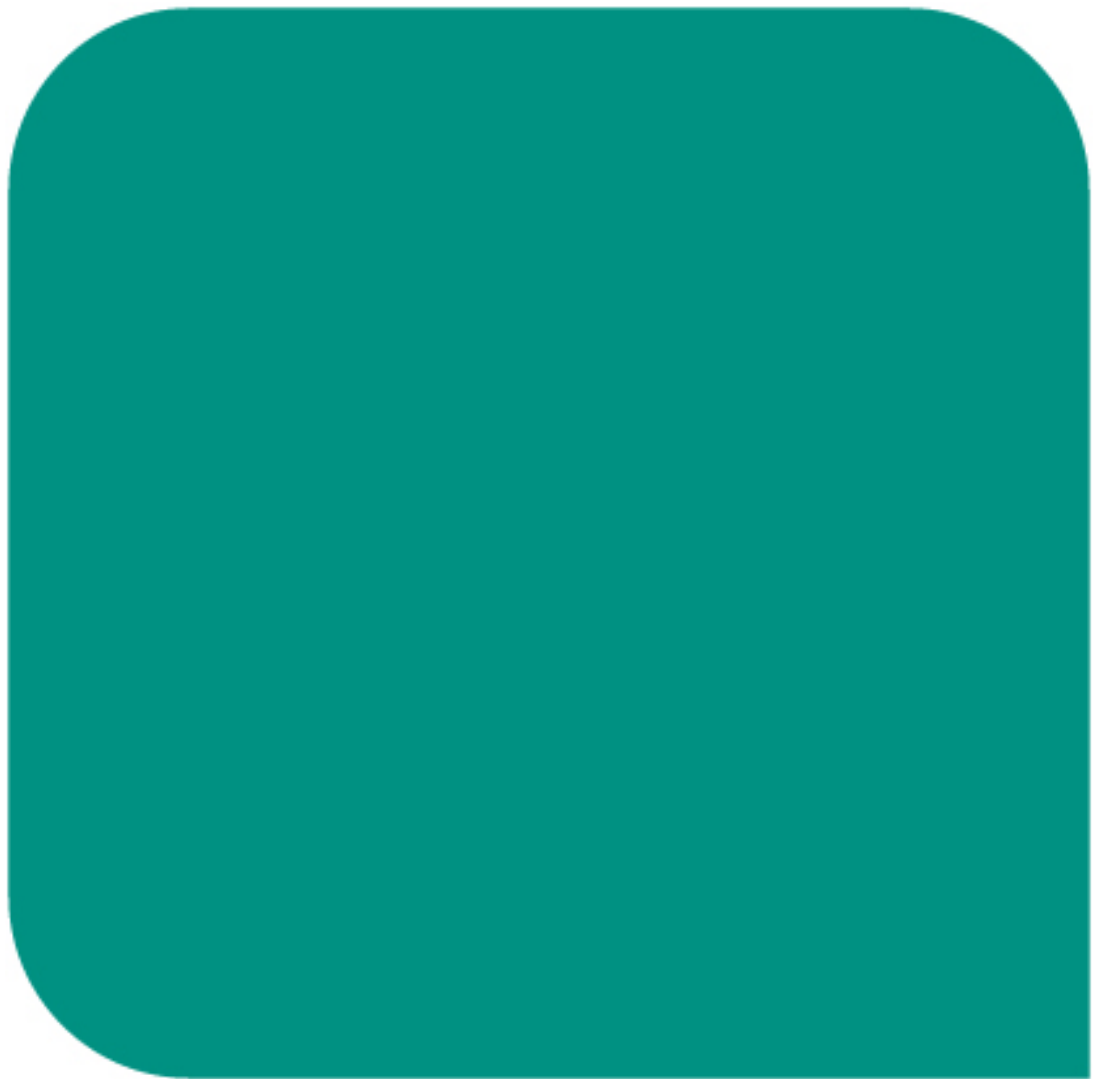




social care
institute for excellence

York Minster independent safeguarding audit (December 2018)



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

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

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

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

First published in Great Britain in March 2019
by the Social Care Institute for Excellence and the Church of England

© Church of England

All rights reserved

Written by Hugh Constant, Susan Ellery and Jane Bee

Social Care Institute for Excellence

Watson House
54 Baker Street
London W1U 7EX
tel 020 7766 7400
www.scie.org.uk



Contents

1	INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1	The audit programme.....	1
1.2	About SCIE.....	1
1.3	The audit process.....	1
2	CONTEXT.....	3
2.1	Context of the Cathedral.....	3
2.2	Contextual features relevant to safeguarding.....	3
2.3	Description of the safeguarding structure (INCLUDING LINKS WITH THE DIOCESE)	3
2.4	Who was seen in this audit	4
3	FINDINGS – PRACTICE.....	5
3.1	Safe activities and working practices	5
3.2	Case work (including information sharing).....	13
3.3	Clergy Disciplinary Measure	15
3.4	Training	15
3.5	Safer Recruitment.....	16
4	FINDINGS – ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORTS.....	18
4.1	Policy, procedures and guidance	18
4.2	Chapter safeguarding adviser, and their supervision & management	19
4.3	Recording systems and IT solutions.....	21
5	FINDINGS – LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY	22
5.1	Quality Assurance	22
5.2	Complaints about the safeguarding service	22
5.3	Whistleblowing	23
5.4	Cathedral Safeguarding Advisory Panel.....	24
5.5	Leadership and management.....	25
6	Conclusions.....	30
	APPENDIX: REVIEW PROCESS	31
	DATA COLLECTION.....	31

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE AUDIT PROGRAMME

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

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

1.2 ABOUT SCIE

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

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

1.3 THE AUDIT PROCESS

1.3.1 SCIE Learning Together and our approach to audit

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

1.3.2 Key principles informing the audit

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

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

1.3.3 Supporting improvements

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

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

1.3.4 Structure of the report

This report is divided into:

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

2 CONTEXT

2.1 CONTEXT OF THE CATHEDRAL

York Minster is the mother church for the Diocese of York and the Province of York, and the seat of the Archbishop of York. Its origins date from the seventh century. As well as a globally significant place of worship, it is a significant regional tourist destination; a major employer, with over 250 staff working alongside more than 500 volunteers; and a centre for a range of crafts and skills such as bell ringing and stone masonry. It has a choir, consisting of boys and girls, the members of which attend the Minster School, a day school adjacent to the minster itself.

2.2 CONTEXTUAL FEATURES RELEVANT TO SAFEGUARDING

As an institution, York Minster is on a different scale from nearly all other English cathedrals. Large numbers of visitors, staff and volunteers have to be kept safe, but it is large enough to have specialist safeguarding staff, and is well-resourced. Its size and significance make it a potential terrorist target, and this has shaped its thinking around security. York Minster maintains its own police force, one of very few cathedrals to do so.

The Minster School is an independent day school for children aged 3–13 years, with c.180 pupils, including the boy and girl choristers of York Minster. The Chapter of York constitutes the governing body of the school, although it delegates aspects of this task to a Delegated Governing Committee. This audit is of York Minster, and not the school, although it does cover how the boundaries between the Minster and the school work in safeguarding terms.

