**Annual Report 2019: Safeguarding Team**



The Ely Safeguarding Team seeks to contribute to ‘People Fully Alive: Ely 2025’ in its strategic aims of developing healthy churches and serving the community. We aspire to strengthen and integrate concepts of ‘safeguarding’ and ‘protecting the vulnerable’ within the culture and everyday practice of all those working, volunteering or worshipping across the Diocese. This preventative aspect of our work includes raising awareness of the various ways in which abuse may be manifested, the processes by which it should be managed and how it may impact on survivors. The Safeguarding Team provides advice, guidance and leadership whenever concerns arise about the possible abuse of a child or adult at risk and in relation to allegations against church officers and where there are concerns in relation to adults posing a risk within congregations.

All aspects of work by the Ely Safeguarding Team are consistent with House of Bishops’ policies and practice guidance. Local strategies and practice guidance are based on these and endorsed by the Diocesan Safeguarding Liaison Group. During 2019, new policy and guidance documents relevant to safeguarding have been published, these are**:**

* **Training and Development Practice Guidance (2019)**
* **Safer Environment and Activities Practice Guidance (2019)**
* **Code of Safer Working Practice (2019)**
* [**Guidance: Identifying and Reporting Safeguarding Serious Incidents to the Charity Commission: Guidance for DBFs, PCCs and Religious Communities (August 2019)**](https://www.churchofengland.org/media/18299)

**The Ely Safeguarding Team**

Rebecca Boswell is the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) and Sarah King is the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer (DSO). There are two part-time Assistant Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers, Sharon Gage and Lisa Pearson. In brief, the DSAs hold responsibility for all safeguarding casework, policy and practice, and the DSO manages the safeguarding training programme, offers support to Parish Safeguarding Officers and manages the work relating to Disclosure and Barring Service checks (DBS). There are two part-time Administrative Assistant positions, Jackie Cox supports DBS and Kelly Nott supports the safeguarding training programme.

**Safeguarding referrals in** **2019**

There were 188 referrals in 2019 which represents an increase of 19% on 2018 when there were 158. This increase may be attributed to the growth within our parishes, increased awareness of staff and volunteers who have attended safeguarding training across the Diocese and the ongoing publicity surrounding past safeguarding failures across the church and other institutions and the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse.

Referrals may result in the provision of consultation and advice, internal casework management and/or referral onwards to statutory agencies. Many cases involve more than one category of harm: (for example a child who has been physically harmed may also be subject to emotional harm) in those cases we have identified a primary category for recording purposes.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Primary Category of Referral** | **Child** | **Adult** |
| Sexual Abuse | 15 | 4 |
| Physical | 5 | 2 |
| Emotional | 2 | 2 |
| Neglect | 9 | 0 |
| Domestic Abuse | 2 | 11 |
| Financial | 0 | 1 |
| Spiritual | 0 | 1 |
| Health and Welfare | 7 | 33 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Other reasons for referral** |  |
| DBS or Confidential Declaration Information | 21 |
| Information about an adult who may pose a risk of harm | 20 |
| General safeguarding issues/advice | 34 |
| Enquiries from Statutory Agencies | 4 |
| Allegations about current or former clergy, parish employees or volunteers | 14 |

**Risk Assessments and Safeguarding Agreements**

Central to all safeguarding work are the holistic assessment of risk and the development of effective strategies to manage any identified risk. These are often complex, involving liaison with partner agencies in the community, such as probation and the police.

At the end of 2019 there were 21 Safeguarding Agreements in place with three further pending. Over 2019 three Agreements ended. Safeguarding Agreements relate to the reviewing of known, historical cases and newly reported cases. The subject of the Agreement participates in this process, and the Agreements are regularly reviewed and monitored. Where statutory agencies are involved, they participate in this process. The purpose of such Agreements is to protect all within the church community, including the subject. All Safeguarding Agreements are now informed by the new Church of England Standard Risk Analysis and Assessment Template (STRAAT). Two members of the Safeguarding Team attended training in 2019 in relation to this Risk Assessment process. All new cases are now assessed using this template. All existing Safeguarding Agreements will be reassessed using the new STRAAT, at the point of review over 2020.

