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# **Lichfield diocese independent safeguarding audit (March 2016)**



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**Independent auditing of diocesan  
safeguarding arrangements for  
the Church of England**

**Diocese of Lichfield**

Audit undertaken 8, 9 and 10 March 2016

**Hugh Constant, Lucy Erber and Edi Carmi**

First published in Great Britain in June 2016  
by the Social Care Institute for Excellence and the Church of England

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 CONTEXT

The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) has been commissioned to undertake an audit of the safeguarding arrangements of each diocese of the Church of England. The aim of these audits is to work together to understand the safeguarding journey of the diocese to date, and to support the continuing improvements being made. Following pilot audits of four dioceses in 2015, an agreed audit model is being applied nationally during 2016 and 2017.

The audit of the Diocese of Lichfield was carried out by Hugh Constant (the lead auditor for this diocese) and Lucy Erber on 8, 9 and 10 March 2016. This report was written by Hugh Constant with support from Lucy Erber; quality assurance was provided by Edi Carmi, the overall lead auditor for the project.

### 1.2 THE DIOCESE

The Diocese of Lichfield is one of England's largest, covering over 1,700 sq. miles of Staffordshire, Shropshire and the northern West Midlands. It has 425 parishes. At the time of the audit, the post of diocesan bishop was vacant, although an appointment had just been made.

The Diocese has three area bishops: the Bishop of Stafford; the Bishop of Shrewsbury; and the Bishop of Wolverhampton, who at the time of the audit was acting as the interim diocesan bishop. There are four archdeaconries within the Diocese.

Lichfield Diocese encompasses rural areas and also significant population centres such as Stoke-on-Trent and Wolverhampton.

The Diocese covers seven separate local authorities, combining both county councils and unitary authorities. There are four prisons in the Diocese, and while by no means everyone who leaves prison stays locally upon release, many do. The management of offender contracts is therefore an important diocesan issue.

There are a number of key people involved in safeguarding:

#### **The Diocesan Safeguarding Team:**

- Bishop's Safeguarding Advisor (BSA)
- Diocesan Advisor for the Safeguarding of Children (DASC)
- Diocesan Advisor for the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults (DASVA)
- Bishop's Advisor for Pastoral Care and Well-being (BAPCW)

#### **And in addition:**

- Diocesan CEO
- Bishop of Stafford – safeguarding lead bishop
- Bishop of Wolverhampton, also the interim diocesan Bishop of Lichfield
- Chair – Diocesan Safeguarding Committee (DSC)

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

This report is divided into:

- Introduction
- An overview of what is working well, where improvements can be made, and a summary of considerations for the diocese.
- The findings of the auditors: these are linked to the safeguarding requirements for faith groups set out in section 11 of the Children Act.
- Considerations for the diocese are listed, where relevant, under each finding section.
- An appendix sets out the review process.

## 2 OVERVIEW

This section provides the headline findings from the review in terms of what is working well and the areas for improvement. The detail behind these appraisals are in the detail of the Findings in section 3.

### 2.1 WHAT'S WORKING WELL?

- The Diocese of Lichfield maintains an impressive openness and willingness to learn in the area of safeguarding. People have a genuine commitment to getting it right and the attitude to the audit was characterised by openness and a lack of defensiveness – everyone to whom the auditors spoke was both keen to learn and improve.
- The Diocese has come a long way in a short space of time, not least because organisationally it was starting from a low base in terms of record keeping etc.
- The safeguarding team structure explained above seems to work. The four people have a 'shared wisdom and breadth of experience' that is an asset. The system allows for mutual support; ability to cover; joint training; and the 24/7 helpline.
- There is mutual respect between the four people, and this broadens out to the wider safeguarding structure: the Chair of the DSC, the CEO, and the Bishop of Stafford.
- Professional supervision and support is available.
- The DASC is considered to be a real asset, with an eye for detail; DBS expertise; excellent communication skills; good case work skills; and great local knowledge and links. She delivers first-rate training, as attested to by parishes, colleagues and senior staff alike
- Parishes in particular rate the DASC's accessibility and training very highly – 'you're not alone with this'. They value not just the safeguarding support, but also the personal support for them, from the BAPCW. This is another strength of the team approach
- The structure is a strength, but it is a strength for now. The Bishop of Stafford said that this is 'right for us at this moment in time', and the auditors would agree. It depends on four people getting on well, as do all teams to a great extent; but some of the roles/hours etc. here are unusual, and finding a replacement who fits in for anyone who leaves could be tricky.
- The BSA is a full-time children's social services manager. The auditors had noted an additional risk in that the structure relies to some extent therefore on the good will of her employer, and that is outside the control of the Diocese. This risk is removed with the BSA's resignation from the council, announced at the end of the audit.
- There are good links with the diocesan communications team, and indications of a well-led central diocesan office generally
- There is a sense of a diocese keeping on top of things – for instance having a social media policy

- Role of senior clergy:
  - Again, there appears to be a mutually supportive senior team, who can disagree without it being perceived as a disaster
  - Senior clergy are quietly but firmly supportive of the safeguarding agenda: the Bishop of Wolverhampton stepping in where needed; the Bishop of Stafford's round-the-clock accessibility to the DASC; insistence on training and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) referrals – with no Permission to Officiate (PTO) being granted without them. There were several examples on the files of senior staff backing the safeguarding line, for instance in not softening on contracts
  - Safeguarding is a standing agenda item in the monthly Bishop's Staff meeting, which is also attended by the Dean of the Cathedral

## 2.2 WHAT NEEDS TO WORK BETTER?

- Filing systems: the paper files remain unstructured in some cases, despite improvements in recent months, and extracting information, chronologies, key people etc. from them is not easy. Electronic files are only readily accessible by the DASC. There is a lack of risk assessment evidence underpinning the contracts. Some file notes were not up to date.
- More development of the adult safeguarding agenda: the understanding of the challenges of adult safeguarding lags behind that of child safeguarding.
- Information-sharing within the Diocese around high-profile cases needs to be strengthened.
- The DBS system works well, but could be done in a more cost- and time-effective way.
- Some systems and policies need to be developed/updated (see section 3.4 for details).
- Some contracts have been undertaken by parishes without the knowledge/input of the DASC. Whilst it is positive that they have undertaken this on their own initiative, it perhaps suggests a need for the DASC to be more present in the parishes.
- A fuller understanding of key safeguarding concepts such as grooming among senior clergy.
- Recruitment practices need to be tightened up (see section 3.9 for details).
- Senior clergy are very supportive of the safeguarding agenda and could use their authority where appropriate to give a public steer to the issues at hand.
- In the future, now that the BSA has handed in her notice to her local authority employers, there will need to be work done to ensure she remains up to date and the Diocese continues to benefit from the latest practice thinking from statutory partners.