As the seat of the Archbishop of York, it is a high-profile institution in the Church of England, with concomitant risks to the Church's reputation in the event of any safeguarding concerns. This was evident in a major controversy about York Minster's bell ringers which consumed a great deal of time and effort over a number of years, which could otherwise have been expended on further improving safeguarding more generally.

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

The Chapter at York Minster has overall responsibility for safeguarding, as it does every part of the Minster's functioning, and therefore sets the strategic direction for safeguarding. There is currently a vacancy for the role of Dean of York, although the current Bishop of Southampton has been appointed, and will take up his role early in 2019. The Canon Precentor, at the time of the audit, was Acting Dean.

The Minster employs a Chapter Safeguarding Adviser (CSA) for three days a week, although this is shortly to be increased to four, to allow more support to be offered to the Minster School. She sits on a Safeguarding Operations Committee (SOC), which is independently chaired, and which includes people from various departments across the Minster. The CSA reports to the Chapter Steward, the most senior lay

figure in the Minster, and as such present at Chapter meetings.

The Canon Pastor is the delegated safeguarding lead, and works closely with the CSA and the chair of the SOC. He provides a safeguarding link to the Diocese, sitting on its Safeguarding Strategy Group. The CSA sits on the Diocese's Safeguarding Operations Group.

Safeguarding arrangements are at a mature stage in the minster, and while the Minster and the Diocese have worked closely together on safeguarding, some aspects of joint working, such as combining advisory groups, feel premature.

2.4 WHO WAS SEEN IN THIS AUDIT

The audit involved reviewing documentation, looking at case files, talking to key people in the life of the Minster – such as Chapter members, safeguarding staff, music leads, and people operating on the floor of the minster – and discussing safeguarding with a number of focus groups. Further details are provided in the appendix. The audit of York Minster, as a large institution, involved a three-day site visit; most cathedrals have a 2.5-day audit.

2.4.1 Any limitations to audit

The audit was well-planned, even though, as one of the first of the cathedrals to be audited, York Minster had relatively little time to prepare. The time and effort that went into the smooth running of the audit was reflective of the commitment to the audit, and the open-minded, positive approach the Minster took to it. Due to some cancellations in what would have been a very small group, the focus group of children involved in the Minster, other than as choristers, was not held.

3 FINDINGS – PRACTICE

3.1 SAFE ACTIVITIES AND WORKING PRACTICES

Safely accommodating staff, volunteers, and nearly 700,000 worshippers and tourists each year, many of whom are children or vulnerable adults – and balancing the sometimes conflicting needs of these groups – is a major undertaking. The auditors judged that York Minster has the procedures and people to manage any risks well.

3.1.1 Precincts and buildings

Description

York Minster sits in open precincts in the heart of York, with the Minster School and other Minster properties, such as a Learning Centre, offices, and clergy accommodation, immediately surrounding it.

Various roles combine to keep people in and around the Minster safe:

- A team of eight York Minster Police (YMP) and two wardens, led by a Head of Security
- A team of c.40 hosts, of whom about ten are on duty on the minster floor at any one time, welcoming people into the Minster, and acting as a first point of contact for people who may be in need of help
- Four Visitor Experience Managers, who manage the hosts and who are duty managers on the Minster floor on a rota basis, and a Visitor Experience Volunteer Manager. These are in turn answerable to the Head of Visitor Experience
- The verger team consists of the Head Verger, four vergers, and two vergers on flexible arrangements who can be brought in as cover
- During services, stewards assist in helping worshippers

The Minster has in place emergency evacuation plans, and a business continuity plan. The role of the CSA in emergency situations is clarified in these documents, indicating that safeguarding is considered in mainstream planning.

Analysis

The YMP provides a visible sense of security in and around the Minster. The working relationship between hosts and police appears strong to the auditors, with a clear understanding of mutual roles; the hosts will contact the YMP whenever they have security concerns. The YMP has good links with the North Yorkshire Police.

The hosts are clear that they do not have a pastoral care role (and hence are not subject to Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) checks), and will refer people in need of pastoral care to vergers or clergy. The Canon Pastor holds weekly meetings with Visitor Experience Managers to monitor matters on the minster floor, suggesting a

cohesive approach to issues between clergy and lay staff.

Reflecting their pastoral role, vergers are all DBS-checked. The auditors heard of incidents in which, for example, the YMP has decided a door should be kept locked, but vergers have opened it. This reflects, the auditors feel, a wider tension between York Minster being a place of worship which needs to be open and welcoming, a tourist destination which needs managing, and a potential terrorist target which needs to be kept secure. Minster staff need to ensure that, however these tensions are managed, everyone abides by the decisions that are made.

Everyone managing the floor of the Minster is trained in safeguarding and security, although the auditors were told that some stewards may be less confident than others about their reporting responsibilities.

The auditors found a reasonable degree of clarity among staff and volunteers in and around York Minster about which situations should be handled by which people, underpinned by some clear procedural documents, and a generally supportive environment in which, if people are unsure what to do, they can readily seek advice and assistance.

There was a strand of thinking, which auditors heard from a number of people, including staff, volunteers and congregants, that the demands of security, especially as they relate to terrorism but also as they relate to safeguarding, have unduly affected York Minster as a place of welcome and worship. Many examples of people's concerns were given, but the presence of police in stab-proof vests during worship, and the closure of public lavatories during the period when choristers need to use them (see below) seem to exemplify the concerns people had. The auditors recognise the difficult balance the Minster faces, and would note that there is a communication challenge around safeguarding, which is explored further below.

Questions for York Minster to consider:

- Are there adequate opportunities for people to understand the rationale behind security decisions, in order to support adherence?
- How can York Minster improve its collective adherence to decisions about how security is managed on the floor of the Minster?
- How can stewards be supported to be clear about their reporting responsibilities?

3.1.2 Vulnerable adults

Description

York Minster is a place of refuge for adults who are, for a number of reasons, vulnerable. This includes people in need of pastoral support, people who are homeless, and those who have care and support needs by virtue of mental health difficulties, learning disabilities, or other cognitive impairments such as dementia.

York is a small and relatively affluent city. While there are homeless people and other people in need around York Minster, they are fewer in number that would be

found in cathedrals in larger metropolitan and/or post-industrial cities. The Minster's policy of charging visitors may also limit the number of people who come in simply to be warm, dry and safe. Hosts are encouraged to allow vulnerable people in for free wherever possible, and while the fact that one would have to explain oneself to a host may act as a deterrent, a number of other people – local residents, and people wishing to pray or light a candle – are also allowed in for free.

An important source of support to vulnerable adults – as they are to anyone in York Minster – is a team of lay chaplains, which is led by the Canon Pastor, himself a visible presence on the Minster floor.

The Minster supports potentially vulnerable adults in a number of organised settings. One is the twice-yearly process of preparing people for confirmation. Adults from across the age range come to York Minster for this, and the auditors heard how discussions can flag up vulnerabilities, such as people experiencing domestic abuse. These groups are led by York Minster's Succentor, who also runs the Minster Mice session – a regular session for parents and their very young children – where vulnerabilities among the parents, such as post-natal depression, can be identified.

Analysis

The auditors heard evidence that Minster staff know the few very vulnerable people who are regularly in and around the building, and judged that the Minster can support them sensitively.

