacity with a 0.5 ABSA post, the auditors felt that this administrative function was not a good use of the time of qualified safeguarding staff and that administrative support would be better placed to be undertaking this role.

Sufficient and fit-for-purpose equipment required to deliver training is supplied by the Diocese

*(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**

*Consider the use of dedicated administrative support to undertake the function of organising safeguarding training, recording-keeping of who has/not had training etc.*

## 2.7 SAFE RECRUITMENT OF CLERGY, LAY OFFICERS AND VOLUNTEERS

The auditors reviewed seven Blue Clergy Files and four files of lay officers. They did not review any files for volunteers.

The auditors found the files of both members of the clergy and lay officers to be variable. For example, most, but not all, had evidence that a DBS check had been undertaken, when this had taken place and the outcome. Likewise, some, but not all, had evidence of confirmation of identity. All but one file had two references, and the one that did not had one reference. All had evidence of application forms.

In one case, where a member of the clergy had been subject of the Clergy Disciplinary Measures (CDM), all relevant information and documentation was on the Blue File in a clearly identified section.

Where relevant there was an easily identifiable front sheet linking the file to a safeguarding file, with a statement that the BSA needed to be contacted. However, there was no information about what the safeguarding concern was about, and the auditors felt that there should be reference to this.

*(Reference to part 7 of S.11 audit: The Diocesan Secretary has implemented arrangements in line with the House of Bishop's 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**

*Consider what steps need to be taken to ensure that all relevant information and documentation regarding Safer Recruitment is kept on both Blue Clergy Files and lay officer files.*

*Consider including more specific information about any safeguarding concern on the front sheet of the Blue Clergy Files.*

## 2.8 DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE (DBS)

The Diocese of Norwich uses an externally commissioned organisation, Due Diligence Checking (DDC) to undertake its DBS checks. Members of the Focus Group and others spoke very highly of the system and said it worked well and very quickly.

There is some administrative support to undertake any routine processing, but the BSA/ABSA deal with any queries that arise. The auditors feel that whilst the more complex issues may need to be dealt with by the BSA/ABSA, more routine queries could be addressed by an administrative worker.

In 2015, the Diocese undertook 640 DBS checks, of which five came back with a concern. In 2016, 11 had a concern and so far in 2017, the number has been three. A risk assessment is undertaken in all such situations.

## **Considerations for the Diocese**

*Consider expanding the administrative support to the BSA/ABSA in order that an administrator could deal with more routine DBS queries.*

## **2.9 COMPLAINTS AND WHISTLEBLOWING**

### **2.9.1 Complaints**

The Diocese has a complaints policy that relates specifically to safeguarding that is clearly written and is available on the diocesan website, on the safeguarding pages.

### **2.9.2 Whistleblowing**

The Diocese has a whistleblowing policy that relates specifically to safeguarding that is clearly written and is available on the diocesan website on the safeguarding pages.

*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.*

## **2.10 QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES**

Prior to the Independent Chair of the SMG becoming indisposed, the BSA and her line manager would meet with her prior to each meeting. Part of their discussion covered risk assessments and the BSA has reported this as very helpful, as well as challenging. Whilst not formally convened or recorded, this was a form of quality assurance, albeit that it is now no longer taking place

As discussed under 2.3, the auditors are of the view that the SMG could usefully introduce a quality assurance function into its role by undertaking a dip sample of risk assessments. The consideration made under 2.3 regarding this would be relevant here.

The supervision arrangements for the BSA and ABSA are discussed under 2.2. The current arrangements for the BSA will provide a form of quality assurance, as cases are discussed and advice given and suggestions made. However, as pointed out, discussions are not recorded and risk assessments are not specifically considered in these sessions. The consideration outlined in 2.2 for the supervision of the BSA and ABSA is also relevant in this section.

There are no new considerations here for the Diocese, but see considerations relating to QA under 2.2.and 2.3.

## **2.11 MONITORING OF SAFEGUARDING IN PARISHES AS PART OF ARCHDEACON'S RESPONSIBILITIES**

Safeguarding is covered in the Archdeacon's Articles of Enquiry. Questions asked cover both children and adult safeguarding. Each church is visited every four years and if there are any concerns regarding safeguarding the Rural Dean for the relevant

church is available to assist in following this up. The auditors were concerned that this could mean that a church that was struggling in some way regarding safeguarding may be left for four years before this is identified under the Articles of Enquiry. This was raised in a conversation with the Archdeacon of Lynn: the possibility of Rural Deans undertaking annual visits to each church to check on safeguarding arrangements in between the Articles of Enquiry was discussed.

Whilst safeguarding is also covered by the central Visitation (often better known as the Annual Visitation), these are not done on a parish basis so are not as targeted.

The auditors felt it was positive that ministerial development reviews take place after the Archdeacon's or Bishop's pastoral visitation ensuring a clear link between the considerations regarding safeguarding and the professional development of ministers.

#### **Considerations for the Diocese**

*Consider delegating to Deans the responsibility to visit each church in their area on an annual basis in order to check on safeguarding arrangements.*

## **2.12 RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS**

There is an Authorised Listeners service in place, undertaken by two volunteers. However, no one from the Focus Group was aware of it. There is also no mention of it on the diocesan website. The auditors suggest that there needs to be more publicity about it, so that people know of its existence, either for themselves, or others.

