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# Southwell Minster

## Independent Safeguarding Audit

September 2021



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND



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## About SCIE

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

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

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 THE AUDIT PROGRAMME

- 1.1.1** The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) is delighted to have been asked to provide an independent audit of the safeguarding arrangements of the cathedrals of the Church of England.
- 1.1.2** This programme of work will see three cathedral audits in 2018, 16 in 2019, four in 2020, 17 in 2021 and a final three early in 2022. There are 43 in total. It represents a significant investment in cathedrals and an important opportunity to support improvement in safeguarding.
- 1.1.3** All cathedrals are unique and differ in significant ways from a diocese. SCIE has drawn on its experience of auditing all 42 Church of England dioceses, and adapted it, using discussions and preliminary meetings with different cathedral chapters, to design an audit methodology fit for cathedrals. We have sought to balance cathedrals' diversity with the need for adequate consistency across the audits, to make the audits comparable, but sufficiently bespoke to support progress in effective and timely safeguarding practice in each separate cathedral. Cathedral representatives will play a key role in adapting the audit framework to their particular cathedral context. Only in this way will we achieve bespoke audits that are right for each place respectively. Bespoke audits will in turn optimise the usefulness of the audit process and outputs to supporting progress in effective and timely safeguarding practice. We look forward to working with you to this end.

### 1.2 THE AUDIT PROCESS

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

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

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

- 1.2.2** Drawing on SCIE's Learning Together model, the following principles underpin the approach we take to the audits:
- Working collaboratively: the audits done 'with you, not to you'
  - Highlighting areas of good practice as well as problematic issues
  - Focusing on understanding the reasons behind inevitable problems in safeguarding
  - No surprises: being open and transparent about our focus, methods and findings so nothing comes out of the blue
  - Distinguishing between unique local challenges and underlying issues that impact on all or many cathedrals

## Supporting improvements

- 1.2.3** The overarching aim of each audit is to support safeguarding improvements. To this end our goal is to understand the safeguarding progress of each cathedral to date. We set out to move from understanding how things work in each cathedral, to evaluating how *well* they are working. This includes exploring the reasons behind identified strengths and weaknesses. Our conclusions will pose questions for the cathedral leadership to consider in attempting to tackle the underlying causes of deficiencies.
- 1.2.4** SCIE methodology does not conclude findings with recommendations. We instead give the cathedral questions to consider in relation to the findings, as they decide how best to tackle the issue at hand. This approach is part of the SCIE Learning Together audit methodology. The approach requires those with local knowledge and responsibility for progressing improvement work to have a key role in deciding what exactly to do to address the findings and to be accountable for their decisions. It has the additional benefit of helping to foster ownership locally of the work to be done to improve safeguarding.

### The process

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

The site visit will be either three days or 2.5 days (in the case of Southwell, it was 2.5 days). Cathedrals have been selected for the three-day audit to provide a broad base, or on the scale of an operation and/or where concerns may have been raised in the past for the cathedral.

## 1.3 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

This report is divided into:

- Introduction
- The findings of the audit presented per theme
- Questions for the Cathedral to consider are listed, where relevant, at the end of each Findings section
- Conclusions of the auditors' findings: what is working well and areas for further development
- An appendix sets out the audit process and any limitations to this audit

## 2. CONTEXT

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### 2.1 CONTEXT OF THE CATHEDRAL

- 2.1.1** The leadership in each cathedral, as part of the audit process, is asked to supply a brief description of the institution:

‘Southwell Cathedral is most often referred to as Southwell Minster. This is because the present Romanesque building was begun over 900 years ago; it has been a Minster for centuries but only became a cathedral in 1884 when the Diocese of Southwell (now Southwell and Nottingham) was created. Also, it remains the parish church for 5,500 souls. The town’s population of 7,500 is growing with new housing developments and ‘infilling’ of brown field sites. Regular worshippers tend to live locally but since the pandemic and the offer of online worship, we are attracting new people, some of whom travel from across the Diocese, drawn to the choral tradition. The electoral roll (congregants) is 230 and has a large representation in the 60+ range.

The Minster is a beacon of living faith for the people of Nottinghamshire, witnessing through the centuries to God’s love for his people, and today inspiring all who come as pilgrims or tourists. The primary work of the Minster in 2021 is the same as it has been through the ages, the worship of God, the mission of the gospel and a focus of hospitality, welcome and celebration. It is a prayerful place and a spiritual resource to the 307 parishes of the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham. Daily worship is at the centre of our life. Southwell Minster as cathedral and parish church offers all who come here an opportunity for celebration, learning and discovery.

It is the seat of the Bishop of Southwell and Nottingham, who resides next door in Bishop’s Manor and nearby is Jubilee House, the diocesan office.

- 2.1.2** The Diocese of Southwell & Nottingham represents the Church of England across Nottinghamshire; it covers some 847 square miles, with a population of 1.14 million. The Minster sits in the centre of the historic small town of Southwell, which is one of the most prosperous towns in England. Its population is almost entirely white and middle-class British (in contrast to the very diverse city of Nottingham). Despite having a cathedral, Southwell is not officially recognised as a city; it is served by a Town Council, and its local authority is Nottingham County Council, which provides services for children and adult social care. Geographically, it is closely connected to a constellation of East Midlands cities, including Nottingham, Newark (nearest main line train station), and Mansfield.
- 2.1.3** Adjacent to the Minster is the partly ruined (and now restored for use by the Minster) Archbishop’s Palace, both surrounded by extensive, well-kept grounds and gardens. Several other properties associated with the Minster are within or adjacent to the grounds. The Sacrista Prebend retreat house, which belongs to the Minster, is across the street. The Minster School, a local authority junior and senior school with music as its specialism, is also close by, and affords easy access for the girl and boy choristers who sing in the Cathedral.
- 2.1.4** The Minster has benefited from a £2.3m Heritage Lottery Fund Grant for its Leaves Project, which has restored the extensive stone carvings in its Chapter House. Although delayed by some months by ‘lockdown’, the interior work is scheduled to finish in October 2021, and the external work in the Palace Garden by spring 2022.

## 2.2 CONTEXTUAL FEATURES RELEVANT TO SAFEGUARDING

- 2.2.1** Southwell Minster is at least 1,000 years old: an earlier Anglo-Saxon church was succeeded by a Norman building, dating from 1108. The land belonged to the Archbishop of York, and the site retains the ruins of his palace. The Minster has a Norman nave, and a Romanesque choir and east end; the Chapter House, situated in a north-east corner of the church, contains glorious 13<sup>th</sup> century stone carvings of foliage. There are four side chapels which are open and give good visibility, and one with a door.
- 2.2.2** The Minster community uses part of the Archbishop's Palace, an adjacent building, for functions, principally as the base for the Department of Music. All areas used by the choristers are secured by fobs. The remainder is open to the public.
- 2.2.3** The extensive surrounding grounds and gardens are open and accessible at all times. In addition to its regular congregation, the Minster welcomes upwards of 55,000 visitors per year (in pre-COVID times), as well as almost 8,000 children, families and other adults who attend school visits and other special events.
- 2.2.4** The Minster has had only one of its two Residentiary Canons in post for the past two years, which adds pressure to the clerical duties required on the floor of the Minster (one clergy on duty per week, covering every day). The previous Canon Pastor had been responsible for the management and oversight of the education, outreach and pastoral care functions. These have been managed since his retirement by the Dean and the Canon Precentor.
- 2.2.5** The Chief Operating Officer, who was the organisational safeguarding lead, left in June 2021 after a period of sickness absence. The post of Chief Officer is being filled temporarily.
- 2.2.6** In common with all cathedrals, Southwell had to adapt rapidly to the restrictions imposed as a result of the COVID pandemic, closing its premises for some of the time, and either suspending its activities or moving them online. Many staff were furloughed and volunteers ceased their work in the Minster. It is now in the process of resuming 'business as usual', albeit with changes that were either in process before the pandemic or have been implemented as a result of changed thinking and practices during the past 18 months.

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

- 2.3.1** The Dean of Southwell, as the lead figure in all aspects of Minster life, carries the ultimate responsibility for safeguarding. Several clergy and staff support her in her leadership role, including:
- The Canon Precentor, who has responsibility for music and liturgy, including the choirs, servers and bellringers
  - The second residentiary Canon post (to be redesignated Canon Missioner), will be responsible for education and outreach, including pastoral care
  - The Chief Officer (previously Chief Operating Officer), who oversees the operations of the Minster, including recruitment and business functions. The current CO has been in post for three months and is an interim appointment for one year. He sits on the Safeguarding Committee, along with the Dean and the Safeguarding Coordinator



- The Head Verger, with his team, is principally responsible for the safety and security of the site, including the buildings described above. He is managed by the CO. The Head Verger has worked at the Minster for 26 years and is leaving at the end of September 2021
- The Rector Chori (Director of Music) has oversight of the choirs. He is supported by an Assistant Director of Music, an Organ Scholar, and two Chorister Supervisors. He works with the Canon Precentor in planning services and until recently has been line managed by the Dean
- The Head of Education is responsible for school/education visits, children and family activities, and some learning activities for adults. She reports (in normal times) to the vacant Canon post, but currently to the CO
- The Tower Captain oversees the activities of the band of bellringers and the safety of the bell tower
- The Chief Steward of the Guild of Stewards, who is a volunteer, is responsible for the around 120 volunteers (before COVID) who are welcomers, stewards and guides in the Minster
- The Minster Safeguarding Coordinator (SC) works closely with the Dean and the CO, but is not formally managed by them, as she is a volunteer
- The Minster Safeguarding Committee (MSC) comprises the Dean, the CO and the SC. The DSA attends when required
- The Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) leads the Diocesan Safeguarding Team (DST) which performs safeguarding functions for the Minster

**2.3.2** Chapter is the governing body of the Minster and comprises the Dean, two Residentiary Canons, a Member of the College of Canons, two lay persons elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting, and four lay members appointed by the Bishop or Bishop's Council and Dean. The Safeguarding Coordinator is a coopted member. The CO is in attendance. Chapter meets nine times per year. It is supported in its governance responsibilities by the Cathedral Council, which meets three times a year (including one joint meeting with Chapter and the College of Canons), and the College of Canons, which meets three times a year.

## **2.4 WHO WAS SEEN IN THE AUDIT**

- 2.4.1** The audit involved reviewing documentation and case files and talking to people at the heart of safeguarding in the Minster. The fieldwork aspect of the audit was conducted over 2.5 days. Lists of persons interviewed and of documentation provided are in the appendices to this report.
- 2.4.2** One person came forward to speak with the auditors on behalf of someone concerning the Minster's response to safeguarding concerns.

## **2.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE AUDIT**

- 2.5.1** This audit was conducted in a fully face-to-face format, albeit socially distanced at all times and observing all COVID-related government rules and guidance. However, some limitations remained that made some aspects of the audit necessarily different.



Given the timing of the audit, the Minster was in the process of resuming 'business as usual' post pandemic. Conversations with those in the Minster community inevitably referred to circumstances before COVID, during lockdowns, and in the current period of 'opening up' and moving back to more familiar and normal arrangements.

- 2.5.2** No focus groups were held during this audit and instead surveys were made available for both child choristers and adults (staff, congregants, volunteers and parents of choristers). These were analysed by the audit team and findings explored and referenced throughout conversations. There was a good rate of response from adults (84), across a broad spectrum of roles, including congregants and volunteers. The children's survey had only three respondents, thus the voice of children in the audit was limited.
- 2.5.3** The auditors observed an after-school rehearsal of the boys' choir, the pre-service arrangements, and an evensong service – the first 'in person' back in the Minster since the most recent lockdown. Afterwards, the auditors observed the care given by the Music Department staff, including one of the two Chorister Supervisors, and the collection of the children by parents/carers. There was no observation of the girl choristers, who were not present during the audit days.

## 3. FINDINGS – PRACTICE

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### 3.1 SAFE ACTIVITIES AND WORKING PRACTICES

#### Precincts and buildings

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

#### *Description*

- 3.1.2** The Minster has three entrances, two of which are open daily, with the West Door only open for high days and holidays (apart from to support ventilation for services during COVID). Most visitors enter by the north door, and there is a welcome desk here with two stewards available. A third steward is normally to be found at the south door. The vergers' base of two offices is in the North Quire Aisle and is easily accessible.
- 3.1.3** The Minster is a generally open and airy space. There are four side chapels which are visible from the body of the church, and one further chapel, the Pilgrim's Chapel, which is entered via a door; this was previously used for Junior Church and is currently a vestry for clergy and servers. School visits normally use the body of the church (nave, north and south transepts) for activities.
- 3.1.4** The Chapter House has an internal entrance from the North Choir Aisle, with a short flight of stairs and a short corridor (called a slype) leading to the space. A stairlift to improve accessibility is due to be installed shortly.
- 3.1.5** The Minster is open daily from approximately 8am until after evensong, about 6:30pm. The North Porch is the 'natural' entrance, as it lies in the direction of most visitors. This is where the welcome desk and stewards are situated. There is usually one steward at the south door, and it is used mainly by those who work/volunteer at the Minster, including the choristers and others in the Music Department, as well as visitors to access the Archbishop's Palace and visitor toilets.
- 3.1.6** The entrance to the bell tower is via an external door which is always kept locked. The Tower Captain has a key, and there is another held in the Vergers' Offices. Halfway up the stairway to the bell chamber there is a door opened via a keypad, providing another layer of security and safety.
- 3.1.7** There is no CCTV in the Minster building. Two CCTV cameras cover the entrance to the Archbishop's Palace. There are no other cameras inside either building, including the Chapter House with its valuable stonework, or elsewhere in the grounds.
- 3.1.8** The Vergers Team comprises three full-time vergers, including the Head Verger and a Deputy Head Verger, and three other part-time vergers. They have worked together as a team for many years and are very experienced. The Head Verger will be leaving his post in September 2021 after 26 years. There is a rota which provides that two vergers will be on duty between 10am and 4pm each day; the auditors were told that the period of 'lone working', early and late, is normally limited to ½ hour. There is also

a weekly rota for a volunteer Day Chaplain (between April and October). A Residentiary Canon is available every day in case of pastoral emergencies.