Examples included:

- one man who sleeps in the Minster Gardens is brought hot drinks and monitored for his wellbeing
- YMP liaising with the North Yorkshire Police about people, and referring people to, for example, the Salvation Army for additional support
- referring people to statutory mental health services when they have presented with deteriorating mental health
- supporting people with additional needs to become or remain volunteers, with careful thought given to how people can be supported, and in what roles, to most enable them to contribute to the minster.

The auditors noted a general understanding that any conversations with vulnerable people, adults or children, should be conducted in private, but in sight of others, which is usually possible given the layout of York Minster.

The Succentor described liaising with the Canon Pastor and, if necessary, the CSA, to support people of whose vulnerabilities she has been made aware in the groups she runs. The focus of Minster staff in the groups is to develop consistent relationships, so that trust can develop, people can raise concerns informally, and staff can spot when problems may be developing.

The auditors' sense therefore is that York Minster takes a holistic approach to supporting vulnerable adults, in which the Canon Pastor, the CSA, and others work cohesively and effectively to address people's concerns where they can, and refer

people appropriately to specialist agencies where necessary. York Minster supports vulnerable adults with compassion, supported by clear processes for how people's needs can best be met.

3.1.3 Children

Description

Children come to York Minster in a variety of settings, including as worshippers, but in a number of other capacities: here we look at the safeguarding of school children on visits, of servers, and of those using Sunday School, Minster Mice, and other activities for children.

School visits to York Minster and to the Learning Centre in its precincts account for the majority of children coming to the Minster, with tens of thousands visiting each year. Minster Mice is a fortnightly session for parents and their pre-school children, run by the Succentor, as described above. The Sunday School is staffed by volunteers, and runs weekly during Sunday morning worship. Most children are on a register, but people can come unannounced.

A small number of children act as servers during worship.

Analysis

The auditors found arrangements for school visits to be strong, with some minor areas in which they could be improved. Positive features include:

- The pre-visit information sent to schools clearly lays out safeguarding requirements, and the expectation that school staff retain primary responsibility for visiting children.
- Many staff at the Learning Centre bring a safeguarding awareness from their professional training to their work.
- All staff and volunteers in the centre are trained in safeguarding, and DBS-checked. Learning Centre staff carry radios, and take part in critical incident training.
- Information about visiting schools is shared with the hosts on the Minster floor, and the Learning Centre staff reported feeling well supported by the hosts and the YMP.

The auditors noted one slight weakness. York Minster does not routinely have the phone numbers of school staff who actually accompany the children, which would be of more timely use than the numbers of the staff who booked the visits, which are noted. Not being able to contact teachers on the ground increases the likelihood of delay in a response to lost child or other safeguarding issues.

That aside, the protocols for managing lost children are well-understood across the Minster, and seem to work well in practice. The auditors consistently heard that on rare occasions when a child is separated from their responsible adults, they are quickly reunited.

In both Minster Mice and Sunday School, the auditors found the welfare of the children to be carefully supported and monitored. Both groups have the mechanics of safeguarding well-embedded, such as DBS-checked staff, and registers of children, including emergency contact details, allergy information and so on. Staffing ratios in Sunday School are compliant with Ofsted requirements.

Child servers come under the watch of the Head Server, and the auditors note that while choristers are chaperoned wherever they go in the Minster, servers are not. Child servers can be left alone in the vestry prior to services, but this is risk assessed as part of the Minster's efforts to encourage greater independence for servers where appropriate. The Head Server reported that three adult servers who refused to be DBS-checked were consequently stopped from serving. This suggests two things to the auditors: that safeguarding is taken seriously and handled robustly; but also that there remains a strand of resistance to its application within York Minster.

Questions for York Minster to consider:

- Is the discrepancy between safeguarding arrangements for choristers and servers legitimate and justified?
- How can Learning Centre protocols be further strengthened?

3.1.4 Choirs

Description

York Minster has a choir of girls and choir of boys, run on an equal footing. Each has a chaperone dedicated to their wellbeing. The choristers attend the Minster School, which is a day school. Children make their way to morning rehearsals alone or with their parents, and then are chaperoned to school. Each evening, the Director of Music, who runs the choirs, and the chaperones, meet the children at the gates of Minster School and accompany them to the rehearsal room, the Camera Cantorum, or the quire area, for rehearsal. Between rehearsal and evensong, the choristers gather in a separate chapel within the Minster, again with a chaperone. The chaperone is with them during evensong, and then accompanies them back to the Camera Cantorum afterwards, where they change, and are then handed over to their parents within the Minster. At the weekends, parents drop children at the Minster, or they make their own way there.

Between rehearsal in the quire, and evensong, there is no time for the choristers to use the lavatory, other than in the only public lavatories in York Minster. During that 15-minute period, therefore, a member of YMP checks the lavatories are clear, and then the lavatories are closed to the public.

The two choirs each perform four times a week, and take it in turns to have 'heavy' and 'light' weekends. A 'heavy' weekend consists of performing at Saturday evensong and two Sunday morning services; a 'light' one means all Saturday is free, and the choir solely does Sunday evensong. Neither choir has any duties on Mondays, and each gets a further day off midweek.

Analysis

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

Logistical considerations about the safe movement of the choristers are a paramount concern in York Minster, and consequently work well. There are a couple of points in the movement of the choristers where improvements could be made:

- Lack of consistent chaperoning for those on collection duty at evening song when they return to the Camera Cantorum
- Lack of clear understanding that choristers should not be touched by worshippers when taking the collection. The auditors were told that they are very occasionally approached and touched (e.g. with a pat on the shoulder or head, or a pinch on the cheek) by appreciative worshippers. They choristers themselves acknowledged that this contact is not threatening, but it can be unwelcome

Another point of potential vulnerability occurs at the handing over of the choristers to their parents. The auditors judge the policies to be correct, but heard of challenges in implementing them reliably, often due to a lack of compliance on the part of choristers' parents. People spoke of parents being late (although this is usually communicated via a dedicated WhatsApp group, not all choir parents choose to be in the group); sending someone else to collect a child, and not alerting York Minster to this; and – most commonly – parents not wearing the lanyards they are given to identify them readily as chorister parents. Minster staff rightly insist on proper procedures being followed by parents, and this has on rare occasions led to cross words being exchanged.

The auditors believe there is a slight sense of a 'them-and-us' culture developing between some parents and some staff on the floor of the Minster. Parents feel they are not listened to, and cited the example of their request to have a single point of access for their children when dropping them off at the weekend for rehearsals. They feel that without a specific entrance for their children, they have to make their way through queues and crowds, making them possibly late, and potentially anxious.

The procedure about the lavatories being closed just prior to evensong is set out in a policy and risk assessment, and the auditors judge it positively as a step that does seem to ensure the choristers are protected from any contact with the public, and which sends a clear message about the safety of children being a paramount concern. The procedure does create tensions: visitors to the Minster who wish to use the lavatory in that period can be angry that they are not allowed to, and sometimes YMP staff or hosts bear the brunt of that discontent. In some instances, members of the public are invited to use a staff lavatory, but the issue highlights for many the tension between safeguarding and welcome.

The chaperones are very experienced, and recognise the multi-faceted aspects of their safeguarding role; indeed they dislike the recent change of job title from matron to chaperone, because they recognise the role as far more than the safe shepherding of people. The auditors did not explicitly address the question of grooming with them, but they understand their role well, and expressed confidence and clarity about how to raise concerns should they have any.