**Safer Recruitment**

All church officers are required to be safely recruited in accordance with the Church of England’s Safer Recruitment Practice Guidance 2016. One aspect of the safer recruitment process is the Disclosure and Barring Service Check (DBS). During 2019, 1525 DBS checks were undertaken across the Diocese. The Safeguarding Team manages all the DBS accounts in parishes across the Diocese. Where information is disclosed on a DBS certificate or Confidential Declaration, this must be assessed by the Safeguarding Team who will make a recommendation as to the individual’s appointment. There have been 21 such assessments over 2019.

**Safeguarding Training**

The Safeguarding Team began to deliver training under the Church of England’s ‘Practice Guidance: Safeguarding Training and Development’ 2016 (hereafter referred to as ‘the Guidance) in January 2017. The Practice Guidance and all training materials were reviewed and updated in 2019 and the Safeguarding Team is delivering all of the currently available training modules.

A significant change within the revised guidance is that the C3 module for licensed clergy and lay ministers has been discontinued, those individuals are now required to complete Basic, Foundation and Leadership Training, as detailed below.

In the main, the modules which apply to employees and volunteers in our parishes are: Basic Awareness (C0) (online or face to face) Foundation (C1) (Online or face to face) and Leadership (C2). We recognise the commitment required by those attending this training, the majority of whom are volunteers and therefore try to make the training as convenient and local as possible, while making the best use of available resources. To reach most volunteers, those modules are delivered at evenings and weekends within Deaneries across the Diocese. The Safer Recruitment (S1) and Domestic Abuse (S3) modules are delivered at the Diocesan Office on a mixture of weekday and weekend dates.

The training cycle is three-yearly and those repeating training are required to refresh their training at the highest level previously trained. For example, a member of clergy who has competed Basic, Foundation and Leadership will be required to repeat the Leadership module only after three years. A volunteer in a parish who has completed Basic training only will be required to repeat the Basic module again after three years. The specialist modules must be repeated every three years for those who are required to attend this training.

**Numbers trained in each safeguarding module in Ely Diocese during 2019:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Module** | **Candidates 2019** |
| **C0 Basic Awareness (online)** | 1544 |
| **C1 Foundation** | 922 |
| **C2 Leadership** | 417 |
| **C3 Clergy and Lay Ministers** | 100 |
| **S1 Safer Recruitment** | 107 |
| **S3 Domestic Abuse** | 125 |

In May 2019 we began offering workshops in DBS administration workshops for Parish Safeguarding Officers In addition, during 2020 we will also offer workshops in Safer Recruitment.

**Ely Cathedral**

There is a Service Level Agreement between the Diocesan Board of Finance and the Chapter of Ely Cathedral of the terms of the provision of safeguarding advice and support to the Cathedral by Ely Diocesan Safeguarding Team. In November 2019, Lisa Pearson, Assistant DSA in the Diocesan Team was seconded for one day per week to Ely Cathedral.

**Diocesan Safeguarding Liaison Group (DSLG)**

Ely DSLG has strong multi-agency and inter-departmental representation which allows robust discussion on safeguarding issues, drawing on a wide range of professional experience and expertise. It is also a supportive group, offering advice, guidance and quality assurance on policy and practice matters. Ely Safeguarding Team is very grateful for all the contributions to its work made by diocesan and partner-agency members of the DSMG.

**Past Cases Review**

During 2016, a review was started by the Church of England's National Safeguarding Team of all dioceses in relation to the 2009 Past Cases Review (PCR) and its continuing legacy. On the basis of the information reviewed, the Diocesan Safeguarding Team concluded that the 2009 PCR should be repeated, the Diocese of Ely subsequently welcomed the recommendation and guidance of the Independent Scrutiny Team to undertake a new review.

The Diocese is now at the final stages of the repeat PCR and a final report will be completed during 2020.

Individuals who wished to make representations to the PCR2 process or who need to come forward with information or make any disclosures regarding church related abuse are encouraged to make direct contact with the Safeguarding Team.