## 2.3 SUMMARY OF CONSIDERATIONS

- Filing: basic information front sheet on files; electronic files that are available to other people beside the DASC; recording standards developed to clarify what should be recorded by when, etc.
- Contracts: include the risk assessment documentation from police/probation in regard to the contracts, or note on file the risks that necessitate the contract.
- Draw up a simple risk assessment tool to keep on file to bolster the contract.
- To consider whether the DSC would be strengthened by external statutory safeguarding expertise.
- A greater focus on adult safeguarding, possibly using the opportunities created by having all senior clergy in post to help publicise the issue.
- Develop a 'need-to-know' policy for high-profile cases and those with the potential to become high-profile.
- Maintain training for senior clergy, and the open culture of safeguarding conversations, to support mutual learning.
- Develop simple whistleblowing and complaints policies.
- Update adults' and children's safeguarding material on the website.
- Free up the DASC's time for training and for contract work
- Support a more effective DBS process.
- Continue monitoring the numbers of outstanding DBS renewals and take further action should the numbers not reduce further. One option may be joining the e-bulk DBS system.
- Develop a 'need-to-know' policy for high-profile cases and those with the potential to become high-profile.
- Slight changes to recruitment practices to allow for easier monitoring of safer recruitment practices.
- System in place to maintain the BSA's expertise, especially around adult safeguarding.
- Professional supervision for the BSA, now she has resigned from her local authority.
- Discussion with the National Safeguarding Team around the variance from the advice of the national team in relation to the DSA's lack of professional qualification, and forthcoming advice on the involvement of clergy in the safeguarding role.

## 3 FINDINGS

### 3.1 SAFEGUARDING MANAGEMENT

The Bishop of Stafford is the lead for safeguarding in the Diocese, having been delegated that responsibility by the previous Bishop of Lichfield. He sits on the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee (which elsewhere is often called the Diocesan Safeguarding Management Group), which he used to chair, and is a member of the Bishop's Staff, who meet monthly, with safeguarding as a standing agenda item. The Bishop of Stafford is a qualified social worker, who practiced in child protection services prior to taking up ministry.

Also on both the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee (DSC) and the Bishop's Staff is the Diocese's CEO. Between her and the Bishop of Stafford, it feels like there is a strong link between the safeguarding management structure and the overall senior clergy management of the Diocese.

The interim diocesan bishop, the Bishop of Wolverhampton, takes an active and engaged role in safeguarding where appropriate, and is described as being very attentive to detail on the topic. The auditors were told there was a willingness to get 'episcopally heavy' around safeguarding when needed, and saw ample evidence of that on case files. The auditors were told that the illness of the previous diocesan bishop meant that other senior people in the Diocese had to pull together more, and noted that the bishops are more than merely supportive of the safeguarding staff; they actively engage and discuss matters with them, and know when they need to seek advice from the safeguarding experts.

The senior clergy appear to be a cohesive team around safeguarding, and where there are disagreements, as was seen in certain cases, these are not especially problematic; instead, they are seen as chances to learn and share ideas. It is important that this culture continues, so that all senior clergy can learn from each other about the best way to handle safeguarding situations, and can discuss key issues such as grooming.

The senior clergy team also need to ensure that potentially high-profile cases are shared appropriately; information about one case, not in the Stafford area, should have been passed to the Bishop of Stafford as the lead bishop for safeguarding.

The CEO is the line manager for the members of the diocesan safeguarding team, three of whom also receive professional supervision from the team's leader, the Bishop's Safeguarding Advisor.

Links with Lichfield Cathedral seem well-developed, with cathedral staff on the DSC and able to make use of the diocesan safeguarding resources, and related expertise such as communications staff.

#### Relevant Section 11 requirements

*Part 1 Provide a structure to manage safeguarding in the diocese; (PAGC A.4)*

*Part 2 The Bishop appoints a member of his senior staff team to be the lead person for safeguarding.*

### Considerations for the Diocese

Develop a 'need-to-know' policy for high-profile cases and those with the potential to become high-profile

Maintain training for senior clergy, and the open culture of safeguarding conversations, to support mutual learning

## 3.2 DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING ADVISOR/S

The structure of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor role in Lichfield is unusual, and as follows:

The Bishop's Safeguarding Advisor (BSA), who works for the Diocese on a retainer basis. She is a full-time children's services team manager in a local council [although announced at the end-of-audit feedback session that she had handed in her notice] and an ordained minister. The BSA provides professional supervision, and practice oversight and support, to:

- The Diocesan Advisor for the Safeguarding of Children (DASC). She works four days a week and is the first point of contact for issues of child safeguarding. She handles children's safeguarding cases, including extensive inter-agency working, under the BSA's guidance; she develops and delivers the Diocese's training; she manages the DBS process; and is the main cover for the Diocese's 24/7 safeguarding phone line. The DASC does not have a professional qualification in a safeguarding field, which is not consistent with current advice from the National Safeguarding Team. She was the Diocese's DBS administrator before her role was extended.
- The Diocesan Advisor for the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults (DASVA). She works in this role for 0.2 of her time, and is a parish priest. She, with the BSA's support, handles any adult safeguarding matters that arise, as well as doing training on adult safeguarding, and being part of the 24/7 cover. She is a qualified learning disability nurse.
- The Bishop's Advisor for Pastoral Care and Well-being (BAPCW), is a clergywoman with a counselling background who fulfils a number of roles in the diocese. She is a paid employee attached to the safeguarding team for half a day a week, as the Diocese's Authorised Listener, as the lead on domestic violence matters, and as support to clergy and parishes where there have been safeguarding incidents.

This structure was developed by the CEO, upon the retirement of the previous Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor, in September 2014. Because this was a retirement, there was a long lead-in period to the change, which allowed for thought and planning about how to restructure the safeguarding arrangements, part of which was a review of how safeguarding was handled in the Diocese.