Sometimes, music lessons are given to choristers on a 1:1 basis in the Minster. Any risks this potentially creates need to be managed.

A balance needs to be struck between child welfare and the demands of rehearsal and performance. The auditors take the view that the welfare of the choristers is well managed, in terms of the manner in which they are trained, and the extent of their training and performance. Although the choristers acknowledged sometimes feeling tired, and that they miss out on social events occasionally, it was clear to the auditors that they were positive about their role, and did not find it unduly arduous.

One instance in which the culture of safety seemed to come second to that of elite performance was when a rehearsal did not get interrupted for a fire drill. This is not a safeguarding issue *per se*, but the auditors would stress the importance of all safety measures being adhered to by everyone.

Both boys and girls were positive also about the Director of Music, and the demanding but supportive way he teaches them singing. It was evident that the children feel they can approach adults with any concerns they have, with most citing the two chaperones. The chaperones themselves expressed their sense of a strong rapport with the children, and the chorister parents also articulated trust in them as people whose sole remit is the welfare of the children.

During evensong, prayers are said for people, often in the context of them having suffered great misfortune. Inevitably, therefore, difficult aspects of life are raised in front of young choristers, which has caused distress to some.

Questions for York Minster to consider:

- How can the welfare of choristers taking the collection be further protected? Are there ways to clarify to the congregation that touch of any kind is not acceptable in this context?
- How can York Minster staff and chorister parents cooperate on the development of further safety improvements for the choristers?
- Are there ways to ensure 1:1 music lessons are safely carried out for both staff and choristers?

3.1.5 Bell ringing

Description

In October 2016, York Minster stood down all of its bell ringers, because of factionalism and safeguarding concerns, and invited those that wished to do so to reapply to ring in the Minster. This proved, and remains, highly contentious. The

auditors believe the safeguarding situation was serious, and that the actions taken by the Minster were proportionate.

Ringling in the Minster is now led by a Tower Captain on a short-term paid contract, and is shaped by a set of new policies and procedures drawn up by an experienced local ringer who stepped in as Tower Captain for a year in the immediate aftermath of the controversy.

The ringing company now consists of 18 people, of whom four are under 18. These young people only ever ring with their parents, or with another nominated adult present. All regular adult ringers are DBS-checked.

Analysis

Unsurprisingly, given the controversies about bell ringing, the policies and procedures are now very tight in the York Minster Tower. For example, the Tower Captain requires any visiting ringers to declare any safeguarding agreements or orders to which they may be subject, and no non-ringing visitors are allowed in the tower.

Ringers who wished to reapply to York Minster after the events of 2016 were subject to a rigorous selection process, which explored attitudes to safeguarding and welfare, and which included external safeguarding experts on the panel.

The auditors judged that the current Tower Captain, as someone who was not part of the company prior to 2016, but who knew the company by virtue of being an occasional visiting ringer, is a sound appointment to a challenging role, and someone who appears well-positioned to bring the Tower out of a very difficult period in its history.

The auditors judge that the safeguarding culture and approach in the company is better now than prior to 2016, while recognising given the contentiousness of the approach taken, that there will be people who would dispute this. What is clear is that York Minster is making efforts to bring the Tower and the ringers more closely into its fold, to support and to monitor the bell ringing more closely. The auditors judge this as a sensible and necessary endeavour. The Tower Captain expressed the view that some restrictions put in place in the aftermath of 2016 might now safely be relaxed; the auditors feel York Minster would need to proceed very carefully before lowering any barriers, as the safeguarding problems the Tower has had remain highly contentious.

An aspect of this which is meeting with some resistance is the requirement that, if a visiting bell ringer rings more than six times a year, they need to be officially registered as a volunteer at York Minster, and thus become subject to requirements to do safeguarding training. The culture among bell ringers is often that their ringing is a hobby, not tied particularly to the Christian faith, and many do not want to be a formal volunteer in the Minster. The auditors' view is that a rigorous approach to embedding safeguarding remains necessary.

This same requirement to register as a volunteer was challenged in other conversations with the auditors, and is looked at further in 5.5.

Questions for York Minster to consider:

- How can the minster work with the bell-ringing community to maintain an understanding about the paramount importance of safeguarding?

3.2 CASE WORK (INCLUDING INFORMATION SHARING)

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

3.2.1 Effectiveness of responses

The auditors looked at seven cases, covering adult and child safeguarding, and including cases where the concerns were more about welfare broadly than about children or vulnerable adults being harmed. This reflects the fact that the CSA is involved in a wide range of issues in the Minster.

Case file evidence revealed a number of positive features: good understanding of statutory processes, and strong links with statutory partners (backed up by feedback sent by partners to SCIE); joint working with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) in York; prompt responses; collaborative work with others within the Minster; and a general thoroughness to the responses.

The auditors noted a willingness to offer transparent apologies to people who had cause for complaint with how York Minster had handled their issue, which is positive within a wider church culture where mistakes are not always freely acknowledged.

Given the possible blurring of boundaries between pastoral and safeguarding issues, the auditors noted that there was clear understanding that the CSA ought to be involved wherever there was any sense of ongoing vulnerabilities for adults, or wherever children were involved.

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

Safeguarding agreements are a key mechanism to support offenders who wish to attend church to do so safely, and are most effective when underpinned by a risk assessment that details the risks posed by a worshipper, the measures in place to manage those risks, and therefore the reasons for the safeguarding agreement.

York Minster currently has no safeguarding agreements, nor any shared agreements with local parishes covering people who occasionally worship at the minster. There is a clear protocol for liaising with the DSA about agreements, but to the best of the CSA's knowledge, no one under an agreement worships at the Minster.

The auditors saw evidence of a risk assessment relating to one regular visitor to the Minster, which led to a reasonable conclusion that a Safeguarding Agreement was

not warranted. The form used was not in line with national one, but the Minster judges it to be more rigorous.

3.2.3 Quality of recording

Good quality recording is essential to being able to make sense of the development of situations over time, to allow cross-referencing between files, and so that others can pick up work as and when necessary, and readily understand what they are dealing with.

The auditors found the recording by the CSA to be good, and at times excellent, with notes that indicate high-quality practice in that they include fact, opinion and analysis within the same record.

3.2.4 Information sharing practice

Information appears to be well shared across the minster, with the strong relationship between the Canon Pastor, as the designated safeguarding lead, and the CSA, helping in this regard. In high-profile matters, clergy, Chapter members and senior staff at York Minster have been criticised for a failure to communicate more widely with the public, but the auditors found that they have made reasonable judgements, balancing transparency and confidentiality in a defensible way.

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

An important part of the audit was speaking to people who had come forward to disclose abuse, share concerns, or expected help from the minster to keep safe for any reason, to find out how timely, compassionate and effective they had found the Minster's responses and support. York Minster made this possible by identifying people in advance and publicising the audit so that people could contact SCIE.

The auditors spoke to two people, whose input we have used to illustrate what works well, or less well, from the perspective of people with first-hand experience. We have no way of knowing whether the individuals constitute a representative sample of all the people with whom York Minster has been in touch in some capacity regarding safeguarding concerns or allegations. Both people highlighted the excellent support they received, citing the warmth, professionalism and holistic nature of the response as key features as to why it was so effective.