#### **Considerations for the Diocese**

*Publicise the Authorised Listeners service more, for example, by listing it on the diocesan website, producing a leaflet that can be displayed in churches etc.*

## **2.13 INFORMATION SHARING**

There is a protocol with the police and probation regarding information sharing. The safeguarding advisers reported they have good links with the local Methodist and Roman Catholic churches, and the Buddhist Centre in Norwich. Overall, information sharing has not been an issue for the BSA/ABSA.

## **2.14 LINKS WITH NATIONAL SAFEGUARDING TEAM**

The BSA and the ABSA, alongside all those the auditors had conversations with, were clear regarding the direction of travel of the National Safeguarding Team (NST), and were supportive of this. The BSA is a member of the national risk assessment task group with the NST, convened to review the current risk assessment practice guidance.

The BSA has approached the national team to ask for information regarding independent risk assessors and would readily approach them with any other enquiry.

## **2.15 NATIONAL SYSTEMIC SAFEGUARDING ISSUES**

A national list of suitably qualified professionals who can undertake risk assessments would be welcomed, including those able to assess where the concern has been concerning possible financial exploitation involving vulnerable adults. (The auditors are advised, by the NST, that this is now available in accordance with the new risk assessment regulations.)

Consider the role of Fresh Expressions within the Church of England regarding any possible challenges it may present to safeguarding processes.

## 3 CONCLUSION

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 in section 3.

### 3.1 WHAT'S GOING WELL?

- The Bishop is committed to safeguarding and has a clear understanding of his leadership role and responsibilities in this area.
- We explored the placing of the safeguarding team within the Bishop's office, but were reassured that the Bishop respects and highly values their safeguarding knowledge and experience and ensures they are allowed their professional voice.
- The Diocese is committed to safeguarding and ongoing improvement.
- The BSA is well known and respected by the Bishop, his senior team, the Diocese and partner agencies for her efficiency, knowledge and good practice.
- The Focus Group said it found the BSA to be very supportive, knowledgeable and that she responded quickly to any requests for advice and in taking referrals. It also found the training she delivered to be of a good quality, relevant and helpful.
- There is a good range of external representation on the Safeguarding Management Group. Members of the Group feel that the external representation enables a better and more holistic approach to its role, and ensures that its work is not inward looking.
- There is timely response from the DSA when a referral is made, and she liaises effectively with external agencies.
- The safeguarding files were of a high standard – clearly written and fit for purpose. There is a clear, and easy-to-follow, file format.
- The process for obtaining and updating DBS clearance works very well.
- Ministerial development reviews take place after the Archdeacon's or Bishop's pastoral visitation, ensuring a clear link between the considerations regarding safeguarding and the professional development of ministers.
- Resourcing of safeguarding has been increased by 0.5 and external supervision for the safeguarding team is paid for by the Diocese.

### 3.2 AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- The use of independent assessors for Type B Risk Assessments: these have not been commissioned out to external, independent assessors and the diocese felt a lack of guidance, to date, from the National Safeguarding Team regarding who could be approached to do such work. The new DSA regulations providing an approved list maintained by the Archbishop's Council should assist in the future.

- The need for consistent updating of risk assessments when a new event occurs.
- Whilst Core Groups are being held they are not always being convened in a timely way, as per guidance.
- The development of supervision for the BSA and the ABSA to include supervision of general safeguarding casework and risk assessments provided by a supervisor with safeguarding experience (in line with the DSA regulations 2016). Provision should be subject to a contract between the supervisor and the safeguarding team's line manager that includes a link with the line manager that covers performance and capability and the expectation that case discussions are fully recorded.
- Authorised Listeners: this service is in place, but needs further promotion so that relevant people know of its existence.
- Numbers of those receiving safeguarding training have been historically low in some categories (but not in others) and whilst a training strategy is in place to increase the numbers trained, this needs to be closely monitored. The Safeguarding Management Group should have strategic oversight of the full implementation of the training strategy and associated workplan.
- The safeguarding team is required to organise its own training and become involved with queries when they arise in the DBS process. This takes time away from its core role and could be undertaken by an administrator.
- The Safeguarding Management Group could usefully undertake a QA role, to satisfy itself that practice is being undertaken to required standard.
- Any independent safeguarding role should be undertaken by someone who holds no office within the Diocese or within a parish.

## APPENDIX: REVIEW PROCESS

### 3.3 DATA COLLECTION

#### 3.3.1 Information provided to auditors

The auditors were provided with the following documentation:

- Self-Audit 2014 and 2015
- SMG Dashboard
- All relevant safeguarding data
- Minutes and Terms of Reference for the SMG
- Strategic Learning and Development Plan
- Information on Safer Recruitment
- Articles of Enquiry form

#### 3.3.2 Participation of members of the diocese

The auditors had conversations with the following people:

- The Bishop of Norwich
- The Suffrage Bishop of Thetford
- The Archdeacon of Lynn
- The Bishop's Safeguarding Advisor
- The Assistant Bishop's Safeguarding Advisor
- Several members of the Safeguarding Management Group

A Focus Group was held with the following participants:

- two vicars
- a rector
- parish children's leader
- two parish safeguarding officers

#### 3.3.3 The audit: what records / files were examined?

The auditors reviewed the following number of files:

- nine relating to children
- four relating to adults
- seven Blue Clergy Files
- four Lay Officers recruitment files.

#### 3.3.4 Limitations of audit

Unfortunately, the Diocesan Secretary was indisposed during the audit, so the auditors were not able to have a conversation with him. Also, the Independent Chair of the Diocesan Safeguarding Management Group (DSMG) was unwell, and no conversation was possible, although the auditors did meet with most members of the DSMG.