The aim of the restructure was to improve the safeguarding service by covering what the CEO saw as the four strands of safeguarding work as detailed by the national safeguarding policies which were in place at the time: work with children (*Protecting All God's Children*); vulnerable adults (*Promoting a Safe Church*); domestic violence

(*Responding to Domestic Abuse*); and working with survivors (*Responding Well to Those Who Have Been Sexually Abused*), while building on existing strengths within the diocese. The DASC had worked in the Diocese for about 10 years at that point, five of which were as the DBS administrator working with the previous DSA. During that time, the DASC had developed her role, and was very well-regarded by the parishes for her efficient work, and clear training, on DBS applications. The DASVA was a well-established parish priest with experience of working with adults at risk. The BAPCW was an experienced listener who could take on the Authorised Listener role and cover domestic violence issues. And the BSA was an experienced social worker and ordained minister with a long association with the Diocese.

Just as the structure was being developed, and had been approved by the diocesan Synod, the Church's National Safeguarding Team recommended that all diocesan safeguarding advisors be qualified in a profession with extensive safeguarding involvement, such as social work. In response, the CEO asked the BSA to extend her specialist role, to provide professional supervision and case management support to the DASC and the rest of the team. Because the BSA is a member of the clergy, this maybe at variance from the advice of the national team that diocesan safeguarding advisors should be independent from the clergy, but that advice was not in place at the time of the appointment.

Also, the CEO was able to support the DASC to develop her role in the 18-month lead-up to the previous DSA's departure. The DASC shadowed the previous DSA at contract meetings, strategy meetings and so forth, and was well prepared for her enhanced role by the time she took it over.

On a day-to-day basis, the structure tends to work by the DASC receiving calls, and handling what she can independently; as she reported, many calls are about DBS queries. Where more substantial concerns are raised, the DASC will field a call, and then contact the BSA for immediate advice. The BSA reports that she can nearly always get back to the DASC within two hours, where she cannot answer the call immediately. The calls, coming through at the rate of two or three a day when the DASC was first in her new role, now happen about two or three times a week, as the DASC has developed in confidence. In addition, the DASC always copies the BSA into any emails she sends.

The BSA uses her employer's TOIL/flexitime policies and annual leave to give the DASC monthly professional supervision, and quarterly supervision to the DASVA and the BAPCW. The four also meet quarterly for a team meeting. The BSA is less available for short-notice work meetings, such as when a local authority designated officer (LADO) might call an urgent strategy meeting. In these cases, she advises the DASC by telephone as best she can, and receives feedback afterwards. The BSA acknowledges feeling dissatisfied with this aspect of the set-up, because while she has full confidence in the DASC, she sometimes feels local authority social workers do not afford the DASC her due respect, because she is a church employee and not a social worker herself. In the cases seen by the auditors where the DASC attended strategy meetings she (according to the minutes) gave clear and succinct information to the meeting and actively participated in the decision-making. The auditors do note however, that this way of working is inconsistent with national advice.

The arrangements for professional supervision are good, particularly for the DASC. The auditors explored whether the BSA was well placed to give professional adult safeguarding supervision to the DASVA, but those involved stated this worked well.

In part, they told the auditors, this is because the principles of child and adult safeguarding are the same. The auditors would not wholly agree with this, given the inherent vulnerability of children, and the fact that adults can choose to stay in vulnerable situations.

The BSA chooses not to have professional supervision in her church role, in part because of time constraints, but the CEO makes it clear that this would be available were she to seek it.

The auditors looked quite closely at the potential pressure points in this system, such as the BSA being too busy on any given day to handle diocesan affairs, or being ill or on leave. The BSA, the DASC, the chair of the DSC, the CEO and others were unequivocal in their view that the BSA does respond quickly enough, and has never left the DASC unadvised or unsupported. When the BSA is on leave in the UK, she is contactable. When, as happened recently, she is abroad for a holiday, then Birmingham's DSA is available for the DASC to contact.

Part of the conversations with the safeguarding staff explored a hypothetical – but plausible – scenario in which the BSA is ill or away when a major safeguarding incident lands in the team's lap. In such a situation, the DASC was satisfied she would get the support she needed, both professionally and personally, from a combination of the Birmingham team, the Bishop of Stafford, the CEO, the DASVA and the BAPCW. Indeed, the uncommonness of the structure – and the fact that it runs counter to national guidance – led the auditors to pose a large number of 'what if...?' questions, exploring what would happen in different situations. To each, the point was made that by having four people in post, there was greater robustness than were they to have the more usual model of one DSA. The team can cover for each other, as seen by the way they manage the 24/7 helpline.

Additionally, the team provides important ongoing support to each other – what the BAPCW described as a 'shared wisdom and breadth of experience'. Other DSAs have described the potential isolation of being the one safeguarding person in the organisation, and it was evident that the four people did function as a team, and demonstrated a great degree of mutual respect and assistance.

The auditors came away, therefore, recognising that the structure works well, not least because the case work, as seen below, is of high quality. It is an unusual structure, not in line with national guidance, and the pivotal person in it, while having done a lot of safeguarding training, lacks a professional qualification and the experience of a frontline statutory safeguarding role. But as the Bishop of Stafford put it, the structure 'is right for us at this moment in time'.

The auditors would agree with this: both that it works, and with the implication that it might not be the right structure far into the future and will need to be kept under review, especially in the light of the strengthening of national policy that will reinforce the advice about the appointments, background and role of the DSA. The four people involved do seem to work well together – this was reported by all of them, as well as by those around them – and were different personalities in place, it may work less well. That of course is true of any well-functioning team, but this structure does seem to consist of posts with unusual hours, roles and professional competencies. Filling a vacancy therefore may well be difficult.

Another concern, given the pressures and volatility of children's social care, was that the BSA's current employer may start making the BSA's life more difficult around

flexitime etc., and may withdraw their agreement that she undertakes this role with the Diocese. However, this issue was addressed by her news at the end of the audit that she was leaving her local authority post, and making more time available to the Diocese. So for now at least, the structure feels strengthened; when we asked people what would improve the structure, more than one person said it would be more of the BSA's time, and it looks now as if that may be available.