However, recognising that this may not feel safe for those with a lived experience of abuse from within the church, a dedicated telephone helpline - **0800 80 20 20** - operated independently from the church, by the NSPCC, has been set up.

Anyone can use the helpline to provide information or to raise concerns regarding abuse within the Church of England context; whether they are reporting issues relating to children, adults or seeking to whistle blow about poor safeguarding practice.

**Parish Focussed Support**

The Safeguarding Team works with Parishes to support their compliance with House of Bishop’s Safeguarding Policy and Practice Guidance. Parishes who for a range of reasons are at risk of not having ‘due regard’ are provided with Focussed Support. This process brings together the Safeguarding Team and Parish in a coordinated response to help parishes overcome their difficulties. An action plan will be agreed, and ongoing support and challenge provided directly by the Safeguarding Team. This process is primarily supportive but may escalate, according to levels of parish engagement. Eight parishes have been supported in this way during 2019.

**Safeguarding Dashboard**

Safeguarding in the Church of England has changed considerably in recent years and is likely to continue changing in the foreseeable future.

New policies and procedures are making churches safer, but they have also brought a significant increase in the amount of administration for Parish Safeguarding Officers. Safeguarding Dashboards is addressing this challenge by making safeguarding administration simpler for everyone. The Diocese of Ely has purchased the License for the Safeguarding Dashboard software and it is available free of charge to all parishes within the Diocese of Ely.

**Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA)**

The Church of England is a Core Participant in the Independent Inquiry. The first public hearings relating to the Church of England were held during 2018 and further hearings were heard in July 2019.

In May 2019 the Inquiry published Case Studies regarding the serious failings in Chichester Diocese and the Peter Ball case. The Conclusion to that Report states:

“*The Church of England should have been a place which cared for and supported victims of child sexual abuse. The investigations into the Diocese of Chichester and the events surrounding Peter Ball revealed several serious failings in its response to allegations against both clergy and laity alike. From the early 1990s there were inadequate safeguarding structures and policies in place at a national level and, as a result, at a diocesan level.”*The Anglican Church Case Studies: 1. The Diocese of Chichester 2. The response to allegations against Peter Ball, Investigation Report, May 2019.

The House of Bishops response to that statement was published on 17 May 2019:

*“At this week’s meeting of the House of Bishops, Archbishop Justin asked every one of us to read and study the full report in detail and we are absolutely committed to this. The Church has failed survivors and the report is very clear that the Church should have been a place which protected all children and supported victims and survivors. We are ashamed of our past failures, have been working for change but recognise the deep cultural change needed takes longer than we would like to achieve.* *We welcome the recommendations …"It is absolutely right that the Church at all levels should learn lessons from the issues raised in this report and act upon them”.*

The IICSA have made a range of recommendations in relation to safeguarding practice within the Church of England and there is a planned implementation programme in relation to these.

**Priority areas**

The Safeguarding Team’s current Strategy 2019-2022 identifies three specific strategic areas as priorities. These are ‘to learn from the past and implement that learning’, ‘to ensure that office holders, lay staff and volunteers are supported in effective and consistent safeguarding practice’ and ‘to develop a quality assurance framework for safeguarding activity.’

It is expected that both the completion of the Past Cases Review and recommendations arising from it and the recommendations arising from the IICSA will be the foundation when reviewing the Safeguarding Strategy.

**Looking beyond the diocese**

The essence of the Safeguarding Team’s work is promoting the safety of vulnerable people within the church community. Everyone is also subject to society’s legislative framework and the Ely Safeguarding Team seeks to strengthen community liaison, whilst also putting forward the perspectives of Church safeguarding policies and practice. The DSA represents the Voluntary Sector on the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Children Partnership Board. The DSAs, the DSO and the DSLG’s Independent Chair are all active in their respective regional and National Church safeguarding fora.

Ely Safeguarding Team also expresses its appreciation for the vital contribution to safeguarding work of all Parish Safeguarding Officers, who provide a helpful ‘front-line’ link in their parishes and keep safeguarding issues on local agendas.

*RB March 2019*