- 3.1.9** The Vergers' Offices are in the North Choir Aisle, easily accessed by anyone needing them. The vergers carry radios for communication, and there is one also on the welcome desk, so they can be summoned if needed. It appears that the vergers are usually summoned in person when needed, as their offices are so accessible.
- 3.1.10** Emergency evacuation procedures are in place and are the responsibility of the vergers. Their office keeps a copy of all safeguarding procedures, and blank copies of 'Concern' forms which are meant to be filled in when relevant by a member of staff/volunteers. In practice, it appears that concerns are emailed directly to the Safeguarding Coordinator (SC). The Head Verger has the telephone number for the police community support officer and beat officer. There are no police based in Southwell.
- 3.1.11** When the building is closed, if a security alarm is set off, this goes through as a telephone call to the Head Verger, who is then responsible either for attending the Minster himself, or for arranging for one of the vergers who live nearer to the Minster to do so. The Minster Centre has a separate system, and any alarm from there is dealt with by an independent security firm.
- 3.1.12** The Head Verger, along with other relevant Minster staff, attends a weekly diary meeting. This meeting records all upcoming events and considers possible future events.
- 3.1.13** Visitor toilets are located in the Archbishop's Palace to the south of the Minster. There are none in the Minster itself. The Song School and other Music Department rooms are in the same building. Every area used by choristers is secured by fobbed doors, and this includes a suite of rooms where the separate choristers' toilets are situated. Upstairs in the Archbishop's Palace, there is the State Chamber, a large room used for all kinds of occasions, including visits from school children.
- 3.1.14** There is one other separate building – Trebeck Hall – a modern structure which provides extra practical space for the Minster. It has generous-sized rooms and has been used for a number of different purposes, including choir rehearsals, storage, and rental for outside activities. It was not open for the auditors to see inside.
- 3.1.15** On one side of the precinct, accessible from busy Church Street, is the entrance to a spacious Minster shop and a café, which has the capacity for indoor and outdoor seating. Next to this is the Minster Centre, where the Dean and other staff have their offices.
- 3.1.16** The buildings described above are surrounded by an extensive open green space. It is not designated a 'Close' and the various gates into the space are not locked when the Minster itself is closed and locked. Thus, it is a public space 24 hours a day. It is well-lit after dark. The auditors heard that the Minster rarely experiences any anti-social behaviour in these spaces and has few 'challenging' visitors to the Minster. The auditors were told that Southwell as a town has few street-homeless people.
- 3.1.17** There is helpful and relevant information about safeguarding in the Minster on its website, including a clear and comprehensive safeguarding policy. In the Minster and in the Song School (and in the girl choristers' rehearsal room, which we did not see), some printed-out documents are posted on a notice board, and these include a 'display document' which introduces the SC, with her photo and contact details.

## Analysis

- 3.1.18** Arrangements for keeping safe the Minster and associated buildings and those working in and visiting them are generally good. Staff, volunteers and congregants are confident that they are kept safe. CCTV coverage could be improved. Lone-working arrangements should be reviewed.
- 3.1.19** Southwell Minster is a welcoming and generally safe environment for those who work and visit there, with survey responses for this audit supporting that judgement: to the question 'How safe do you feel in your cathedral activities?' 84%, (n=71) responded 'extremely' and 6% (n=5) 'moderately.'
- 3.1.20** The building is well cared for and is staffed throughout its public opening hours. The stewards, vergers and clergy form a duty team which provides appropriate responses to those who need their information and help. The Verger Team has good capacity and is impressive in their extensive experience and skills; they operate well as a team to ensure safety and security of the buildings and the Minster community, seven days a week. They are well regarded by staff and volunteers across the Minster community.
- 3.1.21** There is a well-used system for summoning help from the vergers in the Minster – either via radio or seeking them out in their well-positioned offices. However, there is only one other radio available, which remains at the welcome desk. This leaves contact with the vergers potentially limited, especially for those who work next door, in the Archbishop's Palace. On the occasions where there is a welcomer stationed at the south door, they would normally be working alone.
- 3.1.22** Despite the confidence expressed by the Head Verger about managing the relatively small extent of lone working for him and his team, and the confidence expressed by others in the support they received by the Verger Team, the auditors questioned to what degree lone working in general is fully managed and mitigated. Asked 'to what extent is lone working avoided in your role?', 37% (n=31) of survey respondents said 'extremely' and 23% (n=19) replied 'moderately', but 7% (n=6) said 'not at all.' This latter group comprised both staff and volunteers.
- 3.1.23** The Minster building is relatively open and site security is well understood. However, there is insufficient CCTV to give extra security. The Archbishop's Palace, with public toilets and a number of other rooms and corridors, similarly has no internal CCTV, despite being in regular use by the choristers and others in the Music Department, as well as children and adults who come to events in the State Chamber.

### Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- What measures could improve further the safety of the Minster and its associated premises, and reduce the likelihood of lone working?

## Children

This section is about children who come to the Minster in various capacities. It does not cover choristers, or children who bellring, who are referred to in section 3.2. There are no child servers at present.

### Description

- 3.1.24** The Minster has two areas of activities for children (and families): those coming under the remit of the Education Department, and those relating to the Children's Ministry. The auditors heard that the Minster is very keen to welcome more children and families into its community and is working creatively to make this happen.

**3.1.25** The Minster's work with children and families is overseen and supported by a Children and Families Development group, whose membership includes the Head of Education (HoE), the Canon Precentor and the Safeguarding Coordinator.

### *Education*

**3.1.26** The HoE is an experienced teacher, with a background in primary schools; she has been in her post at the Minster for 17 years. Her 'department' comprises only herself and one administrator (a post currently vacant).<sup>1</sup> They are based in the diocesan office, not in the Minster Centre; despite the physical separation, she feels very much part of the Minster's staff team. She is currently managed by the CO, in the absence of the Residentiary Canon who was her previous manager. She has undertaken C3 Leadership training.

**3.1.27** The HoE plans and delivers a programme that is (in normal times) used by about 7,700 children and adults a year. The largest proportion of these are primary school children on school visits. Given her small team, the HoE relies on an army of volunteers to produce the programmes for education visits and special events; for the special Time Travelling weeks alone (see below), she has a pool of 150 volunteers, using 40–50 per day.

**3.1.28** The output of the Education Department includes:

- Rolling programme of school visits for schools across the Diocese (most recently offered on Zoom)
- Three week-long annual events, for Key Stages 1 and 2 and Year 6 (end of primary school) – including drama workshops and the 'Minster Trail'
- Time Travelling events for school children which highlight the rich history and archaeology found at the Minster
- Mini-Minster – once-a-month session for pre-school children (parents/carers present)
- Family Fun Days – generally indoors in the Minster and the Archbishop's Palace; fewer of these are happening due to a drop in take-up
- Some adult learning, including a Discovery Day with the offer of 13–14 workshops; and a talks programme online

The HoE works closely with Minster welcomers, guides and vergers, as well as her own recruited volunteers, to support the quality and safety of all these activities.

**3.1.29** Children on school visits remain the responsibility of the school/school staff who accompany them. In addition, the school is required to carry out a risk assessment for their visit (the HoE sends advance information about how to do this).

**3.1.30** The HoE has prioritised safeguarding in all the activities she organises. There are two headline rules for her team:

- Never be on your own with a child
- Children on school visits remain the school's responsibility

She has developed strong safeguarding standards for the volunteers who work in her

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<sup>1</sup> For the next period, the Education Department also has input from an Intern and a Community Engagement Coordinator, whose posts are funded by the Leaves Project and will end shortly.

department. These include, as a minimum, encouragement to complete C0 online training; this is not yet a requirement, but she is working towards that for all volunteers. Her previous administrator was keeping a spreadsheet for monitoring volunteers' training. For recruiting new volunteers, the HoE has designed a process which captures some elements of safer recruitment practice, including an application form, one reference and a requirement to complete a self-declaration using a form designed by the HoE. Education volunteers are not required to have a clear DBS check, but several have DBS clearance due to other activities. Records are kept by the HoE.

### *Children's Ministry*

- 3.1.31** For its Children's Ministry programme, the Minster commissioned the part-time services of a consultant to deliver children and family work. He is an experienced safeguarding professional who was previously part of the Southwell and Nottingham Diocesan Education Team and remains a longstanding safeguarding trainer in another diocese. He works up to seven hours a week for the Minster (on a freelance contract) to organise and run children and family events, including leading assemblies for the two primary schools in Southwell (post-COVID). He was safely recruited for this post and has a DBS check as part of his work with the other diocese. The work is reliant on large numbers of supporters who 'come from the Minster' and include staff as well as volunteers.
- 3.1.32** A range of family-friendly events are offered – indoors and outdoors – at which parents/carers remain responsible for their children at all times. The auditors were told that it has been challenging to attract local families, and the volunteers group continue to try different approaches to encourage them to attend the events on offer. The auditors were told of a weekend Creation Trail being planned, which is a 'flow event' – meaning that people can arrive and participate throughout the day, making it as flexible as possible for families to attend.
- 3.1.33** The Children's Work Consultant carries out a risk assessment for every event. If he has any concerns regarding safeguarding, he discusses these with the SC and/or the DSA. He provides an advance briefing note to the vergers and the stewards regarding their involvement. For larger services, there is more detailed advance planning and clear instructions for all those involved. Events planning is carried out in line with Minster processes, including the diary meeting, and consultation with senior managers. This provides clear accountability for the activities of the Children's Ministry.
- 3.1.34** The Junior Church at the Minster had come to an end before COVID, due to the declining number of families who attend services, and the auditors heard that there are plans for it to recommence.
- 3.1.35** There is no 'Lost Child' policy. The auditors were told that the likelihood of there being a lost child is regarded as extremely low, due to the local demographic. However, auditors were advised that actions to be taken with regards to a 'lost child' are included in the safeguarding notes given to education volunteers.

### *Analysis*

- 3.1.36** The present provision for young children is safely operated, with appropriate procedures in place. Processes for recruitment and training of volunteers and record-keeping need aligning with the safer-recruitment process adopted in the rest of the Minster.



- 3.1.37** The auditors concluded that the various educational events for children and families are operated safely, with robust risk assessments, and clear agreements with schools and families about the safety and wellbeing of children. The HoE is very experienced and well qualified and is well supported by Minster staff and a large group of volunteers.
- 3.1.38** Volunteers are recruited by the HoE, who has devised a version of safer recruitment for all applicants. They are not required to be DBS-checked because they are never alone with children. Safeguarding training, however, is expected, and the HoE is working towards making the basic online course a requirement for becoming a volunteer (currently, compliance with the training is low). A system for recording training undertaken was begun by the previous Administrator and needs to be revived.
- 3.1.39** The auditors reflected that aspects of the good safeguarding practice adopted by the HoE could usefully be shared across the Minster with those with less awareness. At present, there is no forum for doing this. Conversely, the recruitment practice employed in the education department should be fully aligned with the safer-recruitment practice set out in national guidance and adopted by the Minster, including the use of common forms.
- 3.1.40** The outreach events for the Children's Ministry are well imagined and run; they are planned and delivered by an experienced safeguarding professional, who works in partnership with the Minster community, in particular the safeguarding officers there and in the Diocese, as well as the vergers and stewards. Programmes are carefully planned, with the expansion of family participation in mind.
- 3.1.41** The auditors noted that there is no Lost Child Policy and were told that this is not needed. This seemed an example of 'it can't happen here', and something easily addressed in Minster procedures.
- 3.1.42** The Minster and Archbishop's Palace, where children sing, worship and visit, would benefit from clearer, more child-friendly safeguarding messages, in order to help promote their voices and ensure they know how to seek help or report a concern if needed.

#### Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How might the understanding and good practice in the education department be shared across the Minster?
- How might the Minster address the possibility, however remote, of a child being lost, or left, in its building(s)?

## Adults

### *Description*

- 3.1.43** Southwell Minster represents a place of welcome for those seeking worship and support within the local and wider community. The congregation reflects the largely White, British community of Southwell, with the majority of worshippers being over 60 years. Given this picture, there are inevitably some vulnerable adults among them.
- 3.1.44** The initial welcome to visitors is offered by stewards/welcomers, who belong to the voluntary group, the Southwell Minster Guild of Stewards. This is headed by a Chief Steward (a volunteer) as chair and a committee of 12 members of the Guild. The Dean is the ex-officio President of the Guild and therefore has no active role in its



operation. The Guild has a constitution, last amended in 2015. This does not include any reference to safeguarding. The auditors were told that the group rely on and use the Minster's safeguarding policy and procedures. The Guild undertakes its own recruitment. This is discussed in section 3.6.

- 3.1.45** A rota is constructed, from the 122 volunteers, to cover the Minster 364 days a year. Three volunteers cover the north and south doors between 10am and 5pm every day, apart from Christmas Day, offering a warm welcome and responding to questions about the Minster. Once appointed, they are given training to acquire the relevant knowledge, including about the Minster's architecture and history; there is also continuing training via a programme called Learning More, and some stewards go on to become Minster guides. They are all asked to undertake safeguarding training to Level C0. The group has had additional and very useful training about dementia and 'invisible disability', thanks to the extra funding which has come via the Leaves Project.
- 3.1.46** The Guild committee has a pastoral member who leads on helping those vulnerable colleagues who need support; some former stewards remain linked into the group, and receive telephone calls, a newsletter, and visits if needed. This was especially true during the pandemic. A prominent member of the Pastoral Care Group (see below) is also a steward, providing a useful link across these two bodies.
- 3.1.47** The vergers work closely with the stewards on the Minster floor. They are the first point of contact if/when the stewards have any concerns about a possibly vulnerable adult. They will assess the situation and give care and attention to the person in need. There is a volunteer day chaplain on most days between April and October, whom the stewards and vergers turn to if an individual requests the support of a member of the clergy.
- 3.1.48** The Minster responds to visitors in distress, or who are confused or unwell, using the arrangements described above. The auditors were told that more problematic situations, e.g., where a person appears to have drug or alcohol problems or mental disturbance, are rare. In addition, there are very few street-homeless people in Southwell who present at the Minster for help.
- 3.1.49** The Pastoral Care Team (PCT) is a longstanding group of 10 volunteers, 'hand-picked' by the former Canon Pastor. There is no job description for their roles. The group is coordinated by a volunteer. The Pastoral Care Coordinator, who has been a priest-vicar since 2018, is the link between the team and the Canon responsible for education and outreach (currently covered by the Canon Precentor). The group meets on a regular basis to share information and concerns.
- 3.1.50** The pastoral group members act as 'eyes and ears' in the congregation, often identifying individuals who may need support. They also receive referrals of vulnerable adults in the congregation/community who are then offered a variety of contacts: harvest gifts, cards, telephone calls, and visits. The auditors were told that volunteers visit 'as friends', rather than as representatives of the Minster. They are not required to attend safeguarding training (though several of them have done so) or to undergo DBS checks. They visit alone, and often the person they are visiting is also alone. Any extra concerns that arise are reported back to someone in the Minster, but there is no clear structure for how this should work.
- 3.1.51** The Minster safeguarding policy has a useful section (2.2 Guidelines for Safeguarding Adults at risk) which offers detailed and sensible guidance about home visiting/visiting alone. The volunteers have also had some 'tips' from the SC about the vulnerabilities of such visits.