Relevant Section 11 requirements

*Part 1 Appoint a suitably qualified diocesan safeguarding adviser, and provide appropriate financial, organisational and management support. The adviser must have full access to clergy files and other confidential material (PACG A4.5).*

*Part 1 Ensure that the diocesan safeguarding adviser is informed of any serious safeguarding situation, including any allegation made against a member of the clergy, or anyone else holding the bishop's licence, concerning misconduct.*

*Part 6 The DSA's role is clear in the JD and person specification.*

*Part 6 The DSA has sufficient time, funding, supervision and support to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities effectively; including local policy development, casework – including time for complex cases, advice, liaison with statutory authorities, training (coordination and direct delivery), personal and professional development and professional registration. Communication with parishes – (newsletters, website, etc.). Also administrative and managerial support arrangements, out of hours / leave cover and access arrangements (planned and unplanned) to the senior staff team (PACG A4.5).*

*Part 8 The DSA should be given access to professional supervision to ensure their practice is reviewed and improves over time.*

### **Considerations for the Diocese**

System in place to maintain the BSA's expertise, especially around adult safeguarding.

Professional supervision for the BSA, now she has resigned from her local authority.

Discussion with the National Safeguarding Team around the variance from the advice of the national team in relation to the DACS's lack of professional qualification, and the involvement of clergy in the safeguarding role.

### 3.3 DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE

The Diocesan Safeguarding Committee (DSC) meets four times a year, and is chaired by a former senior police officer with extensive professional experience in children's safeguarding. She has chaired the group since January 2015, having previously conducted a past cases file review for the diocese and, in August 2014, an independent review of the Diocese's safeguarding policies and procedures at the point at which the previous, long-standing DSA was retiring. The chair's role is a voluntary one, for which expenses are paid.

The DSC had previously been chaired by the Bishop of Stafford, but the Diocese, in line with recommendations from the National Safeguarding Team, wanted an independent chair. The chair only agreed to become chair on condition that the post is reviewed after two years, as she was conscious that her knowledge of frontline safeguarding practice would quickly become out of date. The auditors noted in this an encouraging desire for the Diocese to remain on top of current safeguarding developments, and the chair herself noted that it is 'a joy to be part of an organisation that wants to learn'. This openness and willingness to learn was a strength that was noted throughout the audit, and was evident in the decision to commission the review in the first place.

The group includes the CEO, the Bishop of Stafford, a cathedral representative, the Diocesan Registrar, the Bishop's Chaplain, and diocesan safeguarding staff. The group's role is to set a strategic approach to diocesan and national safeguarding issues such as training. While they do not often look at individual cases, they will have closed sessions to explore them in more detail where they might provide learning with wider applicability across the diocese. From our look at recent DSC minutes, the group is well attended, with a practical focus on getting things done.

The DSC does not include any external safeguarding expertise. The Diocese has long been able to call on the fact that the Bishop's Advisor on Safeguarding is a full-time children's services social work manager in order to keep updated on policy and practice issues. With her leaving the local authority, it may be a useful time to consider whether some statutory input to the DSC would be beneficial.

The chair identified the main challenges facing the group as keeping all the parishes up to date and on board across a very large diocese, so issues like communication and training are a key focus. The awareness of adult safeguarding issues lags behind that of children's safeguarding.

#### Relevant Section 11 requirements

*Part 1 Provide a structure to manage safeguarding in the diocese; (PAGC A.4)*

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

To consider whether the DSC would be strengthened by external statutory safeguarding expertise.

Develop a greater focus on adult safeguarding, possibly using the opportunities created by having all senior clergy in post to help publicise the issue.

### 3.4 POLICIES, PRACTICE GUIDANCE AND PROCEDURES

The diocesan Synod adopted the four main House of Bishops safeguarding policies - *Protecting All God's Children; Promoting a Safe Church; Responding Well; and Responding to Domestic Violence* – in their entirety in June 2014. There is no local adaptation of the policies. The revised May 2015 policies on responding to serious safeguarding situations and risk assessments have been adopted, and are on the diocesan website. The auditors saw evidence of good risk assessment practice, in line with the new policy.

There are no detailed local procedures setting out, for example, to what timescales a safeguarding incident should be addressed. There is a concise Good Practice Guidelines poster which is designed for parishes, and clear instructions about who to contact in safeguarding situations on the diocesan website.

The website has links to the main Church of England safeguarding policies and procedures, and to certain statutory/governmental resources. These are incomplete and/or outdated – for instance there is a link to No Secrets, rather than Care Act safeguarding guidance, and much more adult safeguarding than children's safeguarding material.

Commendably, the Diocese has a specific social media policy, which covers all aspects of social media use for church employees and volunteers, including potential safeguarding concerns. There is also a safeguarding policy for the Online Pastor, an initiative whereby a local priest offers online advice and support to young people.

#### Relevant Section 11 requirements

*Part 1 Ensure the diocesan Synod adopts the House of Bishops' safeguarding policies, together with any additional diocesan procedures and good practice guidelines.*

*Part 9 The Bishop / Diocesan Secretary / CX, in line with should ensure that the Diocese has a written procedure on how to deal with serious safeguarding situations and allegations against church officers. All allegations are dealt with in line with Responding to Serious Safeguarding Situations Relating to Church Officers and Other Individuals Practice Guidance May 2015.*

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

Update adults' and children's safeguarding material on the website – for example remove No Secrets and related documents, and replace with the latest (March 2016) version of the Care Act Statutory Guidance on safeguarding; and provide links to key children's safeguarding material such as 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' and 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'.

### 3.5 RESOURCES OF SAFEGUARDING SERVICE

The case files and the conversations the auditors had were consistent in showing that the resource dedicated to safeguarding is sufficient. Alerts are responded to swiftly, and people are available to attend strategy meetings and contract meetings, deliver training and so forth. The parish focus group and the local statutory agencies were clear on this point. It would appear to be a strength of the team approach to providing safeguarding support that people are available to cover for each other, to make sure responses are timely.

The DASC, as the main team member, is located in the central diocesan office, and has all necessary IT equipment and office support to do her work effectively.

It was mentioned to us a couple of times that the DASC would benefit from greater administrative support, but the DASC herself identified that the most useful step in terms of her workload would be for the DBS administration to be contracted out (see consideration for the Diocese below). This would not necessarily make for a more efficient DBS system, although it might well; but it would free up a lot of the DASC's time.

The CEO expressed confidence that, if she were to be convinced of the case for more funds to be allocated to safeguarding, the Bishop's Council (made up of laity and senior clergy), as the body which would need to approve it, would be receptive. Certainly, the commitment we saw to the importance of safeguarding would suggest that her confidence is reasonable.