People coming forward to the Minster about abuse they have experienced are offered, via the CSA, the chance to speak to an Authorised Listener. The Minster has an agreement with the Diocese to access the diocesan list of Authorised Listeners, although their use of them is not common. The auditors were not able to ascertain why this would be.

Questions for York Minster to consider:

- Is there a good reason not to use national tools – e.g. for risk assessment?
- Is the system regarding Authorised Listeners in need of a review?

3.3 CLERGY DISCIPLINARY MEASURE

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

3.4 TRAINING

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

Description

York Minster has around 750 people of varying degrees of seniority and engagement with safeguarding who need to be trained in it. The House of Bishops' framework is used, and so senior staff receive C4 training, most staff with any meaningful engagement with safeguarding receive C2 training, and volunteers in the main have C1 sessions, or use the C0 online training.

Training is mainly done by the CSA, and is delivered at different times during the day and the week.

The auditors had sight of a strategy for 2018/19, looking at who needs to be trained at what level.

Analysis

Feedback on the content of the training was very positive, and the auditors saw in the materials a good degree of tailoring of courses to the Minster context. This is positive; the courses are not in their basic form always pertinent to a cathedral, so the work to make them bespoke is helpful, and appears to have borne fruit. Some senior staff found the content of the C4 course too simplistic for the challenges they face.

One aspect where the training needs tailoring for a cathedral context is that many staff and volunteers are not from a Christian background, and materials tend to assume people are.

A lot of thought was evident in the training strategy about how, where and when the training gets delivered, which makes it flexible and accessible for people. How to handle any distress that delegates may feel has also been thought through; the auditors found this indicative of a thorough approach to all aspects of the safeguarding service, and impressive training preparation.

One positive example of making training accessible was the provision of a series of about ten Learning and Sharing Days, in which volunteers came to the Minster to meet senior clergy, have lunch, and also receive safeguarding training and anti-

terrorist guidance. It was, the auditors thought, a creative way to reach large numbers of people and make safeguarding training seem engaging and non-threatening.

York Minster keeps good records of who has been trained, but not of who has not been trained or of when people need refresher courses. Given the high numbers of volunteers, some of whom come and go quite quickly, a decent tracking system for training is important. The Minster has the IT capability to keep such records, and should prioritise this piece of work.

Questions for York Minster to consider:

- Can people distressed by safeguarding training be identified and supported more privately?
- What is standing in the way of using existing databases to record who has not yet been trained, and when those who have been trained need a refresher course?

3.5 SAFER RECRUITMENT

Description

York Minster has a Director of People and Organisational Development at a senior level within the organisation, and she is supported by a Human Resources (HR) manager for staff, and an HR manager for volunteers.

The Minster uses an HR database to track appointments, DBS checks and other vital information, which currently covers all staff, but not volunteers.

Clergy Blue Files are not held at the Minster.

The Minster has a clear safe recruitment procedure. DBS checks are done by thirtyone:eight (formerly the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service), as part of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Diocese. Blemished DBS returns are risk assessed by the CSA before any appointment is made.

Analysis

The HR database can be strengthened, as mentioned in relation to tracking training.

The auditors looked at four recent recruitment files, for evidence of safe recruitment. These were generally sound, although did reveal a tendency to take only one reference, as opposed to the two which is their standard.

One case file the auditors saw examined a glaring error relating to DBS checks in safe recruitment. Once the error was spotted, the matter was handled well, and a process of reflection followed, with substantive and useful changes made to processes as a result. The auditors judge that such an error would be less likely to happen now, and note the willingness to learn from mistakes that the case illustrated. The Minster needs to be assured the glitches in the system are no longer present.

Closely related to the question of safe recruitment is that of writing references for people as they move to other organisations, or need a character reference. The auditors were told of a culture, among clergy and music staff, of writing references which are not checked with HR, posing a risk that best practice is not adhered to. Personal references are used, which is also not best practice.

DBS checks are done for all adult bell ringers, as discussed, but the auditors were told of uncertainty and delays in relation to when to check younger ringers.

Questions for York Minster to consider:

- What are the barriers to extending the HR database to include safer recruitment of volunteers?
- How can the Minster best enforce non-negotiable aspects of safer recruitment, such as appointing people only after both references have been received and assessed?
- How can a culture be developed of all references being checked by HR for best practice, and character references handled with great caution?
- Can the requirements for DBS-checking 16-17 year-old bell ringers be clarified?
- Is a general audit of recruitment practices merited?

4 FINDINGS – ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORTS

4.1 POLICY, PROCEDURES AND GUIDANCE

Description

York Minster operates to the House of Bishops' policies on safeguarding, including the 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. The auditors saw no indication of the Minster using separate diocesan policies.

York Minster has its own document, last updated in October 2018: *Safeguarding children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable to abuse and/or neglect: Policy, procedures and guidance for all staff, volunteers, contractors and community.*

The document is supplemented by incident log and risk assessment templates.

Analysis

The policy, procedures and guidance document makes it clear that York Minster is compliant with House of Bishops' safeguarding policies and procedures. It opens with a clear statement of principles, and is strong throughout in the message that concerns must always be shared, and referrals made to statutory bodies whenever appropriate.

House of Bishops policies and regulations establish the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser role in church law. Cathedrals such as York Minster employing their own paid and skilled CSA, therefore, need to establish how the CSA will work alongside the local DSA, so that the requirement in *Key Roles and Responsibilities* for CSAs to inform the DSA of all allegations relating to church officers is adhered to, without it affecting the ability of the CSA to manage their own casework where appropriate.

The policy, procedures and guidance document itself works well, the auditors judged: it contextualises national guidance helpfully, and breaks down clearly what people in different roles should do. Positively, there is a code of behaviour for all staff and volunteers who have contact with children or vulnerable adults.

The document cites other local documents, covering responding to concerns, and domestic violence, which the auditors have not seen, but which look as if they may duplicate national documents. Similarly, the risk-assessment template is a local one, where the House of Bishops provides its own. It may be that this risks divergence from national guidance.

As mentioned earlier in the report, the safeguarding service is embedded in wider documentation covering emergency situations in the Minster.

4.1.1 Information sharing protocols

The Minster does not have specific information sharing protocols with partner

agencies. The auditors saw no indication that this was problematic, but the Minster should satisfy itself that it is compliant with new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

Questions for York Minster to consider:

- Are there risks of duplication and/or divergence in having local and national policies and forms in some areas?
- Does the introduction of GDPR bring any implications for partnership working and information sharing for the minster?

4.2 CHAPTER SAFEGUARDING ADVISER, AND THEIR SUPERVISION & MANAGEMENT

Description

The Chapter Safeguarding Adviser has been in post since January 2106, originally for two days a week, currently for three days a week, and from 2019 to be four days weekly, in order to provide additional support to the Minster School.

Her job description focuses on policy development; culture change; managing allegations; case management; audit and annual reports to Chapter; joint work with the Diocese; and training. This seems to fairly reflect the work she does.

The CSA has a background working with women's refuges and domestic violence projects. Prior to joining the Minster, she was working as a policy, projects and training lead for the City of York Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB), and until a month prior to the audit, was combining the CSA role with a similar post at the East Riding LSCB. As well as a practice background, the CSA takes an academic interest in safe organisations and cultures.