**3.1.52** The church wardens and sidesmen (volunteers) are overseen by the Canon Precentor and the auditors were informed that safeguarding is regularly discussed at their meetings with him.

### *Analysis*

**3.1.53** The Minster has a sound understanding of the potential needs of its visitors, and its ageing population of both congregants and volunteers. The arrangements for pastoral care need strengthening to ensure application of consistently high safeguarding standards. Regular safeguarding oversight of pastoral concerns being addressed by different groups throughout the Minster is needed.

**3.1.54** The combination of services on the Minster floor (stewards, vergers, and the duty chaplains) ensures a reliable offer of immediate support to those that need it. The current Chief Steward has been active in trying to bring the Guild closer to the Minster in its operations. The volunteers who offer welcome and attention to visitors are largely well prepared for their role and well supported through their Guild.

**3.1.55** The auditors found a strong commitment to pastoral care. Vulnerable and elderly members of the Minster community receive a visiting service from the PCT which is attentive and caring. They were told that PCT volunteers communicate well and plan their work effectively. However, the auditors reflected that the PCT needs clearer structures, including role descriptions, practice guidance (e.g., regarding safer working practices), and support in terms of supervision and management. Volunteers have not been safely recruited, are not DBS checked, despite their direct role in relation to vulnerable adults, and have not completed safeguarding training at any level. The fact that members of the PCT regard themselves as ‘friends’ when they visit is inappropriate and represents a potential vulnerability for both parties. The lack of records means that there is no way of ensuring that the needs of vulnerable adults are being identified and assessed, or that they are receiving support from social care and other agencies should they need it. Written guidance for pastoral care volunteers and those they visit, possibly in the form of a handbook, would be beneficial.

**3.1.56** The auditors saw an example, from a case, where a vulnerable adult was sensitively supported by staff and volunteers to continue to worship at the Minster. They did not see any other concerns being raised about vulnerable adults, however, and questioned whether there is a need for oversight by a safeguarding professional of concerns that are clearly being dealt with in different areas of Minster activity to ensure that any safeguarding concerns are being identified and responded to appropriately. This would include referral where appropriate to external organisations for statutory assessment and support. They also reflected on there being insufficient reference to domestic abuse, which is as likely to occur in Southwell as anywhere else and would expect there to be full engagement in national training, once it is available.

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

- How might pastoral care arrangements be strengthened and compliance with Minster safeguarding policy and practice be assured?
- How might the Minster assure itself that adults who may be at risk are identified and receive a consistent response?

## 3.2 CHOIRS AND MUSIC

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

### The choir

#### *Description*

- 3.2.2** Southwell Minster's choir comprises the boy choristers, girl choristers, and lay clerks who, between them, provide music for seven choral services each week during school terms. The boys and girls usually sing as separate groups, combining for particularly important occasions such as Christmas and Easter services. Previously the girls sang in what was termed the 'Girls' Choir' and were not designated as choristers. All attend the Minster School, a junior/senior specialist music school which is a Church of England academy within the Minster Trust for Education (MITRE). They are aged between 6 and 13 or 14 (Year 9), with one girl currently in Year 11. The six adult lay clerks are all males. The aspiration for each choir is that they will have a maximum of 28 children; at present there are 10 boys and 19 girls. The Director of Music (Rector Chori or DoM) is assiduous in trying to recruit more children to the choirs.
- 3.2.3** Currently, boys and girls sing separately, but have exactly the same number of rehearsals and performances – much reduced from previous times to eight rehearsals a week, and three (sometimes four) services. The rehearsals are before school, now held in the school premises on weekdays, and otherwise in the Archbishop's Palace.
- 3.2.4** The Song School (for all choristers) is situated on the ground floor of the Archbishop's Palace, behind a fobbed door; it also serves as a vestry. The lay clerks' rehearsal room is in a suite of rooms for the exclusive use of the choir, also on the ground floor, and accessed by a fobbed door. There is a spacious room for feeding the children and other 'off duty' activities.
- 3.2.5** The children's safety and wellbeing while in the care of the Minster is the responsibility of the Music Department staff, with much of the hands-on work done by the choir supervisors. They keep the register for each 'transfer' of children, from the school to the Minster and, after services, from the Minster to parents/carers. The children receive teatime snacks. Their toilets are accessed through a keypad door, in the Archbishop's Palace, away from the visitor toilets which are also in that building. There is a firm rule that no one is ever alone with a chorister.
- 3.2.6** There are no files held on individual children; the Music Department use the register (kept by the choir supervisors) to keep contact and important details for each child. The choir supervisors also keep an incident book, which is read by the staff.
- 3.2.7** The chorister handbook (for children and their parents/carers) was introduced by the current DoM. It is detailed and comprehensive about the arrangements for the choirs and is updated each year. The DoM and the Canon Precentor told us of their aim to communicate as fully as possible with the families and to encourage their participation. The handbook helpfully includes photos of the staff and the SC. There is a safeguarding statement in the handbook, which describes how the Minster will respond if a safeguarding issue arises. Procedures align with those of the Minster School. However, the handbook lacks a simple message directly to the children about

what to do if they themselves have a concern. The overall Minster safeguarding policy also includes a section for the choir.

### *The staff*

- 3.2.8** The Canon Precentor has overall responsibility for worship and music in the Minster; he has been in post for two years, most of which time there have been a reduced number of in-person services due to the pandemic. He is also a chorister parent. He is not a member of the Safeguarding Committee.
- 3.2.9** The Music Department is responsible for the choirs and the music for services. The DoM heads a team comprising an assistant DoM, an organ scholar, two chorister supervisors and a Liturgy and Music Administrator. There are also music teachers working with the children at the Minster School. Apart from the chorister supervisors, all staff are male. The auditors learned that the Music Department is looking at ways to increase gender diversity in the department.
- 3.2.10** The DoM is line managed by the Canon Precentor (having worked, until recently, directly to the Dean). The DoM came to the Minster in 2017, from a previous cathedral post as sub-organist. He replaced a DoM who had retired after being in post for 28 years.
- 3.2.11** The DoM is responsible for the recruitment of departmental staff, with the employment decision being taken by the CO. All staff are DBS checked and are expected (depending on their role) to undertake safeguarding training at the appropriate level. Lay clerks are DBS checked and are required to do safeguarding training Foundation Level. Deputy lay clerks and auxiliary lay clerks are not currently DBS checked. The DoM and the Assistant DoM have most recently received safeguarding training Diocesan Safeguarding Team (DST) at Leadership Level, and both have undertaken previous courses. The DoM has requested safer recruitment-training. The rest of the department have had as a minimum training at Levels 1 and 2; lay clerks have all undertaken Foundation-level training online.
- 3.2.12** The DoM and his staff work closely with the Minster School to ensure that there is an appropriate balance maintained between the demands associated with being a chorister and the children's wellbeing. The relationship is organised and collaborative: an example of helpful flexibility is that early morning rehearsals are now held in the school, rather than the Archbishop's Palace, as was previously the case, which has proved of benefit to the children and the school generally. A fortnightly meeting between Minster and key school staff is a safety net for safeguarding issues and provides a means of sharing and tracking problems and concerns about individual children, as well as any wider concerns.
- 3.2.13** When the DoM arrived, the Cathedral Choir comprised boys and lay clerks; the girls' choir was separate and led by the Assistant DoM. The boys' choir (boys) had a very demanding singing schedule (six days a week), and the DoM described a culture in the choir of 'unruliness' and some bullying. The DoM and Dean together identified the need for formal chaperoning arrangements, and Chapter allocated funds to appoint two part-time chorister supervisors. After three brief and unsuccessful appointments, the current two choir supervisors were employed (two and three years ago). They now contribute greatly to the children's physical safety and pastoral needs, and the aim is to expand their roles via participation in more forums, and more engagement with families.
- 3.2.14** The auditors heard that great importance is attached to talking to parents when recruiting and joining the choir. Thereafter, families are actively encouraged to be part

of the life of the choir, with termly meetings and regular communication from the DoM. The Chorister Family Handbook contains comprehensive information for choristers and their parents, and a chorister code of conduct which includes a safeguarding statement.

- 3.2.15** The SC visits to talk with the choristers once a term, and similarly attends annual meetings with the choir parents, to make herself known and to highlight the priority given to safeguarding. The Song School has numerous copies of a child-friendly card, with the SC's photograph and a message about how to contact her. The Minster's safeguarding policy and procedure documents are posted on a pinboard in the Song School, along with the 'display' document, giving a message about safeguarding, how the Minster staff will respond, and the SC's contact details.
- 3.2.16** A major aim of the DoM has been achieving parity for boy and girl choristers. This is a 'work in progress', as the auditors found out from the audit survey. (Two of the three 'child' respondents said that they were unhappy that girls did not receive the same payment, nor the structure of rewards that apply to the boys – the auditors were told that this had been addressed prior to the audit and would be remedied in September 2021.) Also, the upper age of girls has not yet dropped to the upper age for boys (Year 9).
- 3.2.17** Survey results from choristers were limited in numbers, but gave useful responses:
- How safe do you feel during rehearsals, services and performance? All three said 'extremely'.
  - How well cared for do you feel on trips? Again, all three said 'extremely'.
  - How confident that adults in the Music Department deal with bullying? All three replied 'Extremely'.
  - All three respondents knew whom to speak to if they had a worry or concern, with a different picture about whether their worries would be listened to and that people would help (two moderately, one extremely).
  - Responses from three parents of choristers suggested a high level of confidence in the safeguarding arrangements in the Minster and for the choir.

### *Analysis*

- 3.2.18** Safeguarding arrangements within the choirs have improved significantly in the past three or four years. The staff work closely with the school to promote the safety and wellbeing of all the choir pupils. Written procedures would be beneficial, together with recording guidelines. A formal means for ascertaining regular feedback from choristers is desirable.
- 3.2.19** The auditors heard that the transformation of culture and practice in the music department has not been straightforward and there is still more to be done. The workload of the children has been reduced, and a better balance between the choir and other parts of their lives has been achieved. Next steps, including the gradual reduction of the upper age of the girl choristers, are agreed.
- 3.2.20** The fortnightly meeting with school staff, attended by the DoM, has improved communication between Minster and school, and allows for any concerns to be discussed, including patterns of behaviour, and for problems to be resolved. The choristers and their parents know this takes place and agree to it. School staff spoken



with by the auditors were very positive about the close working relationships they now have with the Minster, which they felt improved the pastoral care of the children.

- 3.2.21** Weekly departmental meetings are in place, attended by the full-time staff, but do not include the chorister supervisors. The meetings are not minuted. The auditors were told that the wellbeing of individual choristers is discussed at this meeting, by exception, but no notes are kept. They therefore wondered how the chorister supervisors, who take prime responsibility for chorister welfare, either contribute to or receive feedback from these meetings, and how they receive support when dealing with concerns which can be upsetting. Without notes being kept, the auditors were also concerned that any monitoring of the wellbeing of individual children over time would be difficult and reliant solely on memory. This can mean that safeguarding concerns could be missed. The planned initiation of separate meetings between the DoM, his assistant and the choral scholar and the chorister supervisors, although welcome, imply a continued separation of these important members of staff from the rest of the department as well as potential duplication of effort.
- 3.2.22** The auditors observed the post-rehearsal collection of choristers by parents, and the positive efforts made by the chorister supervisors to engage with and get to know parents. The arrangements were observed to be working well. As with other aspects of departmental functioning, however, there are no written procedures or practice guidance which set out expectations and standards, other than that which is headlined in the Minster safeguarding policy or included in the Chorister handbook. The auditors reflected that written practice guidance, aligned both with the Minster's safeguarding policy and with practice in the school, would help to underpin the developing culture of good safeguarding and care of choristers, and provide a baseline for training and assessing staff performance. These should include guidance for chorister supervisors about the scope and limits of their pastoral care responsibilities.
- 3.2.23** The auditors reflected that a means of giving choristers regular opportunities to speak out and be confident that their voice will be heard may be beneficial in supporting the desired culture of openness and care to which the DoM is committed. There are no doubt other ways to elicit wider chorister feedback – e.g., via forums for this purpose, use of social media. The parents meeting could similarly be developed to provide a forum for seeking regular feedback from parents and for improving the visibility of the DSA and the SC.
- 3.2.24** Positive steps have been taken to ensure that the SC is familiar to both choristers and parents. The auditors considered that it would be beneficial for the SC (or possibly the DSA) to have oversight of the incident book kept by the chorister supervisors and any pastoral or safeguarding concerns about individual children discussed with the school, to ensure that a consistent threshold is being applied and that safeguarding concerns are being appropriately identified and responded to.
- 3.2.25** Signage about safeguarding should be made more prominent and child friendly.
- 3.2.26** The chorister supervisors expressed concern that members of the public were noted on occasions to be filming the choristers. There does not appear to be a policy about this in the Minster, which is a gap that should be addressed.

#### Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How confident is the Music Department that children's concerns are received, properly recorded, assessed and consistently responded to?

- How might the present system for passing concerns from children on to the school allow for monitoring and oversight by the Safeguarding Coordinator and DSA?
- How might the Music Department develop its arrangements for seeking regular feedback from choristers about their wellbeing and things that concern them?
- How might the regular departmental meetings be developed to ensure that a consistent overview is kept of the safety and wellbeing of every chorister and is appropriately recorded, and that the choir supervisors are fully integrated into the Music Department team?
- How confident is the Music Department that the present light-touch approach to procedures and practice guidance is sufficiently robust?