#### Relevant Section 11 requirements

*Part 6 The DSA has sufficient time, funding, supervision and support to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities effectively; including local policy development, casework – including time for complex cases, advice, liaison with statutory authorities, training (coordination and direct delivery), personal and professional development and professional registration. Communication with parishes – (newsletters, website, etc.). Also administrative and managerial support arrangements, out of hours / leave cover and access arrangements (planned and unplanned) to the senior staff team (PACG A4.5).*

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

Support a DBS process that would free up more of the DASC's time.

### 3.6 RECORDING SYSTEMS AND IT SOLUTIONS

This is an area in which the Diocese has made a lot of progress over the last 18 months, but in which it was starting from quite a low base. As a result, there is further work to be done to ensure that recording practices are as effective as they could be.

The case files of the previous DSA were not very systematic, and often consisted of scraps of paper and post-it notes. Electronic files, such as they existed, were kept privately on a home computer. The situation now is much improved: paper and electronic files are kept in the office, although more thought needs to be given about shared but secure access to the electronic files, which at the moment are accessible only to the DASC. She emails the BSA updates of cases, which is a useful safeguard, but the system would be strengthened by a password-protected shared file, available to certain key personnel.

The paper files, particularly those of more substantial cases, remain fairly disorganised. The auditors felt that, were a call to come in from a fellow DSA for example, asking for urgent information about a case, that it would be difficult in some instances to quickly identify key information. The auditors discussed with the Diocese introducing front sheets with key biographical information, contact details, and salient points in a potted case history, to enable information to be retrieved speedily.

The auditors also found a number of instances in which it was unclear, from having read a case file, what the latest situation was, but upon speaking to the team, learning that more had taken place than was recorded. This felt like a potential weakness in the system, and one that might benefit from some agreed standards on how quickly work is recorded, so that important information is not missed.

The Diocese keeps records of training completed, and these reflect the strong performance in this area, with 1,070 of 1,154 clergy and readers having had safeguarding training in the last 18 months. The records also indicate that 183 parish safeguarding coordinators (PSCs) have had training in that period.

DBS records are maintained, and the system is gradually improving. In the 2014 safeguarding audit, 228 people in the Diocese were outside the five-year timescale for having their DBS renewed. This high figure was of concern, but the bishops' PAs now run a monthly check which flags up all clergy who are due for a review. They automatically get sent a DBS form to complete and a letter telling them to complete it. If they don't, this keeps being flagged up until they get the DBS done. The number as of May 2016 is down to 77 outstanding DBSs, which is an improvement, but the focused work needs to continue.

#### Relevant Section 11 requirements

*Part 1 Provide access to the Disclosure and Barring Service checks for parishes, the cathedral, the bishop's office and the diocesan office for those beneficed and licensed clergy, paid workers and volunteers who need to obtain disclosures.*

*Part 1 Keep a record of clergy and church officers that will enable a prompt response to bona fide enquiries. This record should include start and finish dates, all posts held and next post when known; where there have been safeguarding concerns, these should be clearly indicated on file.*

### **Considerations for the Diocese**

To consider how to improve the recording systems so that basic information front sheet is on files; electronic files are available to specified other people beside the DASC; standards are developed and clarify what should be recorded by whom and, when it should be done etc.

The Diocese to continue monitoring the numbers of outstanding DBS renewals and take further action should the numbers not reduce further. One option may be joining the e-bulk DBS system.

### **3.7 RISK ASSESSMENTS AND SAFEGUARDING CONTRACTS / AGREEMENTS**

The handling of contracts is in many ways a strength of the Diocese. They are routinely used, and the DASC demonstrates her assiduousness nowhere better than in having these in place, and regularly reviewed. The reviews are an important and reflective part of the process; contracts are altered appropriately, according to circumstance, as seen in the case files. For instance, contracts that were reviewed bi-annually would be moved to annually if, after discussion, people were convinced that the offender had adhered well to the contract's requirements. The contracts were also an area in which the auditors saw good safeguarding leadership from senior clergy, with them backing the safeguarding team where people were pushing for what felt like inappropriate softening of the contracts.

The management of contracts by core groups appeared to be functioning well, and to reflect the 2015 guidance on managing risk. The DASC, as mentioned, handles the core groups well, and seeks support from the BSA where necessary.

Despite these positives, there are areas for consideration for the Diocese. The auditors came across two instances of contracts being developed without the input of the safeguarding team, and another that had been reviewed unilaterally within the parish. This is not all negative: it arguably demonstrates an awareness and understanding of the safeguarding agenda in the parishes, but the safeguarding team themselves were concerned that this was happening, and it does demonstrate the importance of the team being able to cover all 425 parishes over such a large area.

Another area to consider is that of the risk assessments upon which the contracts are based. They are not on any of the files, so a contract that states that, for example, a congregant must not sit near children, exists in isolation on the file, without any indication (beyond what one can surmise) as to the risks that it aims to address.

In conversation with the DASC, she made it clear that the risk assessments are done, but that they are done by the police and/or probation services, and professionals from those agencies set out the requirements they need to see in place to protect the person and vulnerable people around them, and then the DASC 'translates' this into the church context with the contract. While this feels like a reasonable approach, the lack of the risk assessments on file mean that there is no future proofing should anyone – the offender, a new incumbent, a new DSA etc. – want to question the basis of the contract.

The approach also means that where a person may be causing sufficient concern that a contract is warranted, but where there is no statutory involvement and/or no crime has actually been committed, the Diocese is left without a risk assessment structure to support the contract. We spoke to one parish representative who had drawn up – with safeguarding team support – an Acceptable Behaviour Contract with a worshipper who had been making others uncomfortable, but these do feel vulnerable to challenge unless the basis for them is clearly set out.

Relevant Section 11 requirements

*Part 1 Provide access to a risk assessment service so that the bishop or others can evaluate and manage any risk posed by individuals or activities within the Church.*

### **Considerations for the Diocese**

The development of a transparent risk assessment process to include:

- the risk assessment documentation from police/probation in regard to the contracts, or note on file the risks that necessitate the contract
- drawing up a simple risk assessment tool to keep on file to bolster the contract in line with Risk Assessment for Individuals who may pose a risk to Children or Adults (2015).