The CSA is directly employed by York Minster, in a paid capacity. Her line management arrangements are in the process of changing formally, from reporting to the Director of People and Organisational Development, to reporting to the Chapter Steward.

Supervision to the CSA is provided by an independent safeguarding consultant locally, using Morrison's restorative model, which is common in social care settings, and focuses on critical reflection and review of practice. The consultant is paid by the Chapter for his time. The supervision agreement specifies there will be six meetings annually, with notes taken, and includes capacity for the supervisor to discuss issues with the Chapter Steward in recognition that he is outside the minster's structure.

The CSA reports to each Chapter meeting, coming in for the safeguarding agenda item each time.

The CSA delivers training, and takes the time to walk around the Minster, informally talking to colleagues, volunteers, and guests. These activities serve to make her a well-known face around York Minster.

There are no apparent conflicts of interest for the CSA in her role.

Analysis

The church's *Key Roles and Responsibilities of Church Office Holders and Bodies (2017)* recommends that diocesan safeguarding advisers have a social work qualification, and the auditors presume this would extend as a recommendation to CSAs. The CSA in York Minster does not, but the range and depth of her experience, the auditors found, make her well qualified for the role she fills. Specifically, the experience of risk assessment inherent in domestic violence work, and the multi-agency working in the LSCB are strengths.

Her LSCB work has given her policy and training experience to go alongside her practice background in refuges and domestic abuse settings. The combination serves the CSA well in a role which requires one person to fulfil a range of functions.

Her background is mainly in the children's field, although her work in domestic abuse services brings her some experience with vulnerable adults. She lacked direct experience, prior to coming to the Minster, with vulnerable adults where children are not involved, but calls on advice from adult social care services and colleagues.

Alongside her experience, an obvious strength of the CSA, the auditors concluded, is her combination of professionalism and warmth, which is well suited to a role in which proper procedures need to be followed in a compassionate manner. Evidence for this was found in case files, in conversation with survivors of abuse and with the CSA's colleagues, and in the palpable sense that she is a well-known and trusted figure around York Minster.

The auditors have not seen evidence of how well the CSA's supervision arrangements work in practice, but the safeguarding agreement suggests they are given a lot of thought. As the CSA's line management switches to the Chapter Steward, there is an opportunity for the supervisor and the Chapter Steward to agree a format for the supervisor's perspective to inform the CSA's annual appraisals and other development opportunities.

The switch of line management arrangements to the Chapter Steward is a good one, the auditors feel, inasmuch as it reflects the importance of the CSA role, and means she can feed directly into Chapter with any concerns. This, and the regular reports to Chapter, indicate that the CSA is viewed as an integral and trusted colleague by senior staff.

Many people spoke to the auditors about the role the CSA plays in supporting colleagues with challenges in their own lives, some of which are only tangentially, if at all, connected to safeguarding. Some people spoke of her as a secular chaplain, and others stressed the importance of her not being seen as a secular chaplain, which suggests more clarity is needed in this aspect of her role. Her job description does not explicitly include it, although the extension of her working week to three days was to deal with these broader welfare issues.

The auditors concluded that this aspect of the CSA's work does not get in the way of the more explicitly safeguarding parts of her role, because her hours have been

extended to cover it, and she herself is clear about where the support she can offer to colleagues begins and ends. More generally, the auditors judge, the resources devoted to safeguarding in York Minster are adequate for the task.

Senior staff expressed confidence that this welfare role would not dwarf the safeguarding tasks by virtue of the fact that the Minster also offers staff occupational health (OH) support and a counselling service. The auditors would suggest that, faced with a choice between unknown OH or counselling staff, and the familiar and approachable CSA, most people will choose the latter, and a watching eye on the of the impact of this needs to be maintained.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider:

- How can the CSA's supervisor and line manger best cooperate to maximise support and professional development for the CSA?
- What are the pros and cons of formalising the CSA's role in supporting staff?
- How can the role of the CSA in staff support best be balanced with safeguarding work, and how can this balance be monitored?

4.3 RECORDING SYSTEMS AND IT SOLUTIONS

Having effective, safe and usable IT systems supports good recording and makes sure that information is secure, but accessible to those people with a legitimate need to see it.

York Minster's case files are paper-based. They are well-ordered and clear, but a paper system does not allow for functions such as cross-referencing with other cases. Taking the bell ringing issue as an example, a system that allows some sort of cross-referencing would be helpful, as bell ringers may be involved with several different churches across the Diocese (as well as in other denominations).

The SOC minutes of July 2018 mention the purchase of the CPOMS case management system, but the auditors did not see evidence of its current use.

Questions for York Minster to consider:

- Has the right priority been given to the transfer to an electronic case management system?

5 FINDINGS – LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

5.1 QUALITY ASSURANCE

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

There is some quality assurance activity at York Minster:

- The casework of the CSA is scrutinised by the independent chair of the SOC at a Scrutiny Panel, and a good quality audit tool is used for this.
- The CSA's supervision arrangements, as discussed, look strong.
- The interim head of the Learning Centre benchmarks her safeguarding practice against other cathedrals, museums and tourist destinations.
- The auditors note that the complaints policy includes a commitment to twice-yearly learning sessions from issues arising from complaints.
- The SOC looked at lessons to be learnt for the Minster from the Peter Ball review.

The auditors nevertheless found that there is no framework for bringing organisational learning together. York Minster has no cathedral of comparable size, or another cathedral with a CSA, anywhere near to it, which makes benchmarking logistically difficult. Nonetheless, a greater focus on quality assurance would enable the Minster to maintain identify weaknesses and emerging problems, and respond promptly to tackle them.

Questions for York Minster to consider:

- What quality assurance mechanisms – e.g. self-audit; routine benchmarking against other cathedrals; lessons learnt from other cathedrals; survivor feedback; staff feedback; learning cycles from case work – can the Minster use to monitor and develop safeguarding practice?
- How can these different mechanisms be brought together into an organisational learning framework?

5.2 COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE SAFEGUARDING SERVICE

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

things. York Minster's complaints process has merits, but should be improved in certain regards.

Description

York Minster has a policy specifically for making complaints about the safeguarding service. It dates from October 2016.

Analysis

There is much to recommend in the policy: there are clear tiers and timescales, a commitment to learn lessons from complaints, and an independent element. This involves the independent chair of the SOC hearing second-stage complaints, and the independent chair of the York Minster Cathedral Council hearing the third (which is the final) stage.

Both chairs are, however, involved in the life of the Minster, and the auditors believe a more truly independent element to the complaints procedure would strengthen transparency. Additionally, the chair of the SOC was unaware of her role in the complaints process, and acknowledged she may not be able to fulfil it if something of the magnitude of the bell ringing controversy arose again.

The policy excludes third parties making a safeguarding complaint, unless it is a parent or guardian on behalf of a child. No doubt unintentionally, this serves, the auditors believe, to exclude vulnerable adults who may be unable to bring a complaint themselves. The policy also needs to be updated, as the first port of call is the Director of People and Organisational Development, who is shortly to cease being the CSA's manager.

The auditors did not see evidence of the formal complaints process being used although it has been on one recent occasion. There was case evidence, however, of the minster responding to their mistakes proactively, and making apologies and redress appropriately. Against this, there are, as mentioned, choir parents who do not feel their concerns are always listened to.