## Bellringing

### *Description*

- 3.2.27** The history of the bells at the Minster dates to before the Norman conquest, and records give further evidence of ‘repairs to a Number 8 bell’ in 1430. Now, Southwell Minster has a ring of 12 bells. They are located via an external entrance (a locked door) near the south door to the Minster. There is no access to the bell tower from within the Minster. The Tower Captain keeps the key to the door, and a second key is held securely within the Vergers’ Offices (a third key is kept in a location known only to the Tower Captain and the Head Verger. There are 114 steps up to the ringing room. Halfway up, there is a keypad, adding another level of security.
- 3.2.28** The Tower Captain has been ringing at the Minster since 1987 and has been Tower Captain for more than 10 years. He is currently chairman of the Southwell and Nottingham Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers. He is also a trustee of the Chimes Trust, which concerns the fabric of the bells.
- 3.2.29** The bells are rung by a ‘solid band of 14’, both male and female, the youngest of whom is 18 with most above the age of 60. There is at least one member in their 80s. There are no children in the team at present; however, this remains a ‘teaching tower’. The bells are rung for Sunday Eucharist. As with most towers, visitors are welcomed at practice nights (Tuesday evenings) and visiting teams can arrange to ring there. The band is always keen to attract new recruits.
- 3.2.30** The Team is well established and has equally established processes for keeping safe. These include:
- No lone working
  - Never being alone with a child; parents always present during teaching
  - Use of risk assessments
  - A register to record anyone who is present in the ringing room
  - A visitors’ book
  - Telephone in the ringing room
  - Vergers kept informed about the start and finish of any use of the ringing room
  - There is safety equipment in the ringing room (e.g., a defibrillator)



- 3.2.31** The Tower Captain has a DBS check, as do some others in the team ('lead ringers' are required to have one). He has done initial safeguarding training online and is due for renewal of his Foundation course (previously C1) and to go on and complete C2. He and the team are aware of safety and safeguarding and its importance in what they do, and in the church more widely. They know the role of the SC and how to contact her, as well as when/how to use the Diocesan Safeguarding Team (DST). In the bell tower, there are two notice boards which include clear safeguarding policy and procedures for Southwell Minster. In addition, the Southwell and Nottinghamshire Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers provides regular communication for ringers which includes information about safeguarding.
- 3.2.32** Regarding arrangements for visiting teams, the Tower Captain is not involved in their visits, and there is no requirement for teams to give information or make a declaration about their members. For individual visitors – either planned or 'drop in' – the auditors learned that there is no current means of knowing of any safeguarding concerns, e.g., being the subject of a safeguarding agreement.
- 3.2.33** The auditors were told that there is little formal connection between the tower and the Minster, other than by the Dean being invited to the AGM. There is informal connection with the Canon Precentor.

### *Analysis*

- 3.2.34** Bellringing at Southwell Minster is safely managed. Written procedures, aligned with the Minster safeguarding policy, and specifying safeguarding arrangements for visiting individuals and bands, are needed.
- 3.2.35** The Minster benefits from the extensive experience and understanding of the Tower Captain, who ensures the appropriate safeguarding measures are in place, in line both with the Minster's safeguarding procedures, and those of the Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers. The auditors reflected that a written safeguarding procedure for the bell tower would help embed current practice and reduce dependence on the presence and experience of a single individual to maintain high safeguarding standards.
- 3.2.36** The auditors understand that the world of bellringing, particularly locally, is very familiar, and most visitors are known in one way or another. However, best practice would suggest that safety could be improved by the simple step of asking anyone wishing to ring in the tower to give a confidential declaration, in particular regarding any safeguarding agreement in place.
- 3.2.37** The auditors reflected that the bell tower appeared to operate very separately from the Minster in general, and the Music Department in particular, and wondered whether there are ways in which the two might be more closely aligned. This would be beneficial in providing both support and oversight of the individuals concerned, and of the safeguarding arrangements in operation in the tower.

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

- What benefits would there be in developing more formalised safeguarding arrangements for the bell tower and visiting ringers?
- How might alignment of the bell tower with the Minster be strengthened?

### 3.3 CASE WORK (INCLUDING INFORMATION SHARING)

- 3.3.1 When safeguarding concerns are reported, a timely response is needed to make sense of the situation, assess risk and decide what action needs to be taken, including whether statutory services need to be informed. In a Cathedral context, this includes helping to distinguish whether there are safeguarding elements to the situations of people receiving pastoral support.
- 3.3.2 The DSA is responsible for undertaking safeguarding case work on behalf of the Minster. This arrangement is set out in a draft service level agreement (SLA) between the Diocese and the Minster which is in the process of being finalised.
- 3.3.3 Within the Minster, the Safeguarding Coordinator (SC), who is a volunteer, acts as the Minster's first point of contact for reporting concerns and works closely with the DSA to ensure a consistent and appropriate response.
- 3.3.4 Records of incidents and concerns are kept within different departments. The Music Department shares information and concerns about choristers with the SC and the Minster School. At present, there is no process for recording or maintaining oversight of these different systems, leading to the possibility that different understandings and thresholds are being applied and inconsistent responses received.
- 3.3.5 Signage displayed around the Minster, and contained within the safeguarding policy, instructs that anyone who has concerns about possible abuse should report them to the SC. There is a dedicated 'safeguarding@' mailbox to do this. The auditors were told that there are forms kept in the Vergers' Offices for the same purpose, but that these are seldom used.
- 3.3.6 The auditors saw and were told of very few instances of safeguarding concerns being raised with the SC, although they heard anecdotal evidence of more situations which may have indicated a risk or concern. They reflected that the threshold for reporting – 'possible abuse' – is high and may deter reporting lower-level concerns. A form which can be completed online might assist in ensuring that key information is captured from the outset.
- 3.3.7 They also reflected that much of the public messaging, including in the safeguarding policy itself, referred to actual or risk of abuse, which could mean that individuals 'screen out' concerns they may have as not being of this level of seriousness. The auditors wondered whether the introduction of a single system for raising concerns, rather than reporting 'suspicion or disclosure of abuse' may help address this.

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

- 3.3.8 As part of the audit, the auditors looked at six case files kept by the SC, ranging from 2018 to the present. These were related to concerns about both adults and children.
- 3.3.9 The case work in these cases was responsive and timely throughout; there were no gaps or delays noted. The appropriate people (including parents, school and Minster staff) were consulted and included in discussions, meetings and planning. The files showed that children's wishes and feelings were taken into account, and sensitively recorded. The SC appropriately consulted the DSA for advice. None of the cases, bar one described below, reached the threshold for investigation separately by the DST.
- 3.3.10 There was one historic case which the auditors were concerned did not adequately solicit and record views of the children.
- 3.3.11 The DSA/DST provide advice in relation to Minster cases and conduct the case work for those which reach the threshold for an investigation. The Minster benefits from the

positive working relationship between the SC and the DSA. There is an intention to progress from the current system to the appointment of a part-time, professional safeguarding officer for the Minster, and possibly siting this person within the DST. The SLA, which is currently progressing towards approval, will spell out the proposed new arrangements.

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

**3.3.12** There are currently no safeguarding agreements in the Minster. The auditors saw only one example of a case where such an agreement was considered, but which in the end was managed sensitively and effectively without an agreement.

### **Quality of recording**

**3.3.13** The national Past Cases Review (PCR2) has commented on the poor state of paper files in the Minster, something that has already been addressed. The planned introduction of an electronic recording system (MyConcern), now in use in the DST, will enable more systematic oversight. The SC has already received training for using this system and is able to input information.

**3.3.14** The paper files read for this audit were adequate, in that they all included a chronology/log of actions. For the rest, they were collections of copies of letters, meetings, and emails, without any proper file structure. They would have benefited from a 'front sheet', giving details of the subject of the case, and a closing case summary.

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

**3.3.15** One person connected with the Minster came forward to speak with the auditors on behalf of an individual who had received a safeguarding response from the Minster. In this instance, the auditors were told that the experience had been a poor one, with the individual left feeling unsupported. The auditors did not see or hear of other such concerns but have commented elsewhere (sections 5.2 and 5.3) both on the need for clear procedures for making complaints and for whistleblowing, and for developing a culture in which feedback is actively sought as a means of learning.

**3.3.16** Apart from this one instance, survivor views were not heard directly by the auditors, and none of the case files seen contained any such information.

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

- How might current arrangements for keeping records of incidents and concerns across different departments be coordinated and monitored in order to ensure a consistent threshold for assessing the need for a safeguarding response?
- How might the Minster work with the Diocese to ensure that it is learning from those who have survived abuse or have received a safeguarding response?
- What could be the benefits of introducing a simple means of reporting concerns across the Minster and what needs to happen to put this into place?

### 3.4 CLERGY DISCIPLINARY MEASURES

- 3.4.1** Disciplinary processes in the Church differ significantly from a secular work context, in that they are initiated by someone making a complaint, rather than management assuming responsibility and appointing an investigating officer to investigate what has happened.
- 3.4.2** There were no blue files which included a safeguarding concern relevant to the audit, and the auditors were told that none had been submitted to the second review of past cases which is being conducted by the Church.

#### Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- There were no considerations under this heading.

### 3.5 TRAINING

- 3.5.1** Safeguarding training is an important mechanism for establishing safeguarding awareness and confidence throughout the Cathedral. It requires good quality substance, based on up-to-date evidence, with relevant case studies, engaging and relevant to the audience. It also requires strategic planning to identify priority groups for training, details of the training needs/requirements of people in different roles, and an implementation plan for training over time that tracks what training has been provided, who attended, and who still needs to attend or requires refresher sessions.

#### *Description*

- 3.5.2** Ensuring that all staff and volunteers are trained at a level commensurate with their post within the Cathedral context is a challenge. Five years ago, there was very little safeguarding training at the Minster. The Dean and the SC have developed this and worked to make appropriate training a requirement for Minster staff and volunteers, based on the National Church's programme.
- 3.5.3** The auditors heard that most posts (relevant paid staff, and volunteers in key roles) in the Minster are required to do at least the basic safeguarding training. This has been rolled out via face-to-face and online courses, facilitated by the SC. Higher levels (e.g., Foundation training) are accessed widely as well. During the pandemic, online courses were undertaken. All members of Chapter have had basic training and some have completed Foundation level.
- 3.5.4** Higher levels of training – e.g., leadership level – have been facilitated by the DST, some of which were planned specifically for the Minster. This has been accessed by the DoM and Assistant DoM, church wardens, the Head Verger, and the Head of Education (apart from the clergy, who are trained through the diocesan system of training and licensing).
- 3.5.5** Pre-COVID, much of the training was offered in person, with the SC routinely adapting materials for the context of the Minster and delivering the training; this has been supplemented by training from the DST. More recently, almost all training has had to be online.
- 3.5.6** More specialised training, such as in safer recruitment and domestic violence and abuse has not been widely undertaken. The SC has participated in training on safer recruitment and the Dean in domestic violence and abuse. The interim CO completed safer recruitment training in a previous role.

- 3.5.7** Although every encouragement has been given by the SC, Dean and others to clergy, staff and volunteers to undertake the relevant level of training, take-up has been inconsistent. There is no evidence of a 'bottom line' regarding non-compliance.
- 3.5.8** The SC keeps records of training take-up, and the Diocese has records of the completion of online and DST-delivered training. There is no central database for recording and monitoring the training of all those who work/volunteer in the Minster community.

### *Analysis*

- 3.5.9** There has been good progress in ensuring that clergy, staff and volunteers have undertaken basic levels of safeguarding training. A more systematic approach to planning, delivering and monitoring training is required. Consideration of how the impact of training on daily practice might be evaluated would be beneficial.
- 3.5.10** The efforts made to ensure the widespread take-up of safeguarding training is evident. Training has been delivered in different ways to facilitate take-up, accompanied by publicity and encouragement. The SC has worked hard to produce good-quality courses and to encourage people to attend, either in person or online. Among those interviewed for the audit, the auditors found a strong interest in doing as much training as possible, with little if any resistance. Indeed, there was keenness to have training not yet accessed, such as safer recruitment courses.
- 3.5.11** Training appears to be appreciated and well regarded. For the audit survey, the question 'How adequate for your role is the safeguarding training you have received from the Cathedral' 55% (n= 46) of respondents answered 'extremely' and 24% (n=23) answered 'moderately.' This suggests that more training would be welcomed, and that more feedback about the outcome of courses is needed.
- 3.5.12** The auditors noted that messages about the requirement for volunteers to undertake safeguarding training are inconsistent, as its necessity is not always insisted upon. In the Guild of Stewards, the take-up is about 60%. The proportion of education volunteers complying is far lower, 40/187 having completed the relevant course. Training is not mentioned in the Minster's safeguarding policy. The auditors reflected that the current lack of clarity regarding who should receive what training, and what are the consequences of not completing this, should be addressed. They also considered that the current position, where a volunteer holds the training information on behalf of the Minster, is unsatisfactory.
- 3.5.13** Not all staff who are responsible for recruitment for their department or section have had safer recruitment training. This includes the Music Department and those who regularly recruit volunteers.
- 3.5.14** The new House of Bishops' Safeguarding Learning and Development Framework, which was approved by the National Safeguarding Steering Group on 22 April 2021, provides a good opportunity to review what the Minster has achieved so far in its promotion of training. The framework argues that a 'paradigm shift in safeguarding requires a "whole-system" approach within which change is achieved by the inter-relatedness of different strands'. Church bodies are required to plan for full implementation from January 2022.
- 3.5.15** The auditors reflected that this is an opportunity for the Minster to review its progress to date and plan accordingly. This should include consideration of how training requirements and completion are recorded, and how effectiveness and impact may be monitored. The new guidance contains useful information about how training can be



evaluated and includes a template for a diocesan training strategy which could be adapted for Minster purposes, if required.

- 3.5.16** Given the close working relationship between the Minster School and the Music Department, and the attention being paid to aligning processes, the auditors wondered whether there might be opportunities for joint training, in order to deepen understanding of the safeguarding frameworks in which the respective staff are working and identify where there may be discrepancies which need to be addressed.

#### Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How might the Minster meet in full the requirements of the new House of Bishops' Safeguarding Learning and Development Framework and what will be the Minster's 'bottom lines' regarding participation?
- Who is best placed to monitor compliance with national and local requirements for core and specialist safeguarding training?
- How might the impact of training on the safeguarding culture and practice of the Minster be assessed?
- What opportunities might there be in developing joint training arrangements between the Minster School and the Music Department?