## **3.8 TRAINING**

The delivery of training appears to be very strong. Until recently, the bedrock of the training offer was that each parish was sent a DVD, in which the previous DSA discusses the key points of child and adult safeguarding, and the DASC, in her role as DBS administrator, explains the DBS process. The format works much better when covering the precise factual detail of the DBS process than it does in discussing the greater nuances of safeguarding. It is striking, in fact, how clearly the DASC explains the DBS process. A considerable drawback with the DVD is that there is no mechanism to know who has watched it, so as a way of monitoring safeguarding training across the Diocese's parishes, it is ineffective.

Whereas face-to-face training used to be done only on request, for the last 18 months, there has been a programme of 'classroom' training put in place across the Diocese. This is tiered, with courses for general volunteers, for PSCs, and for clergy, whose course covers issues such as offender management and the seal of confession. This is led by the DASC, and is usually co-presented with the DASVA, to cover the adult safeguarding aspects. The child safeguarding aspects are based on NSPCC's awareness training, and the material for both adults and children looks effective. As noted above, the coverage, especially for clergy and readers, is very good: 1,070 of 1,154 people. There remains a challenge in reaching some PTOs, especially those who do very small amounts for the Church, and who may be faced with a 20-mile journey to a training session.

The auditors were struck, when meeting the parish focus group, by just how well the training was received. It was described more than once as having effected a sea-change in parishes' attitudes to safeguarding, and people were particularly impressed with how it had made what once felt like a tick-box exercise now feel

relevant and important to their daily experience. One interesting measure of the impact of the training has been the increase, whenever it has taken place, of non-emergency, information-seeking calls to the DASC, as people put a face to her name, and begin to see issues in a new light as a result of the course.

The Diocese is planning to introduce a basic level e-learning safeguarding course, for which the DASC will be the moderator. This will include tracking of who has completed the course. The Diocese is aware that the National Safeguarding Team is also planning to introduce e-learning as part of the national learning and development framework, and is unsure as yet how the two will marry up. It believes it has a platform that will allow it to adopt the national programme easily enough.

It was mentioned that the DASC's delivery of such a well-regarded course is a useful tool in promoting safeguarding awareness, and awareness of the safeguarding team. The Diocese might want to consider how this benefit can be maintained if e-learning is rolled out extensively.

Given the apparent quality of the course, the diocese might want to consider accreditation of it.

#### Relevant Section 11 requirements

*Part 1 Select and train those who are to hold the bishop's licence, in safeguarding matters. Provide training and support on safeguarding matters to parishes, the cathedral, other clergy, diocesan organisations, including religious communities and those who hold the bishop's licence; Provide a complaints procedure which can be used for those who wish to complain about the handling of safeguarding issues.*

*Part 8 Those working closely with children, young people and adults experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect (clergy and lay people) have safeguarding in their induction and are trained and have their training refreshed every three years.*

### **Considerations for the Diocese**

Free up the DASC's time for training and work on offender management contracts – see section 3.5.

### **3.9 SAFER RECRUITMENT OF CHURCH OFFICERS**

The DBS system now appears to be working better, although there remains a backlog which needs to be addressed. The parish focus group reflected the view of diocesan employees that generally the resistance to doing DBS checks has faded over time. One PSC reported that the burden of DBS checking had meant that his parish had tried to steer clear of specific work with children, but the system now works smoothly enough, due to the DASC, for them to be no longer put off.

The Diocese is considering whether to contract out the DBS process, changing to an electronic process undertaken by an external organisation. There is a cost to this, but it would free up the DASC's time, as well as being quicker for applicants.

We looked at four recruitment files for diocesan staff, which were kept securely. They did not have a record of DBS checks having been completed, and three had no references on file. These were held, but because they had been emailed through, they were not on the paper file. It may tighten things up to have a front sheet or

similar recording that DBS checks and references are in place, and where they can be found.

In addition, we saw two clergy blue files, of clergy who had been involved in safeguarding incidents. These both contained clear reference to the safeguarding concern.

The checks on the blue files and the diocesan files took place either at the end of the day, or just prior to the feedback session, and were not done with the thoroughness that they deserved. This was entirely an issue of the auditors' timing, and nothing at all to do with the Diocese, but it does mean that the reflections on this issue are not as full as they should be. The auditors did not check, for instance, whether the Diocese has a policy on only having professional references, and how many references are required. It may be that as part of reflecting on this audit more generally, the Diocese wants to look at its safer recruitment policies, but in suggesting this, we need to be clear that it is not because we found the Diocese wanting in this respect.

Relevant Section 11 requirements

*Part 1 Provide access to the Disclosure and Barring Service checks for parishes, the cathedral, the bishop's office and the diocesan office for those beneficed and licensed clergy, paid workers and volunteers who need to obtain disclosures.*

*Part 7 The Diocesan Secretary / CX has implemented arrangements in line with the House of Bishop's Policy on Safer Recruitment 2015.*

**Considerations for the Diocese**

Support a DBS process that frees up the DASC's time (see earlier consideration for the diocese) – see section 3.5.

Slight changes to recruitment practices to allow for easier monitoring of safer recruitment practices.

### 3.10 RESPONSE TO ALLEGATIONS

The auditors explored 17 case files, covering the various categories as set out in SCIE's briefing pack for the dioceses, bar that of a case where there had been a complaint about how a safeguarding matter was handled: no such case exists.

The prompt response to alerts and concerns was evident from the case work, and was backed very strongly by the parish focus group. One priest spoke warmly of how quickly he was responded to, not just by the DASC in regard to the safeguarding matter at hand, but then also by the BAPCW, to check that he was alright. He particularly noted that this response – which was measured in terms of minutes - all occurred on a Friday night, and that there was 'a wholeness to it' which greatly relieved him of his anxiety.

The promptness of the responses did not seem unduly affected by the need for the DASC to liaise with the BSA in more complex situations. The DASC would typically return to the referrer with a holding call or email until further advice was received, but this did, in the cases examined, always seem to happen quickly enough. Measures are in place – such as cover between the team members, and support from neighbouring dioceses – to ensure the response is good and quick enough when people are away.

However, the auditors did feel that a 'need-to-know' procedure needs to be in place in order to ensure that key individuals (e.g. diocesan safeguarding lead, the communications team, CEO, etc.) are alerted to any potential high-profile safeguarding cases. This feels necessary because one case with the potential to become very public had not been shared with the Bishop of Stafford.

