

Response from Dean and Chapter of Worcester Cathedral to the SCIE Safeguarding Audit and Report

The Chapter warmly welcomes the recent Safeguarding SCIE audit and report of the arrangements for Safeguarding in the Cathedral. We are encouraged by the positive comments that reflect the focus and hard work that has gone into ensuring the Cathedral is a safe place to worship, visit and work. The Chapter have considered the recommendations and areas for further work and note that they broadly mirror the self-assessment process that helped to inform our future priorities and plan. We are not complacent about the need to keep progressing Safeguarding work and, indeed, ensuring the organisation's culture promotes this.

This audit was the first virtual audit carried out by SCIE as part of their national Cathedral programme. We are grateful to the auditors for their professionalism during this process, and take very seriously their comments that there were substantial limitations to their work. For example, the auditors were unable to follow up, through face-to-face focus groups, the comments made through anonymous online surveys and whilst we organised a virtual tour, this was not the same as an in-person visit to the Cathedral.

Chapter have put together an action plan that is set out below. One of the new developments, endorsed in the SCIE report, that Chapter had already planned was to set up a new Safeguarding Committee; with an independent chair to give additional focus and scrutiny to safeguarding developments and improvements. This Committee will have a key role in ensuring the plan is prioritized and implemented and a longer term 2 year Safeguarding plan is put in place. The first meeting is planned for May 2021 and the group will subsequently produce an annual report on Safeguarding. It will also take a key role, along with Chapter, in enhancing the clarity and visibility of the strategic leadership of Safeguarding across the Cathedral community; in particular to articulate the 'golden thread' which runs through all the ministries of the Cathedral. This will be supported by a communication plan and strategy to re-enforce the messaging about the importance of Safeguarding, which is conveyed to staff, volunteers, members of the congregation, parents and choristers.

Action Plan – Safeguarding SCIE Audit

Children

Bullying – the Chapter notes the concern mentioned by the audit of possible bullying. When we conducted our own survey in preparation for the audit, no concerns were expressed, but due to the importance of this question we are re-examining the question. We will consider any further improvements that need to be made in light of responses from parents and choristers.

Lost Child Protocol – the safety of young children visiting the Cathedral is paramount and we will put in place a protocol for the safe recovery of children who may become separated from their parents or educational groups.

Staff and Volunteers

Lone working – we will review arrangements for lone working to include issues such as how to deal with threatening behaviour, how to respond to people with mental ill-health, how to summon assistance urgently etc.

Policy and Management

Reporting Concerns – the Safeguarding Policy Statement will be reviewed and updated to ensure that all those working within the Cathedral could effectively recognise, report and record concerns. The document will be made available to all staff and volunteers.

Recording – the process of storing and recording cases and safeguarding incidents centrally will be reviewed and strengthened.

Recruitment and training – a centralized process for the recruitment, induction and training of staff and volunteers will be put in place, using the planned web-based system that is currently being sourced.

Care of vulnerable adults – we will strengthen a number of areas within our work around vulnerable adults as follows:

- we will review the interface between safeguarding and the provision of pastoral care by clergy and others in the Cathedral community.

- we will review the response to vulnerable adults to ensure the correct balance between security and pastoral concern
- we will review the Cathedral's response to those who present as survivors of abuse
- we will implement a training programme covering mental health, domestic abuse and substance abuse for staff on the Cathedral floor.