## 3.6 SAFER RECRUITMENT

### *Description*

- 3.6.1** The CO has responsibility for the HR function and oversees the appointment process involving the relevant manager heading each functional area. DBS checks are carried out on behalf of both the Minster and the Diocese by APCS (Access Personal Checking Services Ltd). ID verification is carried out by the Safeguarding Coordinator. Any blemished DBS checks are referred to the DSA.
- 3.6.2** Hard copy HR files of staff are held centrally. Each of the files seen by the auditors demonstrated that safer recruitment practices are generally being followed. Job profiles are not kept on files, although a general document comprising main terms and conditions of employment does include a small amount of role-specific information.
- 3.6.3** Volunteers are grouped into departments, managed by the relevant staff member or a volunteer, who is responsible for their recruitment. For example, the Head of Education recruits all volunteers who contribute to the education and Time-Travelling activities. The pastoral care volunteers were described as 'hand-picked' by the former Canon Pastor and/ or the (volunteer) coordinator of the Pastoral Care Group. There is no central coordination or management of volunteers. Volunteer records are held within each department. The auditors were told that the records vary considerably in what they include, in what form they are held (e.g., paper, electronic), and where they are held. On occasions, records are kept outside Minster premises and systems. There is no central record of all volunteers.
- 3.6.4** Stewards and guides are recruited via the Southwell Minster Guild of Stewards, which is a separately constituted body, run by a committee, with the aim of offering 'a Ministry of Welcome on behalf of the Dean and Chapter'. The Dean is its president. The Guild's constitution, which was last amended in January 2015, specifies that 'the committee shall be responsible for the recruitment and training of new stewards and guides'.

- 3.6.5** All clergy appointments are made by the Bishop after consulting with Chapter. Blue clergy files are held by the Bishop.
- 3.6.6** The Safeguarding Coordinator (SC) made safer recruitment an early priority after taking up post in 2017. Working with the then Cathedral Administrator, they established who had an up-to-date enhanced DBS (i.e., no older than three years), and processed DBS checks for those who needed them. Personnel files were reviewed to establish what information was recorded for each staff member and what work was needed to bring them up to standard. The auditors were told that some work was carried out on these files in 2018/19. The SC set up and maintained a database of DBS and related information on their own computer in order to maintain oversight.
- 3.6.7** On taking up their post, staff members are subject to a three-month probationary period, which is extended in certain instances and can also lead to the termination of a contract in cases where the employee has not met the required standard for the post. An induction checklist was seen in some files, but this does not include reference to safeguarding.
- 3.6.8** There is a staff handbook which sets out the terms and conditions of employment for staff, together with a range of policies and procedures relevant to employment at the Minster. The handbook also contains a code of conduct for recruitment in relation to equal opportunities but does not cross reference to safer recruitment principles or procedures. Some of the files seen by the auditors included a signed confirmation that the employee had received, read and understood the staff handbook, which is good practice. In one case, the COO had followed up when an overly hasty confirmation of reading of the handbook had been received, which is commendable.
- 3.6.9** Safer recruitment training has been undertaken by the SC, and by the acting Chief Officer and Canon Precentor in previous roles, but not by anybody else in the Minster. This means that most people involved in recruitment are not trained in safer recruitment.
- 3.6.10** As part of the audit, six staff files were reviewed, and one volunteer file. There were no other volunteer files available.

### *Analysis*

- 3.6.11** While the Minster has made some progress in instituting safer recruitment practice when recruiting staff, there is considerable work to be done to improve practice and record-keeping in volunteer recruitment.
- 3.6.12** Staff HR files reviewed by the auditors were for the CO and posts within the Music Department and generally contained references, a confidential declaration, DBS as appropriate and ID verification – demonstrating that safer recruitment processes were generally being followed. Certificates of safeguarding training were included in some. An older file for a post which had access to children lacked the expected contents, possibly indicating that safer recruitment practices had been introduced subsequently. The files comprise loose papers and could be improved pending the introduction of an electronic system by including a checklist of contents (one file of a recent appointee contained a ‘new hire’ checklist at the front of the file). Inclusion of a reference to safeguarding in the reference requests would strengthen the process; very few of the references seen contained any information about safeguarding, despite them being for posts which required DBS clearance because of their nature.
- 3.6.13** The auditors were unable to establish whether there is a centrally held, accessible record of which posts require which kinds of checks (as set out in the national practice



guidance on safer recruitment), although the SC has sought to do this. Administrative support in this important area is lacking.

- 3.6.14** Only one of the six files contained an application form, and none contained a role profile. This meant that it was not possible for the auditors to see whether job descriptions and other information included anything about safeguarding expectations and responsibilities, including whether or not the post was liable for a DBS check, nor whether safeguarding was discussed at interview. This is a missed opportunity to promote the ethos of a safer church, in line with national commitments, and to establish immediately the stance of the Minster in this respect.
- 3.6.15** The expectation that recruitment is conducted within the various departments, where staff and volunteers have not received safer recruitment training, rather than centrally coordinated, is an area to be addressed. The auditors were told by one manager who is responsible for regular recruitment of staff that they would welcome clear guidelines to follow, to be sure that correct safer recruitment processes were being followed in the absence of consistent central support (formerly available from the COO).
- 3.6.16** Recruitment of volunteers in the education department is led by the Head of Education, who – as a former teacher – is well versed in safeguarding arrangements. In the absence of organisation-wide guidance, she has developed her own safer recruitment processes for new volunteers, including devising a confidential declaration form (which is not the same as that used for staff recruitment, although fulfils the same function). Her records are well and securely kept, but processes should be aligned with those across the Minster.
- 3.6.17** The Guild of Stewards has a volunteer group numbering 122; their recruitment is managed by the Chief Steward and his committee. The Chief Steward has not had safer recruitment training, and the Guild does not follow safer recruitment guidelines. Minimal personal details kept about members of the Guild, apart from a confidential declaration, which was instigated by the current Chief Steward.
- 3.6.18** The auditors were unable to establish what processes were being followed for recruiting to other volunteer roles, other than that it is uncoordinated, not systematically recorded, and not overseen or supported satisfactorily. Such records as exist are kept in a range of different places, not on the Minster system, and cannot be overseen satisfactorily. The impression was given by some that recruitment practices within some areas of volunteering are restrictive, with opportunities not openly advertised or available. A standard initial process for volunteer recruitment would enable a wider view to be taken of the range of skills, interests and experience being brought by each applicant, and enable them to be directed into the appropriate area(s) of activity. This would be of benefit to both the applicant and the Minster.
- 3.6.19** The auditors considered that current recruitment practices for volunteers are inadequate overall and need rapid improvement. Establishing what, in schools, would be called a single central record is an essential first step and would assist in identifying where there are shortcomings in historic recruitment arrangements which need to be addressed.
- 3.6.20** The current practice for untrained managers and volunteers across the various departments to lead on recruitment is bringing about inconsistent practices which do not conform with the principles of safer recruitment. They should, in the opinion of the auditors, be assisted centrally by improved administrative support and HR guidance. The auditors understand that this has been recognised, together with the need for an electronic system which would enable all staff and volunteer records to be centrally

held and be interrogated to ensure that essential processes such as DBS renewal can be readily overseen. The auditors understand that there are plans to address both these areas, and welcomed the planned discussions with the Diocese regarding an SLA for HR services.

**Questions for the Cathedral to consider**

- How will the Minster address the need to bring its safer recruitment processes and records up to the standard specified in National Church guidance, and how will it monitor continued compliance?
- What steps are needed to ensure that best practice in safer recruitment is systematically embedded across all departments, for both staff and volunteers, and who will ensure that this happens quickly?
- How confident is the Minster that all posts requiring a DBS check have been identified and that these checks are regularly renewed, in line with agreed policy?
- What action is needed to ensure that recruitment to the Guild of Stewards complies with Church of England national policy, properly recorded, and aligned with practice in the Minster?
- What might be the advantages of introducing a single central record of all clergy, staff and volunteers and what is needed to make this happen?

## 4. FINDINGS – ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORTS

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### 4.1 POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND GUIDANCE

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

#### *Description*

- 4.1.4** Southwell Minster's safeguarding policy states in its introduction: 'We follow the House of Bishops' Policy, 'Protecting All God's Children' (2010) and the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham's Policy'. The policy was reviewed in April 2021. It is available on the Minster's website, and copies are also available in the Minster Office.
- 4.1.5** The policy contains numerous related procedure (e.g., on safer recruitment, information-sharing) and guidelines, some of which are department-specific, such as safeguarding choristers and for visiting choirs. An appendix contains contact details for all relevant safeguarding personnel, and references to the principal National Church policies and guidelines which are accepted by the Minster.
- 4.1.6** The safeguarding policy also contains sections on 'best practice' for the principal activities of the Minster, and includes the treatment of staff/volunteers, as well as that of children, young people, and vulnerable adults. There are useful sections on multimedia and data handling, and brief sections on complaints and whistleblowing.
- 4.1.7** There is also a 'Policy statement on safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk in Southwell Minster' but this is not reproduced in the larger safeguarding policy. A display document (includes details about how to report concerns, respond if concerns raised, and gives a photograph and contact details for the SC) is included on the website and is also used around the Minster.
- 4.1.8** The Education Department has developed its own safeguarding policy for schools and families which does not explicitly cross reference to the Minster safeguarding policy or safeguarding policy statement.
- 4.1.9** The Southwell Minster website has a prominent section on safeguarding, with a message from the Dean about safeguarding, a copy of the safeguarding policy, the display document noted above, and advice about what to do if you are concerned about a child or vulnerable adult. Contact details are clear and up to date. There is a safeguarding button on each page which links directly to the safeguarding page.
- 4.1.10** Chapter reviews and approves the safeguarding policy annually.

#### *Analysis*

- 4.1.11** The safeguarding policy comprises a great deal of safeguarding-related information.

Department-specific practice guidance is needed to supplement the policy. Attention is needed to ensure that policies and procedures are accessible, properly understood and embedded in daily practice.

- 4.1.12** The 'Policy statement on safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk in Southwell Minster' is a short and useful statement of the Minster's commitment to safeguarding. It is produced in a form which facilitates public display and contains information on how to report a concern to the SC.
- 4.1.13** The longer 'Safeguarding policy for children, young people and adults at risk' is comprehensive, with a full and detailed guide to good practice. The auditors questioned the read-across between the two documents.
- 4.1.14** It was unclear to the auditors how fully the safeguarding policy is embedded across the Minster community. The relationship between the policy statement and the safeguarding policy is unclear. The auditors did not hear of induction/training for its use and reflected that the department-specific contents may be better held elsewhere. For example, there is little practice guidance for those who work in the Music Department, and the auditors heard that such practice guidance would be welcomed. The same message about the need for practice guidance was both identified and received from other departments, across staff and volunteers, some of which is identified in the report.
- 4.1.15** The policy contains references to related policies which are summarised in brief (such as complaints and whistleblowing), but the auditors did not see any separate documents about these, neither are they searchable via the Minster website.
- 4.1.16** The auditors considered that there are opportunities for promoting safeguarding messages more strongly, e.g., in the staff handbook, where the section on safeguarding is very brief and contains no practice guidance; similarly, in the choristers handbook. Both these documents would benefit from the addition of a flow-chart for how to respond to safeguarding concerns.
- 4.1.17** Currently, there is no volunteers handbook, so there is no vehicle for promoting the importance of safeguarding and setting out practice guidance for the different groups of volunteers. This is a significant omission which potentially affects both volunteers and those they serve.
- 4.1.18** It was not clear to the auditors whether any specific body has responsibility for overseeing the development and implementation of safeguarding policy and procedures in the Minster. The Safeguarding Committee minutes do refer to reviewing procedures and to Chapter approving them, but in the absence of terms of reference the auditors were unable to confirm their specific responsibilities.

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

- Where does the responsibility lie for overseeing the development and implementation of safeguarding policy, procedures and practice guidance and who should be involved?
- What benefits might there be in separating out elements of the safeguarding policy and developing them as either standalone policies which are accessible to the entire Minster workforce or else department-specific guidance?

- How might the Minster ensure that its clergy, staff and volunteers understand its safeguarding and related policies and guidance, and apply them consistently and appropriately?

## 4.2 THE DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING ADVISOR/ CATHEDRAL SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

### *Description*

- 4.2.1** Southwell Minster has had a Cathedral Safeguarding Officer since 2017; her title in the Minster is Safeguarding Coordinator (SC). Before taking on this role, she had a long association with the Minster as congregant and volunteer. Since 2011, she has been a member of Chapter as a parish representative. Her background is in teaching. She is DBS-checked and has undertaken Leadership Level training in 2021; C1 and C2 (2017), and Safer Recruitment training (June 2017 and May 2021). There is no role profile for the SC post, though the auditors were told that it corresponds with that of a Parish Safeguarding Officer, as set out in Roles and Responsibilities.
- 4.2.2** The auditors noted that the workload of the SC is considerable, and she has no administrative support, clinical supervision, or formal line management. Her records are maintained on her home computer. Despite this, they heard repeatedly of how well the SC is recognised and trusted as a reliable person to consult and to make referrals to. She has become familiar to many in the Minster through her leading in-person training and attendance at various forums. This was evidenced in the cases seen, where referrals came from a wide variety of people across the Minster community, by telephone or via a secure email account. Through her attendance and influence at Chapter, she has raised the profile of safeguarding and led widespread improvements, particularly in relation to training.
- 4.2.3** Recognising the growing expectations of the role, the Minster has plans for the appointment of a Cathedral Safekeeping Officer (CSO) with a professional background. This post is likely to sit within the DST, possibly two-to-three days a week, ensuring accessible professional support. The SC will continue to add considerable value in sharing information about the Minster context and other history with the new postholder.
- 4.2.4** At Southwell and Nottingham Diocese, safeguarding case work was previously commissioned from an independent childcare agency, and only returned to the Diocese in August 2018. Two staff were incorporated into the diocesan team. The DSA joined the Diocese in 2020, following several months when he had provided support to the DST in the absence of a full-time DSA and case worker. He is very experienced and professionally qualified for the role, which he has carried out elsewhere for several years. Following his arrival, the capacity of the DST was increased by the appointment of an assistant DSA and a part-time case worker. A part-time trainer completes the team.
- 4.2.5** The DSA and SC work closely together to ensure that safeguarding concerns are properly responded to. The DSA has also become a regular attendee at the Safeguarding Committee, which strengthens the connection between the Minster and the Diocese as well as ensuring that the Minster is kept apprised of national developments in policy and guidance. A service level agreement (SLA) between the Minster and Diocese, which will confirm the responsibilities of Diocese and Minster, is in the process of being negotiated.