The auditors also looked at a case that had connections with a case subject to a current national independent review commissioned by the Church of England, as well as the Goddard Inquiry (Peter Ball). The Diocese had not informed the National Safeguarding Team of this link. The auditors were concerned that the National Safeguarding Team develop an effective process to ensure any such case is fed back to them so that its relevance to the current review and national historic abuse inquiry is considered. Information on this case was passed to the national team.

During the audit, the major cases that were looked at all involved people who, for at least part of the time in question, worked outside the direct oversight of the Diocese. In one case, this involved a priest who had other, entirely non-church related employment. In two others it concerned school chaplains, where the Diocese was involved in initial recruitment, but then entrusted the supervision and oversight of the clergy member to the school that employed them. It was discussed that all these situations may be leaving the Diocese open to safeguarding concerns that it has limited scope to swiftly pick up on and address.

The audits also highlighted one case where a member of the clergy's employment outside the church caused complications in his case, which raises questions about how such issues are handled.

### Relevant Section 11 requirements

*Part 9 The Bishop / Diocesan Secretary / CX, should ensure that the Diocese has a written procedure on how to deal with serious safeguarding situations and allegations against church officers. All allegations are dealt with in line with Responding to Serious Safeguarding Situations Relating to Church Officers and Other Individuals Practice Guidance May 2015.*

*Part 10 The Bishop / Diocesan Secretary / CX, should ensure that all allegations are dealt with in line with Responding to Serious Safeguarding Situations Relating to Church Officers and Other Individuals Practice Guidance May 2015.*

### **Considerations for the Diocese**

Develop a 'need to know' policy for high-profile cases and those with the potential to become high-profile.

### **3.11 QUALITY OF CASEWORK**

The audits showed that casework was generally good, both from the previous DSA, and the current safeguarding team. We noted, and discussed, a couple of times when the decision made by the DASC was not one that the auditors might have made in the situation. In both cases, the BSA promptly and effectively advised the DASC to change her initial decision. Both cases involved situations in which a person's behaviour was causing concern, but the behaviour was taking place in situations that were not the immediate business of the Diocese of Lichfield. A hypothesis is that the DASC lacked the confidence to address matters that fell outside her clear remit. Whatever the cause, the auditors noted that this is the system working well; the DASC may not have a professional qualification as per national policy, but is supported very effectively by someone that does, and the service provided between them is of good quality.

In all the other cases looked at, the DASC's decision-making and support to everyone involved: victim, offender, clergy, parishioners, was of a high standard. One strength was the cooperative working on display.

The DASC interacted well with parishes, senior clergy, statutory services (the feedback from whom was very positive), and with other people in the Diocese. There was really good joint working with the diocesan communications lead, who consistently seems to have played an impressive role, and with the housing department in one successful incidence. The auditors also saw evidence of good liaison with other dioceses, in England and Wales, when people who were causing concern moved.

As mentioned above in relation to contracts, but evident elsewhere as well, there were times when the safeguarding team was not fully informed about the latest situation in cases. For example, someone had been to court, and the team did not know the outcome. In one case, this non-engagement with the safeguarding team appears to be because the vicar involved is deliberately blocking it (and encouragingly, this has been passed to the Bishop of Wolverhampton to resolve). In others, perhaps what is reflected is a need, in a large diocese, for the team to be out and about, getting as widely known as possible, and making it clear to everyone what support it can offer. The consideration for the Diocese that the DASC's time should be freed up to do this work has been set out earlier.

Relevant Section 11 requirements

Part 1 Provide access to a risk assessment service so that the bishop or others can evaluate and manage any risk posed by individuals or activities within the Church.

Part 9 The Bishop / Diocesan Secretary / CX, should ensure that the Diocese has a written procedure on how to deal with serious safeguarding situations and allegations against church officers. All allegations are dealt with in line with Responding to Serious Safeguarding Situations Relating to Church Officers and Other Individuals Practice Guidance May 2015.

Part 10 The Bishop / Diocesan Secretary / CX, should ensure that all allegations are dealt with in line with Responding to Serious Safeguarding Situations Relating to Church Officers and Other Individuals Practice Guidance May 2015.

Part 11 The Bishop / Diocesan Secretary / CX, in line with should ensure that all who fall into this category are dealt with in line with Responding to Serious Safeguarding Situations Relating to Church Officers and Other Individuals Practice Guidance May 2015. The category is: If an organisation removes an individual (paid worker or unpaid volunteer) from work such as looking after children (or would have, had the person not left first) because the person poses a risk of harm to children or adults, the organisation must make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

### 3.12 COMPLAINTS

The Diocese lacks a clear complaints process around its safeguarding function. The CEO was confident that this could be readily addressed, and it does perhaps need little more than details on the website about who to approach should anyone be dissatisfied with the support they received.

Relevant Section 11 requirements

Part 4 There is an easily accessible complaints procedure including reference to the Clergy Discipline Measures and whistleblowing procedures.

#### Considerations for the Diocese

Develop a simple complaints policy.

### 3.13 WHISTLEBLOWING

The Diocese supplied a draft whistleblowing policy as part of the material submitted ahead of the audit. Drafted in response to the audit's request for one, the policy – while it is good as far as it goes – is focused solely on safeguarding issues. It lacks consideration of wider issues, such as, for example, theft from diocesan offices or other situations that don't involve vulnerable people.

Relevant Section 11 requirements

Part 4 Whistleblowing arrangements are in place and are addressed in training.

#### Considerations for the Diocese

Develop a simple whistleblowing policy.

### **3.13 MONITORING OF SAFEGUARDING IN PARISHES AS PART OF ARCHDEACONS' RESPONSIBILITIES**

Safeguarding – for adults and children – is now a standard part of archdeacons' annual visitations and the three-yearly parochial visitations. Checks are made that safeguarding policies are displayed. The Archdeacon with whom we spoke acknowledged that there was greater clarity among archdeacons and clergy more generally on child protection, than on the more blurred, nuanced issue of protecting vulnerable adults. He raised (as did the parish focus group) that questions such as whether a lift to church given to an elderly parishioner was a church activity (and therefore potentially in need of a DBS check etc.) or an act of neighbourly kindness, were challenging.

It is clear that the archdeacons will tackle any perceived resistance to the safeguarding agenda in their parishes, initially with a supportive, 'what's-going-on?' visit, and gradually with firmer responses, including from the bishops. The possibility of a Clergy Disciplinary Measure is there, and there is an expressed willingness to use it, though this has not happened in the Diocese on a safeguarding-related matter.