Questions for York Minster to consider:

- How can the complaints process be improved, especially in regard to its independent element?

5.3 WHISTLEBLOWING

There is a concise whistleblowing policy, which reflects people's right to raise concerns internally and externally (although Public Concern at Work has changed its name to Protect).

Volunteers are not covered by the whistleblowing policy, and are directed instead to the Volunteer Problem Solving Procedure, which the auditors have not seen. Other staff, such as agency workers and contractors are covered, and it would be simpler to include everyone at the Minster on an equal footing in the policy.

Questions for York Minster to consider:

- Is there any advantage in volunteers having a separate whistleblowing procedure?

5.4 CATHEDRAL SAFEGUARDING ADVISORY PANEL

Based on the national guidance in *Roles and Responsibilities* for Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panels, 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

The main safeguarding group at York Minster is the Safeguarding Operations Committee (SOC). It is chaired by an independent person, who also has the role of the York Minster Safeguarding Representative (YMSR), in which she represents the congregation's safeguarding issues to the CSA and Chapter.

Alongside the chair, the SOC includes the CSA, the Canon Pastor, and safeguarding leads from different Minster departments. These leads act as safeguarding champions in their teams, raising issues at meetings, making sure posters are displayed, and so forth. SOC meets three times a year, and acts as an operational decision-making body. Aside from the chair, there are no external members.

The chair of the SOC/YMSR works to a role description which focuses on chairing SOC, scrutinising cases, and handling complaints. The chair is an experienced social worker, working in children's services in Leeds. She is a member of the Minster congregation, but independent of any organisational structure. It is a voluntary role.

Case scrutiny is done in a bi-annual sub-group of SOC, the Scrutiny Panel, which looks at cases and complaints. It consists of the chair of the SOC/YMSR, the DSA, and the Canon Pastor.

The Canon Pastor and the CSA sit respectively on strategic and operational safeguarding groups in the Diocese.

Analysis

SOC appears, from the evidence of the minutes and from conversations, to function well as a decision-making body, and one which serves to maintain a high profile for safeguarding. The auditors found that the membership of safeguarding leads in each team is a positive way of creating a sense of cohesion across York Minster.

It is not, and does not purport to be, an advisory panel as set out in *Roles and Responsibilities*. The presence of the chair does create a degree of independent oversight of safeguarding. The chair, relatively new in role, does not however think

she can commit the time necessary to understand sufficiently how safeguarding operates in the Minster to fulfil the challenge function. In this vein, the chair of SOC does not do an annual report for Chapter, because she feels she lacks the necessary overview to complete it.

There is therefore, the auditors concluded, no effective independent oversight of the strategic direction of safeguarding, as set by Dean and Chapter. This is in some ways a product of how cathedrals operate, in that there is little independent scrutiny of Chapter decisions in any sphere. Good practice, and *Roles and Responsibilities*, would both suggest independent oversight of safeguarding is bolstered. The auditors are clear that the direction and decisions of Chapter are good, but future-proofing this by means of further scrutiny and challenge would strengthen the system. Involving other congregants, survivors of abuse, and statutory professionals could be ways of bringing this element in.

The auditors would further question whether the best place for the independent element of its meeting structures is as chair of what is an internal decision-making body. The chair of SOC/YMSR is an experienced safeguarding professional, with the skills to provide an element of challenge to Chapter, but the current structure does not seem best designed to make use of her abilities.

The role of YMSR seems unclear to the auditors. Prior to the appointment of a paid CSA, the YMSR was an active post, but with the CSA in role as someone for congregants to approach, it is less obvious what function the YMSR fulfils. The CSA does value the role of the YMSR as a sounding board in cases. The auditors recognise the value of having a safeguarding champion (who is also a safeguarding senior professional) active in the congregation, albeit only in the Sunday morning congregation.

Questions for York Minster to consider:

- How can independent support, scrutiny and challenge of the Dean and Chapter in relation to safeguarding best be brought into York Minster?
- What information and/or opportunities to engage with safeguarding in the Minster would enable the chair to feel confident in a scrutiny, support and challenge role in relation to Dean and Chapter?
- Can the role of the YMSR be further clarified, to maximise its usefulness?

5.5 LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

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

The auditors concluded that leadership of safeguarding in the Minster is strong, although opportunities exist for that to be spelled out more clearly.

5.5.1 Theological leadership

The remit for theological leadership in relation to safeguarding is clearly always with the clergy, and especially with the Dean. This is 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 critical in terms of making the church a safer place for children and vulnerable adults.

The audit of York Minster took place in an interregnum between deans. The previous Dean left in the autumn of 2018, having served for nearly six years. The Canon Precentor is currently Acting Dean, until the new Dean arrives in early 2019. The Acting Dean recognises his role is in part to hold the fort, but clearly expressed his understanding of the theological lead he needs to take, as the ambassador for the culture changes that still need to happen.

The arrival of the new Dean will be an important opportunity to reaffirm the theological basis underpinning safeguarding.

Questions for York Minster to consider:

- What can the new Dean do to share positive public messages around the vital importance of safeguarding and its integral place in Minster life?
- To what extent is this aspect a clear priority in description of the role?

5.5.2 Strategic leadership

Description

Strategic leadership in safeguarding falls to the Dean and Chapter. Within Chapter, the designated safeguarding lead is the Canon Pastor, and he fulfils this role in close partnership with the Chapter Steward. The Canon Pastor meets quarterly with the Chair of SOC/YMSR, and daily with the CSA. He links Chapter and the SOC.

Safeguarding is an agenda item at each Chapter meeting, and the CSA joins the meeting at this point to report back. The CSA provides a fuller annual report to Chapter.

Analysis

The auditors concluded that the strategic safeguarding leadership provided by Chapter is good. Much of this is credited to the former Dean, who led a clear change of direction towards a more professionalised safeguarding environment. Examples of this include the creation of the CSA post, and the policy and procedural changes to how people are kept safe in and around the Minster.

The most high-profile example of clear safeguarding leadership is the handling of the bell ringing controversy. The auditors concluded that Chapter demonstrated bold, necessary leadership, and maintained it in the face of high personal, organisational and financial cost.

Progress on safeguarding has, the auditors determined, been strong in recent years.

There is no strategic plan, in any written form, which sets out how this progress can be bolstered and enhanced in future. Developing one would help in setting priorities and identifying barriers. It would also add transparency to decision-making, which given the ongoing communication and cultural challenges around safeguarding (see below), would be beneficial.

As the senior lay person at York Minster, the role of Chapter Steward is pivotal to good strategic leadership in safeguarding. The auditors found the Chapter Steward to be someone who gives safeguarding a great deal of consideration, who acts as a useful support to the CSA and Canon Pastor, and who is willing to commit resources to improving the safeguarding function. Furthermore, she showed a commitment to transparency which is important in the context of increasing awareness of past cover-ups of abuse across the Church of England.

The Chapter Steward also receives quarterly supervision from the supervisor of the CSA, which the auditors saw a very positive commitment to understanding safeguarding.

Questions for York Minster to consider:

- How best can a strategic plan be brought together, setting out priorities, and incorporating a quality assurance element? Which body should take ownership of the plan, and how can people be held accountable for it?