### *Analysis*

- 4.2.6** The SC and DSA work well together to provide a good safeguarding service to the Minster. Proposals to employ a paid safeguarding officer in the Minster will further strengthen arrangements.
- 4.2.7** The auditors judged that the SC has been instrumental in promoting safeguarding in the Minster and placing it on a much stronger footing since her appointment. Her own work has developed over time so that she is able to provide an effective service in the many aspects of her role, albeit without administrative resources. It is of considerable concern that, in her critical safeguarding role, her records are entirely maintained on her home computer, with the risks that that implies.
- 4.2.8** The SC has been successful at building positive relationships within the Minster community, ensuring that staff, volunteers and others, including children, know they can go to her for help and advice. They understand as well that she is supported by the diocesan team, which provides another level of safeguarding service.
- 4.2.9** The auditors heard nothing but praise for the work of the SC. Together with the Dean, she has taken the initiative in promoting the profile of safeguarding, for establishing requirements for DBS checks and training, for writing and updating policies, and generally for spreading the safeguarding message among all groups by attendance at, and reports to, relevant meetings – e.g., annual choir meeting, Chapter meetings. Her case work is responsive and solid, and she understands how to triage concerns coming in, passing these on appropriately to the DSA, or obtaining his advice.
- 4.2.10** The Minster has been fortunate to have the services of an energetic, knowledgeable and dedicated volunteer as SC. The auditors reflected that her role as a member of Chapter, however, potentially complicates the accountability for the strategic and operational aspects of her work.
- 4.2.11** The auditors welcomed the proposal to recruit a professional safeguarding officer (CSO), considering that this will further strengthen the Minster's safeguarding arrangements. It is positive that the Minster will not lose the experience and skills of the SC, who has agreed to help support a new CSO. Attention will be needed to ensure that the new postholder is appropriately managed and supervised, with an adequate level of administrative support, and that their relationship with the DST is clear.

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

- What arrangements will be needed to ensure that a future, professional CSO has capacity to meet the requirements of the role, is properly managed and supervised, and has adequate administrative support?

## **4.3 RECORDING AND IT SYSTEMS**

### *Description*

- 4.3.1** Having effective, safe and useable IT systems supports good recording and makes sure that information is secure, but accessible to those people with a legitimate need to see it.
- 4.3.2** Southwell Minster employs a number of recording systems in the administration and oversight of safeguarding, most of which are paper based. Some records are held centrally, some within departments, and some by individuals, particularly the SC.

- 4.3.3** Information about staff and especially volunteers is held in a variety of places, using different systems of recording. There has been an attempt by the SC to establish an electronic database for the recording of DBS checks and training, but she was unable to obtain the required information about volunteers. The auditors were given an account of the security with which various records are kept – normally in locked cabinets in rooms with security from the public, and accessible only by named members of staff.
- 4.3.4** Different departments and teams (e.g., the Education Department, the Music Department, the Pastoral Care Team) have developed their own systems for recording information, including about the volunteers and the people who receive a service from them. Again, most of these are paper based, and held securely, as described above. The auditors were told that records for the PCT are held on a personal computer.
- 4.3.5** The Minster's safeguarding policy has a brief section on how 'records that deal with safeguarding matters' (i.e., case files and 'concerns') should be kept, in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998. Only the Dean and the SC have access to safeguarding files.
- 4.3.6** Safeguarding case records in the Diocese are kept on an electronic case management system called MyConcern. This is in the process of being introduced nationally, and the SC has had training in its use. Its introduction will provide a more consistent and secure system for these records.

### *Analysis*

- 4.3.7** There is no consistent approach to keeping records across the activities of all parts of the Minster. This should be addressed as a priority.
- 4.3.8** The guidance on storing records and data protection which is set out in the safeguarding policy is minimal, and insufficient in providing guidance for the storage of personal information. The auditors did not see reference to any more comprehensive guidance.
- 4.3.9** The inconsistency of record-keeping, and the practice of some records being kept on personal computers, is a significant risk for the Minster. This leaves some information potentially hard to access as well as vulnerable and makes oversight and monitoring difficult if not impossible.

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

- What actions are needed, by whom, to ensure that all record-keeping related to safeguarding, including personal information about associated activities such as training and recruitment, comply with best practice standards?
- Who is best placed to ensure that all relevant records that are being kept separately are identified and incorporated into the Minster's own systems?



## 5. FINDINGS – LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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### 5.1 QUALITY ASSURANCE

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

#### *Description*

- 5.1.2** DSAP has recently introduced the parish dashboard as a basis for auditing across the Diocese. This is a system which has been specially developed for use in church settings. It comprises three levels: Level 1 - Safer Foundations; Level 2 - Safer Activities; Level 3 - Safer Practices. Completion of a self-assessment at each level generates an action plan. The Minster partially completed level one, Safer Foundations, in February 2021, updated in September 2021. This included detail about a safeguarding policy and action plan, procedures, safeguarding roles, training and displayed information. All but two actions are marked as completed; these two are marked as 'urgent'. The resulting action plan therefore has only two actions – the completion of basic awareness safeguarding training by a new member of Chapter, and the need to approve a safeguarding action plan. A note says that the action plan will be presented and reviewed by Chapter at its September meeting.
- 5.1.3** It is envisaged by DSAP that the DSA will have a role in the QA of the parish dashboard self-assessment, to ensure that there is a consistent standard of evidence being used to assess performance. The auditors do not know whether the DSA contributed to the Minster's initial Level 1 assessment.
- 5.1.4** Other elements of QA activity that are in place include:
- Attendance by the Dean at DSAP
  - Safeguarding is a standing item on the agenda of Chapter, and it receives an annual report written by the SC. Equally there is an annual report from Chapter to the Bishop
  - The Safeguarding Committee, chaired by the Dean, considers a range of relevant matters, such as policy and procedure, overview of cases, progress with training
  - The audit and risk committee holds a risk register on behalf of Chapter. This includes a number of safeguarding items.
- 5.1.5** The auditors saw how the Minster had responded positively to feedback from the PCR2 reviewers. This was principally in relation to record-keeping of case files.
- 5.1.6** Efforts have been put into developing systems to enable monitoring and reporting, such as the spreadsheets which collate information on safer recruitment and training. Overall, however, data is not yet used systematically to demonstrate progress or focus activity.
- 5.1.7** There is no formal mechanism in place for systematically gathering feedback from those who are engaged with the Minster, in whatever capacity, or who receive a safeguarding service. The response from across the Minster community to the audit

questionnaire (87 respondents in total) indicates that there may be a general willingness to provide feedback if asked.

- 5.1.8** The auditors saw evidence on one file that a complaint had resulted in actions aimed at service improvement but did not see evidence otherwise of a systematic approach to quality assurance.

### *Analysis*

- 5.1.9** There is the beginning of a framework for quality assurance in place. This needs developing to include more effective systems for monitoring and reporting, and for gathering feedback from those engaged with the Cathedral. The lack of a formal safeguarding strategy and associated action plan means the safeguarding activities of the Minster are missing an important monitoring and QA tool.
- 5.1.10** For every Chapter meeting, the SC brings either a written or verbal report. Chapter minutes list safeguarding reports as ‘information items’, however, suggesting a lack of collective responsibility being taken for safeguarding and a tendency to ‘leave’ safeguarding matters to the Dean and SC. A lack of systems to capture and report on activity and progress is evident.
- 5.1.11** The recently introduced Parish Dashboard, and what the auditors understand will be its function across the Diocese, will be a positive tool for the Minster in assessing the quality of its safeguarding arrangements. Its usefulness will be maximised by the introduction of an independent element – possibly the DSA – into the self-assessment process.
- 5.1.12** The identification through the Parish Dashboard process of the need for a safeguarding action plan was endorsed by the auditors. Roles and Responsibilities sets out the requirement for each church to have a Promoting a Safer Church action plan in place that sets out, in line with national and local priorities, how the Promoting a Safer Church Policy is being put into action and is reviewed regularly. The auditors reflected that such a plan could provide a strong basis for scrutinising progress and holding people to account in their safeguarding work – including recognising the positive progress that is being made.
- 5.1.13** Arrangements for seeking feedback from across the Minster community are under-developed. The auditors reflected that developing a systematic means of eliciting comments and feedback would strengthen the Minster’s understanding and responsive to the views and experiences of its members. The DSAP’s contact with survivors may assist further.

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

- What would a framework for quality assurance look like, that is able to evidence progress in creating a strong safeguarding culture and compliance with the expectations of Promoting a Safer Church, and what systems are needed to support it?
- How might the Minster seek regular feedback from a range of children and adults, including survivors of abuse

## **5.2 COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE SAFEGUARDING SERVICE**

- 5.2.1** A good complaints policy enables people to raise concerns, and to have timely and

appropriate consideration of any problems. A strong policy is clear about who complaints should be made to, and how they can be escalated if necessary. Positive features include an independent element, and clarity that *raising a safeguarding concern*, and *making a complaint about a safeguarding service*, are two distinct things. A good procedure will include a use of a staged process and include the potential use of independent investigation if needed.

- 5.2.2** National guidance assigns Chapter the responsibility of providing ‘a complaints and whistleblowing procedure which can be used for those who wish to complain about the handling of safeguarding issues’.
- 5.2.3** The Minster’s safeguarding policy contains brief but clear advice about how to make a complaint regarding the safeguarding service and distinguishes this from reporting a concern about a child. In essence, a potential complainant is directed either to the DSA or the Cathedral Administrator, depending on the circumstances. The safeguarding policy is available on the Minster website but ‘complaints’ does not appear if searched for. Neither is there a diocesan complaints policy available if searched for on either the Minster or the diocesan website.
- 5.2.4** The staff handbook contains details of a grievance policy and procedure which is comprehensive and sets out in detail the three-step approach that would be followed. The staff grievance policy and procedure does not apply to volunteers or members of the public.
- 5.2.5** Auditors saw one case where the Minster had been criticised for how a case was dealt with. This resulted in a positive engagement with the complainant, and a list of actions to address some of the concerns, including improvements in some areas of service.
- 5.2.6** The absence of a complaints policy and procedure of any kind in the Minster is a concern, especially given widespread perceptions that the Church of England is not good at responding well to safeguarding concerns. Having clear reporting procedures to deal with safeguarding concerns and allegations is one of the features of good safeguarding practice which is highlighted in the national Promoting a Safer Church policy statement, and this should include recourse to a clear procedure where concerns remain about the response received. The auditors considered that the short statement contained in the Minster safeguarding policy is insufficient for this purpose.

#### Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How will the Minster address the need for a complaints policy, which includes reference to making a complaint about the safeguarding service, and establish a culture in which complaints are positively invited, proactively identified, and systematically reviewed for learning?

## 5.3 WHISTLEBLOWING

### Description

- 5.3.1** Southwell Minster includes a short section on whistleblowing, referred to as ‘raising the alarm’, within its safeguarding policy, and refers to the importance of acting early if concerned. The safeguarding policy is available on the website but it is not possible to search for either ‘whistleblowing’ or ‘alarm’. There is no reference to whistleblowing in the staff handbook, though this contains sections on bullying and harassment at work, and grievance procedures, as noted above.

- 5.3.2** The Diocese identified the need for a diocesan whistleblowing policy in a recent (June 2021) 'section 11' self-assessment and noted in a progress update that a whistleblowing policy had since been written and approved by DSAP and was awaiting implementation across the Diocese, pending approval by Bishop's Council. The auditors did not see the draft policy and were not informed whether it would apply to and be formally adopted by the Minster.
- 5.3.3** The auditors considered that the reference to whistleblowing in the safeguarding policy is insufficient in itself to be used as a policy and procedure but could be developed for the purpose.

#### Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How will the Minster address the need for a whistleblowing policy and procedure and promote its use?

## 5.4 DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING ADVISORY PANEL/CATHEDRAL SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE

- 5.4.1** Based on the national guidance in Roles and Responsibilities for DSAPs, the panel should have a key role in bringing independence and safeguarding expertise to an oversight, scrutiny and challenge role, including contributing to a strategic plan. No specifics are provided in relation to cathedrals, with the apparent assumption being that cathedrals are part of diocesan structures.

### *Description*

- 5.4.2** The Southwell and Nottingham DSAP has changed considerably over the past two years. The current Chair arrived in post in September 2019, at which time there were no terms of reference for the panel, and its membership was principally drawn from postholders in the Diocese. Since that time, terms of reference have been established, and membership of the Panel has expanded to include the 'core agencies' of health, police, and social care. There is now a disability representative, and a survivor and the representative of the voluntary organisation Survivors of Sexual Abuse, providing a link that the Chair has given particular attention to developing. The terms of reference include the requirement to 'discharge its responsibilities by processes of scrutiny, support, constructive challenge and assurance having due regard to the National Church's Practice Guidance on safeguarding'.
- 5.4.3** Roles and Responsibilities requires the diocesan bishop, in consultation with the DSA, to appoint a Chair who 'should be an independent (independence signifies not employed in another role in the Diocese nor discharging managerial functions in the Diocese) lay person with responsibility for ensuring that the panel's advisory and scrutiny functions are carried out effectively'. The present DSAP Chair has a strong background in senior posts in local authority social care (both children and adults). Since retirement from that career, he has been involved in other senior chairing roles in voluntary organisations and is currently the Chair of a Safeguarding Adults Board in a neighbouring county. He and the DSA have together worked on developing the framework for a safeguarding SLA with the Minster.
- 5.4.4** DSAP has recently introduced the parish dashboard as a basis for auditing across the Diocese. The preparation of a quality assurance framework for the DSAP meeting in January 2022 is an agreed priority for DSAP.

- 5.4.5** The Dean is a member of the DSAP and contributes to discussions at meetings but does not provide written reports about Minster safeguarding arrangements. There is no formal mechanism for the Panel to hold the Dean and Chapter to account for safeguarding in the Minster, nor to be a critical friend.