A wider issue that the archdeacons come across is getting the laity – who tend to stay put, while clergy come and go – on board with safeguarding, especially, as mentioned, the issue of adult safeguarding.

#### Relevant Section 11 requirements

*Part 1 Include the monitoring of safeguarding in parishes as part of the archdeacons' responsibilities. The expectations of a parish are set out in PACG page 20 paragraph 4.6.*

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

The BAPCW acts as Authorised Listener for the Diocese. Although she is an experienced counsellor, she is clear that the Authorised Listener role is not a counselling one. The BAPCW does have links, however, to a local Christian counselling service, Listening Ear, to whom she can refer people.

The BAPCW reported that she has not yet formally acted in the Authorised Listener role.

#### Relevant Section 11 requirements

*Part 3 The Bishop / Diocesan Secretary / CX, in line with PAGC 4.5 should ensure: there is a structure to hear the views of young people; there are children and young people's advocates available; and there are Authorised Listeners in place (RWSA 5).*

### **3.15 INFORMATION SHARING**

In practice, this appears to be working well. The auditors saw no evidence of information-sharing being blocked inappropriately, or of information being shared too widely. There was one instance of the lead bishop for safeguarding not having been informed of a potentially high-profile case. A system for 'need-to-know' cases needs to be developed, and has been mentioned in more detail above.

As discussed above, some of the files are too unwieldy and unstructured to easily extract the key information that might need to be shared.

One example of good practice concerned contracts, where there is always a tension between the need to restrict the number of people who know the details of a contract, to support confidentiality, and the need for consistency when people leave posts etc., so that no-one slips through the net. The DASC is now informed whenever an incumbent leaves a church where a contract is in place, so she can inform the new priest when they take up the post.

#### Relevant Section 11 requirements

*Part 1 Share relevant information about individuals with other dioceses, other denominations and organisations or the national Church as appropriate.*

*Part 5 The Diocesan Secretary / CX, who will have a lead on DPA matters, should ensure that there are clear information sharing protocols in place.*

### **3.16 QUALITY ASSURANCE**

The Diocese, in its commission to the current chair of the DSC to audit its safeguarding arrangements, has demonstrated an interest in quality-assuring its practice. On a day-to-day basis, there are good supervision arrangements for the safeguarding team. Beyond that, and the standard measures such as archdeacons' visitations and annual statistical returns, there are no specific QA measures in place for safeguarding. But the overall sense, shaped in part by the Diocese's attitude to this audit, is of an organisation which has a well-developed willingness to learn in all that it does. There is though no use of the sec.11 audit from Working Together 2015.

#### Relevant Section 11 requirements

*Part 1 Provide a structure to manage safeguarding in the diocese; (PAGC A.4).*

### **3.17 LINKS WITH NATIONAL SAFEGUARDING STRATEGY AND TEAM**

The DSC was recently visited by the head of the National Safeguarding Team, and seems to have strongly appreciated his input. His observation that in safeguarding a diocese 'is only as strong as its weakest parish' clearly hit home, as it was cited to the auditors repeatedly, and has been taken up as a challenge, to make sure weaker parishes can be identified and supported.

The Diocese is comfortable with national safeguarding procedures, and feels no need to localise them. The Diocese is keen to know when the national e-learning might be ready, as this will have an impact on their own plans.

We did not see evidence of the team using the National Safeguarding Team for direct case guidance. This might have been useful in the case where there were links to Peter Ball and the Diocese of Chichester.

The DASC makes use of national and regional support networks, and the DSC chair is about to join a Midlands-area chairs' network.

Relevant Section 11 requirements

*Part 1 Share relevant information about individuals with other dioceses, other denominations and organisations or the national Church as appropriate.*

### **3.18 WHAT NATIONAL SYSTEMIC SAFEGUARDING ISSUES HAVE ARISEN?**

- Considerations for the National Safeguarding Team:
- Keeping track of those clergy outside the day-to-day oversight of the diocese (e.g. school chaplain) - see section 3.10
- Policy about clergy who undertake work outside their parish duties – see section 3.10
- Communication to diocese of the timescale for development of safeguarding e-learning
- Further strengthen communication with dioceses in relation to alerting the NST of any local cases with connections to known cases of national significance

## APPENDIX: REVIEW PROCESS

Prior to the audit, the Diocese supplied the following information:

- Minutes of the three most recent meetings of the Safeguarding Committee
- Policies for:
  - whistleblowing (draft)
  - social media use
  - Online Pastor
- diocesan safeguarding structure chart
- diocesan safeguarding 'Structure and Approach' paper
- 2014 safeguarding statistical return
- 2014 safeguarding self-audit
- safeguarding poster and newsletter
- safeguarding flowchart for parishes
- content of the Diocese's safeguarding course, and we watched a video training course from the Diocese
- an independent review of the Diocese's safeguarding policies and practices, conducted in 2014
- Job descriptions for:
  - the chair of the Safeguarding Committee
  - the Bishop's Safeguarding Advisor
  - the Diocesan Advisor for the Safeguarding of Children
  - the Diocesan Advisor for the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults
  - the Bishop's Advisor for Pastoral Care and Well-being

The Diocese also contacted a number of statutory partners, asking them to contact us with their reflections. Four of them did so: a probation officer, a police officer, and two Local Authority Designated Officers, from Shropshire and Staffordshire social services.

### Participation of members of the Diocese

During the three-day audit, we had face-to-face conversations with:

- Alison Fletcher – Chair of the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee
- Julie Jones – Chief Executive
- Sally Smith - the Diocesan Advisor for the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults
- Jane Tillier - the Bishop's Advisor for Pastoral Care and Well-being (seen jointly with Sally Smith)
- Sue Boyce - the Bishop's Safeguarding Advisor
- Simon Baker – Archdeacon of Lichfield
- Bishop Geoff Annas – Bishop of Stafford
- Kim Hodgkins - the Diocesan Advisor for the Safeguarding of Children

In addition, Lucy Erber had a telephone conversation with Bishop Clive Gregory, Bishop of Wolverhampton and interim diocesan Bishop of Lichfield.

We met with a parish focus group comprising:

- two parish priests
- one parish administrator
- one curate
- two parish safeguarding coordinators
- one churchwarden
- one director of retreat houses for older parishioners and children

**The audit: what records / files were examined?**

The auditors examined 17 case files, four recruitment files, and two clergy blue files.