5.5.3 Operational leadership and management

Description

The SOC provides operational decision-making and direction for safeguarding.

Management of the CSA is transferring to the Chapter Steward. The CSA is delegated the authority to manage cases on behalf of Dean and Chapter.

Analysis

On a day-to-day basis, operational safeguarding matters are handled by the CSA, reporting to the Chapter Steward, and this works well.

The auditors note that final decision-making on whether to refer a church officer to statutory services is believed by Chapter members to rest with the Dean and Chapter, as they are the final arbiters on any decision in York Minster. The Acting Dean was explicit that Chapter would not go against the advice of the CSA in this matter, but *Roles and Responsibilities* is also explicit that the final decision on safeguarding referrals rests with a DSA (and by extension, the auditors believe, with a CSA).

The strength of relationships in the Minster, including between the CSA, the Canon Pastor and the Chapter Steward, serves the safeguarding agenda well. Clearly this is not a systemic strength, as it relies on the individuals involved, but it merits notice in the report, and brings the theological, strategic and operational leadership of safeguarding together effectively.

Questions for York Minster to consider:

- Is Chapter clear that, while accountability for decisions rests with them, the decision-making in safeguarding must rest with safeguarding professionals?

5.5.4 Culture

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

Description

York Minster is a global centre of worship, visited by hundreds of thousands of people annually. It also has at its heart a much smaller number of clergy, staff, volunteers and worshippers who help shape the culture of the place, including its safeguarding culture.

Analysis

The auditors found that York Minster, especially at the senior level, has a positive safeguarding culture, but that there is work to do bringing everyone in the Minster community on board.

Culture is to a large extent shaped from the top, and the former Dean gave a robust lead in developing an environment in which safeguarding, and safety more generally, is a paramount concern. The auditors' sense was that the Chapter are not naive about safeguarding in the Church of England, and are disabused of the notion that clerical people will not do harm. This serves them well in their approach.

Chapter has demonstrated a willingness to make controversial safeguarding decisions, and even though the reaction to these has been heated, it has meant that safeguarding is a live conversation in the Minster, and not something that is politely ignored. The leadership acknowledges there has been 'collateral damage' in the decisions they have taken, and that there is an ongoing need for cultural healing as a result. One obstacle to healing is that Chapter is constrained, rightly, in what they can say about controversial issues. This leaves a space for people to speculate, and an impression that Minster leaders are unjustifiably withholding information.

As well as reaction to the high-profile decisions, there is also resistance to the greater security in York Minster, and to what has been described as the secularisation of a place of worship. Much of the focus here was on the requirement for people to become volunteers, and thus be trained and registered as such, if they wish to take on even quite minor roles in the Minster.

The tension between a cathedral as church, a tourist destination, and a potential target for people who wish to do harm is a live one that will never be resolved to everyone's satisfaction. What interested the auditors was the message that changes have happened by stealth, and that the leadership has not always taken the congregation with them in the decisions they have made. Communicating the importance of what is being done remains a challenge.

The auditors also heard a mindset in which safeguarding is accepted as important in the abstract, but is resisted when actually applied to the people concerned. But there is a consensus that this resistance is withering over time. Various factors contribute to this: a more general societal shift in awareness, which has a generational aspect to it; an unavoidable recognition that the Church of England is a place in which abuse and cover-up occurs; and the efforts of the CSA, Chapter and others to improve understanding and acceptance of safeguarding.

Questions for York Minster to consider:

- How can the rationale for decisions about safeguarding be communicated more effectively and convincingly, including where details can't be shared?

6 Conclusions

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

Safeguarding at York Minster operates to a high standard, with identifiable strengths in its culture, procedures and personnel. Prominent among these are:

- clear and at times courageous leadership
- a CSA with the time and skills to fulfil her role expertly
- a professional approach to keeping people monitored and safe while in the minster
- a healthy balance between the performances and the welfare of choristers.

The main area for improvement is the need to establish a clear structure for setting the future direction and objectives of safeguarding, and then monitoring, with a degree of independent oversight, progress towards achieving those goals.

More work is needed on developing a cohesive understanding of safeguarding requirements with the community, and certain keys groups within it. Alongside that, the unending task of communicating the importance of safeguarding will have to be maintained. Certain procedural improvements would strengthen already robust systems.

Nonetheless, York Minster, the auditors conclude, is well-placed to address these issues, and to further improve its safeguarding work.

APPENDIX: REVIEW PROCESS

DATA COLLECTION

Information provided to auditors

In advance of the audit, staff at York Minster sent through:

- York Minster safeguarding policy and procedure
- form for logging allegations against staff or volunteers
- form for logging concerns about a child/adult who may be vulnerable
- parental consent and child information form
- safeguarding risk assessment form
- Memorandum of Understanding between York Minster and Diocese of York (draft and in consultation)
- York Minster safeguarding leaflet and poster
- procedure for choristers using lavatories, including during organ refit
- risk assessment: choir children's toilet access
- chorister safeguarding policy and supervision guidance
- pre-visit information for school parties etc. coming to York Minster
- Learning Team's Armistice 100 risk assessment
- Learning Team's risk assessment for the activity tent, July 2018
- Learning Team's model release form for photographs
- Learning groups' risk assessment (ongoing)
- procedure for missing or found children or vulnerable adults
- Safeguarding Operations Committee Minutes Nov 2017, April 2018 & July 2018
- Safeguarding Scrutiny Panel: case file audit tool (agreed July 2018)
- training logs for C0, C1, C2, C3, C4 safeguarding training
- training logs for online safeguarding training
- Learning Team training log
- safeguarding complaints policy and procedures
- bell ringing: Head of Tower job description and advert; agreement for visitors; visitor information; risk assessment
- recruitment policy and procedure, including safer recruitment
- whistleblowing policy
- Chapter Safeguarding Adviser (CSA) job description and supervision agreement
- role description for volunteer safeguarding representative
- Critical Incident Management Plan (April 2018)
- security order choral outreach (June 2018)
- choristers' evacuation procedures
- business continuity plan
- map of York Minster precinct

- organisational chart (August 2018)
- self-assessment feedback forms from various people in the Minster.

Participation of members of the diocese

During the audit, a Learning Together session was held at the start and end of the site visit, to discuss York Minster's safeguarding self-audit, and the auditors' initial impressions. The auditors were taken on a tour of relevant parts of the Minster and precincts, and observed a choir rehearsal and an evensong service.

Conversations were held with:

- Acting Dean of York
- Chapter Steward
- Chapter Safeguarding Advisor
- Canon Pastor
- Independent Chair of the Safeguarding Operations Committee
- Director of Music
- Current and former Head of Bell Tower
- Head of Security
- Head of Visitor Experience
- Head Verger
- Acting Head of Learning
- Head Steward
- Volunteering Manager
- Visitor Experience Volunteer Manager
- Director of People and Organisational Development
- Succentor
- Sunday School leader
- Chorister chaperones
- two people who had made use of the safeguarding service

Focus groups, of between 5 and 12 people, were held with:

- choristers
- parents of choristers
- staff and volunteers
- members of the congregation

The audit: what records / files were examined?

The auditors looked at seven safeguarding case files and four HR files for evidence of safer recruitment.

Limitations of audit

Late cancellations meant that the focus group of children involved in the Minster – e.g. as Sunday School users or servers – was not held.