#### Minster Safeguarding Committee

- 5.4.6** The Minster Safeguarding Committee (MSC) is a very small meeting, attended only by the Dean, the SC and the CO, with no terms of reference or clear remit, and apparently little connection across to other bodies in the Minster (or the DSAP). Its focus has been primarily operational, with an emphasis on PCR2 and preparation for the audit. Written reports are not usually provided, and no management information (for example, in relation to training or safer recruitment) is systematically reported. It does not have a formal oversight and scrutiny function. The auditors were told that there is recognition of the need to make this group more strategic, expand its membership and introduce an 'independent element'.

#### Analysis

- 5.4.7** DSAP is well placed to provide an oversight and scrutiny function for the Minster but would need to develop its systems and processes to enable this.
- 5.4.8** The recently revised terms of reference gives DSAP the responsibility for the oversight and scrutiny of safeguarding arrangements across the Diocese, including at the Minster (although this is implied rather than explicit). This is in line with national expectations as set out in House of Bishops policies. The appointment of the current, well-qualified, independent Chair, closely followed by the arrival of the DSA, has led to significantly broader membership and the agreement of a clear set of priorities. The introduction of the Parish Dashboard as the basis for QA activity is positive. Survivor input is now part of how the Panel operates, which is very positive. In the view of the auditors, these developments have strengthened DSAP's ability to carry out its functions of 'scrutiny, support and constructive challenge' in relation to Southwell Minster.
- 5.4.9** For these functions of DSAP to work well, the auditors reflected that better systems for mutual reporting would be beneficial. These could include having Minster safeguarding as a standing item on the DSAP agenda, in recognition of its size, status and public profile, with the expectation that a written report would be produced for each meeting. The nature of this report would need to be agreed. In the Minster, there are plans in place (e.g., the changes to the Safeguarding Meeting) which should provide a better basis for stronger reporting to the DSAP, and in turn more constructive feedback from the DSAP to the Minster.
- 5.4.10** Roles and Responsibilities guidance requires DSAPs to review progress annually and report this to the bishop and the identified diocesan body/bodies. To date, there has been no formal reporting by DSAP to the Dean and Chapter. The auditors reflected that this might provide an additional source of arm's length assurance for the Minster regarding its safeguarding arrangements, were it to be agreed.
- 5.4.11** As an internal body with limited membership and a primarily operational agenda, the MSC is not well placed to provide scrutiny and challenge to the Minster, although the auditors reflected that the recent addition of the DSA, the recognition of the need for an independent element to the membership, and the intention to review its functioning, were all positive. They could see the potential for MSC to develop its functions further, and these could include internal monitoring.



### Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How might the Minster work with DSAP to strengthen DSAP's ability to provide an effective oversight, scrutiny and challenge function of the Minster's safeguarding arrangements?

## 5.5 LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**5.5.1** Safeguarding leadership takes various forms – strategic, operational and theological – with different people taking different roles. How these roles are understood, and how they fit together, can be determinative in how well led the safeguarding function is.

### Theological leadership

#### *Description*

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

**5.5.3** The present Dean was installed in September 2016. She came to Southwell from the Diocese of Bath and Wells, where she had occupied a number of positions including Archdeacon of Wells and a Canon Residentiary of Wells Cathedral. The previous Dean of Southwell retired in 2014, and a Canon Residentiary acted as Dean in the interim two years. He returned to a post as Canon Chancellor following the appointment of the present Dean and subsequently retired in September 2019.

**5.5.4** The Dean described her approach to safeguarding leadership as 'relational', seeking to demonstrate leadership by example. Recognising the need for a more explicit approach, she described how the Minster will be observing 'Safeguarding Sunday' for the first time later in the year. This is an annual event in which hundreds of churches across the country turn a spotlight on safeguarding, demonstrating their commitment to ensuring that protecting vulnerable people is at the heart of the Christian message. The Dean was planning to use this as an opportunity to comment for the first time from the pulpit about safeguarding, including the findings of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) about safeguarding in the Anglican Church.

**5.5.5** The safeguarding policy contains a foreword from the Dean in which she sets out a commitment for Southwell Minster to be a safe place for all who come, notably for children and adults at times of risk and harm, relating this to the Gospel's messages about human wellbeing and wholeness. She goes on to say that the Gospel 'is also concerned with confronting truth and the reality of human sin. The Gospel is insistent that those who are most vulnerable are to be protected'.

#### *Analysis*

**5.5.6** Theological leadership of safeguarding in the Minster needs developing to become more visible, and more widely understood as integral to the core beliefs of Christian love and care.

**5.5.7** The Dean is very aware of her responsibilities of safeguarding, arising from her extensive experience in different senior positions. Her commitment to improving safeguarding, from what she found to be a neglected area at the Minster when she



arrived, has been strong and has resulted in progress in specific areas of safeguarding. She acknowledges, however, that she has not taken the opportunity to preach explicitly about safeguarding. The auditors welcomed her stated intention to rectify this, in the first instance through her sermon at 'Safeguarding Sunday'.

- 5.5.8** The survey asked the question 'To what extent does safeguarding, and the safety and wellbeing of others, form part of the message of sermons?' 11% (n=9) replied 'extremely' and 28% (n=24) 'moderately.' 12% (n=10) said 'not at all' and 49% (n=41) said the question was not relevant to their role or experience.
- 5.5.9** Although a relatively small sample, these responses suggest that collective theological leadership of safeguarding could be strengthened and made more explicit in the messages given from the pulpit as well as in other communications.

#### Questions for the Cathedral to consider

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

### Strategic leadership

- 5.5.10** The House of Bishops' Roles and Responsibilities practice guidance assigns different and overlapping roles to Dean and Chapter, with the former having a clear leadership role in relation to safeguarding, and Chapter having a strategic and oversight role in relation to the Church of England's Promoting a Safer Church safeguarding policy. This includes the requirement to have a Promoting a Safer Church action plan in place that sets out, in line with national and local priorities, how the policy is being put into action, and is reviewed regularly.

#### Description

- 5.5.11** The Chapter of Southwell Minster is the body charged with the responsibility for leadership, administration and management. Chapter comprises the Dean, two Residentiary Canons, a Member of the College of Canons, two lay persons elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting, and four lay members appointed by the Bishop or Bishop's Council and Dean. The SC is a co-opted member, in the dual role of SC and PSO. The CO is in attendance. Chapter meets on nine occasions per year. One of the two residentiary canon roles is vacant. Other roles have been recently filled. The interim CO took up post in June 2021 following the departure of the previous COO.
- 5.5.12** The Chapter is assisted in its role by several sub-committees, none of which have delegated authority. The Cathedral Council and the College of Canons provide support and oversight to Chapter.
- 5.5.13** These governance arrangements are likely to change as the Minster develops its response to the Cathedrals Measure 2021 and moves towards charitable status.
- 5.5.14** The Leaves Project has been a major focus for Chapter over the past few years. The £2.3m National Lottery Heritage Fund-supported project is centred around the conservation and interpretation of the famous Leaves of Southwell in the Chapter House. The three-year programme to deliver the project was delayed by some months by 'lockdown'. The interior work is scheduled to finish in October 2021, and the external work in the Palace Garden by spring 2022.
- 5.5.15** Minutes of meetings this year (2021) have included safeguarding as a standing item. Safeguarding reports have been received from the SC on a regular basis, sometimes

merely noted as 'for information', suggesting a subject that is not normally discussed or debated. The view was expressed by some that safeguarding needs to be 'higher up on the agenda' and given more time and attention.

- 5.5.16** The recently appointed acting CO, who was previously the longstanding Diocesan CEO, has introduced new ideas about how Chapter can better fulfil its responsibilities, including in relation to safeguarding. He has put in place a new Senior Management Team (SMG), which will meet fortnightly from September. Membership will include the Dean, the Canon Precentor, the CO and the Head of Finance. This body will provide the strategic leadership for the Minster, freeing Chapter to fulfil its core governance responsibilities. This will be supplemented by a weekly operational meeting, comprising departmental managers, chaired by the CO, to ensure coordinated delivery of the Minster's plans.
- 5.5.17** There is no strategic plan at present. An awayday is planned for early October, led by an independent consultant, which is intended to provide an opportunity to 'reset the culture' and agree strategic priorities.
- 5.5.18** The survey used by the auditors asked a number of questions about leadership. Asked the question 'How active is the Dean in communicating the importance of safeguarding within the Church?', the responses were: 'extremely' – 62% (n=51); 'moderately' – 21% (n=18); 'not at all' – 5% (n=4). 13% (n=11) said the question was not relevant to their role. In response to the survey question 'how obvious is it that safeguarding is a priority in the cathedral?', 57% (n=48) replied 'extremely' and 39% (n=33) replied 'moderately.' Only two respondents (3%) replied 'not at all'.

### *Analysis*

- 5.5.19** While personal leadership of safeguarding has been strong, and much has been achieved, a collective, strategic approach to safeguarding is under-developed. The development of a strategic safeguarding plan will assist.
- 5.5.20** From a low base, much has been achieved since the arrival of the Dean. The appointment of the SC, albeit voluntary, was a step forward. Progress has been made in introducing and embedding safer recruitment practices for staff. Safeguarding training has been progressed. Chapter has benefitted from including the SC among its membership, has identified resources to enable the appointment of chorister chaperones and is now recognising the need for a paid CSO, which is positive.
- 5.5.21** Chapter minutes indicate that Chapter has been trying to operate simultaneously at strategic and operational levels. Some items are discussed in considerable detail. The capacity for standing back to take more of an overview and scrutiny role has been very limited, not helped by vacancies and turnover of members.
- 5.5.22** The auditors reflected that strategic leadership of safeguarding at Southwell Minster has been weakened by a number of factors including, within Chapter, the limited capacity and inadequate attention given to safeguarding, and in the Minster as a whole, the lack of formal structures to enable operational planning and oversight. The Dean has assumed roles and tasks which blur the boundaries between strategic leadership and operational management, which has both disempowered colleagues and inhibited the development of a more collective approach to safeguarding. The SC has been relied on both to provide strategic leadership and also to deliver operationally. Chapter itself does not appear to have functioned well as a collegiate body; there was little evidence seen by the auditors of an appreciation of its collective responsibility for the strategic leadership of safeguarding.

- 5.5.23** The vacancies at Chapter have exacerbated this situation. The protracted process in recruiting to the vacant post of Residentiary Canon has meant that the Dean and the Canon Precentor have had to cover a particularly wide range of responsibilities during a period which coincided with the pandemic. Together with decisions made about furloughing staff, which the auditors reflected would understandably have been influenced by difficult financial considerations, this precipitated stresses onto an already slim organisational structure, resulting in significant pressures for specific postholders, including the COO and the Head Verger.
- 5.5.24** The decision to create a strategic leadership team is a positive way forward. Terms of reference for this group have not yet been agreed but could include strategic leadership for safeguarding. Were this to be the case, it would be beneficial to review the terms of reference of the MSC, in order to ensure that the remit of both groups for strategic and operational leadership are clear.
- 5.5.25** The auditors reflected that the development of a Promoting a Safer Church strategy and action plan could assist in focusing activity and clarifying responsibilities for strategic and operational leaders, as well as providing a basis for QA activity, including reporting to DSAP and the Bishop. The planned development of a strategic plan for the Minster provides an opportunity to progress this promptly and within a wider strategic context.

#### Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- What systems and structures might enable a more visible, collegiate approach to safeguarding across the Cathedral's strategic leadership?
- How might the development of a Promoting a Safer Church strategy and action plan help the Minster to focus its energies and develop its safeguarding arrangements?

### Operational leadership

#### *Description*

- 5.5.26** Operational leadership of the Minster's lay functions sits with the CO, supported by staff and managers across a number of different departments. The Dean and Residentiary Canons also have management responsibilities. Until recently, the Dean line managed the Rector Chori. It is now the Canon Precentor who manages the Rector Chori and also oversees the day-to-day running of the Music Department. He also has oversight of servers, wardens and sidesmen. The Dean is the Chapter link with the bell tower. In the absence of a second Residentiary Canon, the Dean and Canon Precentor have shared responsibilities for areas of activity which will eventually come under the remit of this post, once appointed to. These include education and pastoral care.
- 5.5.27** The CO manages most of the lay staff, including the vergers, and also is the link with the Guild of Stewards, although the Dean is its President. Activities of volunteers are managed by the relevant activity leaders. For example, the education officer manages all volunteers associated with school visits.
- 5.5.28** The Chief Steward, who is a volunteer, is responsible, with a 12-person committee, for the activities of the Guild of Stewards; he acts as an operational leader. He has no line-management or supervision arrangement, and he is not a member of any group relating to safeguarding (he sits on the Creativity and Events Committee, and the Shop Committee). Like other colleagues, he has made strenuous efforts to establish

best safeguarding practice within the Guild, in the absence of consistent Minster support.

- 5.5.29** The interface between the Guild and the Minster is loose. The Chief Steward does not report to a designated person in the Minster. He has no supervision, and as he does not attend the diary meeting, there is no consistent flow of information to him and his team about forthcoming events. The recruitment of stewards does not follow safer recruitment principles. The auditors reflected that the Guild would benefit from its structures and processes being aligned with those in the Minster to strengthen accountability, and ensure that adults who may be at risk receive a consistent response.
- 5.5.30** The auditors understand that a more formalised arrangement between the Minster and the Guild is being considered, at the instigation of the Chief Steward, which could potentially improve a number of these deficits. This will undoubtedly be a step forward. However, the auditors questioned whether there is an opportunity to completely reset the Cathedral's approach to its volunteers, bringing them fully in-house in order to ensure that accountability is clear and consistent standards are applied across the entire body of volunteers.
- 5.5.31** The Minster Safeguarding Committee (MSC) is the only group whose sole remit is safeguarding. It has limited membership (CO, the Dean, and the SC). The DSA has recently joined. It has not met since January 2021. The auditors were told of plans to strengthen this group, including the possible appointment of an independent Chair.
- 5.5.32** The diary meeting is the only forum, aside from the MSC itself, that has the potential to coordinate day-to-day safeguarding activity across the Minster. It brings together most, but not all, of the departmental and team leaders and enables discussion and planning for activities in the Minster and across its precincts. The auditors were pleased to note the very recent creation of an operational management team, chaired by the CO, which should address this gap and enable a refocusing of both the MSC and diary meeting to operate more effectively.
- 5.5.33** Key to strategic leaders having a clear understanding of the effectiveness of safeguarding, and of staff and volunteers seeing a recognisable and cohesive commitment to safeguarding across senior leaders, is the visibility of individuals around the physical spaces of the Minster. The question 'How visible are people leading safeguarding in the Cathedral?', received the following replies: 'extremely' – 36% (n=30), 'moderately' – 45% (N=38), 'not at all' – 8% (N=7). These results indicate that improvement is needed in this area.

### *Analysis*

- 5.5.34** A good start has been made in embedding safeguarding into areas of the Minster's operations. Coordinating operational leadership, and developing a safeguarding delivery plan, would assist in ensuring that improvements and standards are consistent in all areas. The governance arrangements for the Guild of Stewards should be addressed as a priority.
- 5.5.35** The auditors reflected that operational leadership at the Minster is strong within individual teams/departments, but that there has been no structure for managers to meet and communicate on a regular basis. Despite the absence of coordination, the commitment and expertise of individual leaders and their teams have ensured much good practice is in evidence.
- 5.5.36** There have been limited opportunities to share good practice and promote consistent standards – e.g., for recording and safe storage of records, expectations about

training compliance. The planned review of the MSC is an opportunity to address this by bringing relevant operational leaders into the same forum.

- 5.5.37** Good use is made of the knowledge and experience of the DSA and the DST. Advice is regularly sought and invariably followed. The greater engagement by the DSA in Minster safeguarding arrangements is welcomed and is having an impact. This will be reinforced by the conclusion of the discussions about a formal SLA.
- 5.5.38** The diary meeting does not appear to be effective in ensuring coordination of activities and planning adequate capacity to support them safely. The auditors understand that this meeting is one of many which is being reviewed with a view to improving its effectiveness.
- 5.5.39** The auditors heard evidence that the vergers are very well regarded – e.g., ‘the vergers are fantastic’ – but also learned that there is a sense that they may be under-appreciated and expected ‘to do everything’. There has been a high level of sickness from stress in this team during the past 18 months. Given the reliance on the vergers for the oversight of the premises and much of the activity within it, the fact that the Head Verger or a member of his team were not always included in the planning for re-opening the Minster post-COVID (the Restart Group) was a significant omission.
- 5.5.40** The auditors were concerned at the ‘arm’s-length relationship’ between the Minster and the Guild of Stewards. Given the significant, public-facing role of the stewards, and without wishing to detract from the positive work that has been done to ensure good training and safeguarding standards are in place, they reflected that it was not consistent with the Minster’s responsibilities for safeguarding to have a body whose governance is separate and whose constitution makes no reference to the safeguarding policies of either the National Church or the Minster. The auditors reflected that the relationship between the Guild of Stewards and the Minster should be reviewed to ensure appropriate accountability and consistent safeguarding practices are in place.

#### Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How can the Minster establish a more coordinated and collegiate approach to operational leadership regarding safeguarding and what structures are needed to support this?
- What needs to be done to ensure that the Guild of Stewards complies fully with the Minster’s safeguarding policy and guidance, and how might its governance and accountability arrangements be strengthened in relation to the Minster?

## 5.6 CULTURE

- 5.6.1** 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. SCIE’s experience auditing safeguarding in faith contexts more broadly, suggests that in areas where there is experience among senior clergy of previous serious abuse cases, a culture of openness and humility in approaching safeguarding issues can be stronger. It can be accompanied by a move away from responses which give too much attention to reputational issues and the welfare of (alleged) perpetrators, as opposed to the welfare of victims and survivors.



- 5.6.2** Any cathedral should strive for an open, learning culture where safeguarding is a shared responsibility, albeit supported by experts, and which encourages people to raise concerns about how things are working so they can be addressed. An open learning culture starts from the assumption that maintaining adequate vigilance is difficult and proactively seeks feedback on how safeguarding is operating and encourages people to highlight any concerns.

#### *Description*

- 5.6.3** On her arrival at Southwell Minster in 2016, the Dean described finding an inadequate understanding that 'safeguarding is everyone's business', and therefore set out to model and instil an understanding of safeguarding as being about more than reporting concerns to the clergy. These efforts have had considerable success. The audit survey found that 57% (N=48) of respondents saw safeguarding as a priority in the Minster ('extremely'), with 39% (N=33) agreeing 'moderately'. Asked to what extent there is a culture in the Minster that does not tolerate bullying, mistreatment, abuse and misuse of power, and a norm of treating adults and children with respect and care, 68% (n=57) responded that this was 'extremely' the case, and 25% (n= 21) thought it was 'moderately' the case. 6% (n=5), though, replied 'not at all'. One person thought the question was not relevant to their role or experience.
- 5.6.4** Confidence that concerns that someone is being hurt in some way, or that someone is behaving inappropriately would be taken 'extremely' or 'moderately' seriously was high at 95% (n=80), with 74% saying they were 'extremely' confident. 4% (n=3) said they were not at all confident, however.
- 5.6.5** Southwell Minster was described by many who spoke with the auditors as having been through an extended period, lasting several years, of 'transition', and at times 'trauma'. Particular individuals and groups appear to have been affected more than others. As in society more generally, there were those with additional vulnerabilities due to their own health or their living circumstances. Sickness absence affected some areas of the Minster to such an extent that 'coronavirus' and 'loss of key staff' due to unplanned retirement or resignation were the only two new areas added to the Minster's risk register in 2020.
- 5.6.6** Many who responded to the survey took the opportunity to add additional comments. There were many and contrasting views expressed, from those who were perfectly happy about how things are, praised the Dean for her personal leadership of safeguarding, and who were confident about how well safeguarding is carried out in the Minster, to those who expressed strongly contrasting views. These latter comments, echoed in several interviews, and by the person who spoke with the auditors on behalf of someone who had experienced abuse, suggested that some in the Minster community felt unsafe, reluctant to raise concerns, and unsupported. The level of sickness absence in some teams is further indication of there being a problem.

#### *Analysis*

- 5.6.7** The organisational culture does not feel safe for all members of the Minster community, leading to the risk that individuals may not feel able to raise safeguarding concerns. Without this being addressed, the Minster will not be able to realise its aspiration of becoming a safer church for everyone.
- 5.6.8** In considering the range of views expressed through interviews as well as the survey, the auditors reflected on the importance of having a strong Chapter, with well-functioning key roles, supported by an adequately resourced organisational structure,



in order to enable a strong safeguarding culture to flourish. This has not been the case in Southwell, with the result that a few have been disproportionately impacted, leading to a sense of victimisation, and a lack of confidence in the leadership.

**5.6.9** The additional stresses arising from the pandemic have proved overwhelming, due to the limitations in strategic leadership discussed above. The experiences of being unsupported in a context where capacity is limited and relationships difficult, creates a culture where individuals feel unsafe, not valued nor taken seriously by the leadership and hence there is a disincentive to raise safeguarding concerns.

**5.6.10** The auditors were positive about the steps already taken by the acting CO to put into place the basic building blocks for a well-functioning organisation. The forthcoming leadership training for the senior leaders, and the planned development of a vision and strategy for the Minster, are both opportunities to reflect on a painful and challenging period. Openness to hearing from people who are critical as well as those who are supportive will assist the Minster in developing the open, learning culture which is the foundation for promoting a safer church.

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

- What are the next steps in building and embedding a culture across the Minster which puts the experiences of victims and survivors at its heart and where safeguarding is owned as 'everybody's business'?
- How will the Minster leadership demonstrate their commitment to creating an open culture in which everyone, including clergy, staff and volunteers, feels safe and well supported?

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

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- 6.1.1** Arrangements for keeping safe the Minster and associated buildings and those working in and visiting them are generally good. Staff, volunteers and congregants are confident that they are kept safe. CCTV coverage could be improved. Lone working arrangements should be reviewed.
- 6.1.2** The present provision for young children is safely operated, with appropriate procedures in place. Processes for recruitment and training of volunteers and record-keeping need aligning with those in the rest of the Minster.
- 6.1.3** The Minster has a sound understanding of the potential needs of its visitors, and its ageing population of both congregants and volunteers. The arrangements for pastoral care need strengthening to ensure application of consistently high safeguarding standards. Regular safeguarding oversight of pastoral concerns being addressed by different groups throughout the Minster is needed.
- 6.1.4** Safeguarding arrangements within the choirs have improved significantly in the past three-to-four years. The staff work closely with the school to promote the safety and wellbeing of all the choir pupils. Written procedures would be beneficial, together with recording guidelines. A formal means for ascertaining regular feedback from choristers is desirable.
- 6.1.5** Bellringing at Southwell Minster is safely managed. Written procedures, aligned with the Minster safeguarding policy, and specifying safeguarding arrangements for visiting individuals and bands, are needed.
- 6.1.6** Referrals are triaged effectively by the SC, and case work is managed well by the DST on behalf of the Minster. Introducing a single system for reporting concerns is desirable. Learning from the experiences of survivors is needed.
- 6.1.7** There has been good progress in ensuring that clergy, staff and volunteers have undertaken basic levels of safeguarding training. A more systematic approach to planning, delivering and monitoring training is required. Consideration of how the impact of training on daily practice might be evaluated would be beneficial.
- 6.1.8** While the Minster has made some progress in instituting safer recruitment practice when recruiting staff, there is considerable work to be done to improve practice and record-keeping in volunteer recruitment.
- 6.1.9** The safeguarding policy comprises a great deal of safeguarding-related information. Department-specific practice guidance is needed to supplement the policy. Attention is needed to ensure that policies and procedures are accessible, properly understood and embedded in daily practice.
- 6.1.10** The SC and DSA work well together to provide a good safeguarding service to the Minster. Proposals to employ a paid safeguarding officer in the Minster will further strengthen arrangements.
- 6.1.11** There is no consistent approach to keeping records across the activities of all parts of the Minster. This should be addressed as a priority.
- 6.1.12** There is the beginning of a framework for quality assurance in place. This needs developing to include more effective systems for monitoring and reporting, and for gathering feedback from those engaged with the Cathedral. The lack of a formal safeguarding strategy and associated action plan means the safeguarding activities of the Minster are missing an important monitoring and QA tool.

- 6.1.13** The absence of a complaints policy and procedure of any kind in the Minster is a concern which should be addressed as a priority. The auditors considered that the short statement contained in the Minster safeguarding policy is insufficient for this purpose.
- 6.1.14** The reference to whistleblowing in the safeguarding policy is insufficient in itself to be used as a policy and procedure but could be developed for the purpose.
- 6.1.15** DSAP is well placed to provide an oversight and scrutiny function for the Minster but would need to develop its systems and processes to enable this.
- 6.1.16** As an internal body with limited membership and a primarily operational agenda, the Minster Safeguarding Committee is not well placed to provide scrutiny and challenge to the Minster, although the auditors reflected that the recognition of the need for an independent element to the membership, and the intention to review its functioning, were both positive.
- 6.1.17** Theological leadership of safeguarding in the Minster needs developing to become more visible, and more widely understood as integral to the core beliefs of Christian love and care.
- 6.1.18** While personal leadership of safeguarding has been strong, and much has been achieved, a collective, strategic approach to safeguarding is under-developed. The development of a strategic safeguarding plan will assist.
- 6.1.19** A good start has been made in embedding safeguarding into areas of the Minster's operations. Coordinating operational leadership, and developing a safeguarding delivery plan, would assist in ensuring that improvements and standards are consistent in all areas. The governance arrangements for the Guild of Stewards should be addressed as a priority.
- 6.1.20** The organisational culture does not feel safe for all members of the Minster community, leading to the risk that individuals may not feel able to raise safeguarding concerns. Without this being addressed, the Minster will not be able to realise its aspiration of becoming a safer church for everyone.

## APPENDICES

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### Appendix A: Information provided to auditors

In advance of the audit, the Minster sent through:

- Site plan – January 2010
- Floor plan – January 2010
- Overview for SCIE – September 2021
- Safeguarding Self-Audit for SCIE – September 2021
- Display document – January 2020
- Chapter minutes: 15/4/21; 13/5/21; 8/7/21
- DSAP Terms of Reference (Version 4) – November 2020
- DSAP minutes: 20/1/21; 20/5/21; 13/7/21
- Cathedral Safeguarding Meeting minutes: 12/11/20; 27/1/21
- Policy statement on safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk in Southwell Minster – undated
- Safeguarding policy – updated April 2021
- Training overview – September 2021
- Education
  - Generic risk assessment – February 2020
  - Guide sheet – September 2020
  - Photo permission family fun days – March 2020
  - Photo permission schools form – January 2020
  - Policies summaries 2020 – September 2020
  - Safeguarding policies 2020 final – February 2020
  - Draft Memorandum of Agreement – June 2021 Guild of Stewards Constitution
- Roles and Responsibilities Appendix 8
- Safeguarding Action Plan Southwell Minster – September 2021
- Safeguarding Training Programme – September 2021
- SCC Annual Report and Accounts 2020
- SCC Risk Register 2020
- Staff handbook

- Southwell Minster Choir Chorister Handbook – 2021
- Staff Handbook Absolute Final
- DSA job description
- Diocesan Safeguarding Action Plan draft 2020
- Safeguarding Structure and Resources Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham
- Safeguarding Priorities Grid (Diocese) 2021
- Safeguarding Process Flowchart and Service Standards Grid (Diocese) – June 2021
- Section 11 Self-Assessment (Diocese) – February 2021
- Synod Report Final – May 2021
- Details of Pastoral Care Committee (DBS and Training) – September 2021
- Draft report to Chapter – safeguarding

## Appendix B: Participation of organisation staff

The auditors had conversations with:

- The Dean
- Chief Officer
- Canon Precentor
- Safeguarding Coordinator
- Rector Chori
- Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser
- School staff: Head of Juniors, Director of Music, Assistant
- Pastoral Care Coordinator
- Children's Work Consultant
- Head Verger
- Tower Captain
- Head of Education
- Chorister supervisors

By telephone:

- Independent Chair of DSAP
- Chief Steward

## Appendix C: What records/ files were examined?

The auditors reviewed:

- six case work files
- seven HR files (six for staff, one for a volunteer)





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