

## **Church of England – Hereford Diocese - Safeguarding Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2018**

### **Introduction**

The Safeguarding landscape has changed radically in the last few years. This is largely due to a series of national events, most notably the Jimmy Saville affair, the Rochdale and Oxford child sexual exploitation scandals and various high profile cases involving the church. The Church of England is accordingly stepping up its resourcing of safeguarding at every level of the organisation.

The fundamental allocation of responsibilities for safeguarding in the Church of England has not changed. **Bishops** continue to hold ultimate responsibility for the implementation and enforcement of national safeguarding policies, practices and training in their Dioceses. However, just as the national debate on safeguarding has expanded, so has the national church's work in this area, and the work that is expected of each Diocese.

### ***Forward from Bishop Richard***

*In the Diocese of Hereford, we are committed to our churches being safe for everyone. Our mission priority is to proclaim Christ and grow disciples. It is vital that as we continue to develop and implement the Diocesan Mission Action Plan, we ensure that the church we serve has the highest commitment to safeguarding.*

*I am grateful to Mandy McPhee for producing the Safeguarding Strategy and Action Plan. Everyone concerned with safeguarding must recognise the vital importance of understanding the various policies and engaging with the appropriate training. The Diocesan Strategy is based on the Church of England's House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policies.*

*I commend the Safeguarding Strategy to you as a statement of what we believe and practise.*

**This Safeguarding Strategy and Action Plan aims to set out exactly what the Diocese of Hereford needs to do to ensure all activities connected with church work are safe for both children and adults. It draws upon the National Safeguarding Business Plan and makes reference to National Safeguarding Policy and Practice Guidance and other supplementary documents. It details every element contained within safeguarding delivery. This Strategy will be updated every year and presented to Diocesan Synod for approval. The Action Plan will become a key working document used in a variety of forums in order to understand the progress of delivery.**

**Strategic Objective 1: Governance and Leadership.** The Diocese will develop and maintain an efficient and effective governance structure to support the delivery of safeguarding activity. The governance structure will ensure the following: that there is the correct level of senior leadership and oversight of safeguarding activity; that there is an appropriate level of engagement with independent and statutory bodies and that there are sufficient levels of resource in place to carry out the activity required.

**1A Develop a process of gaining external scrutiny of the Diocesan Safeguarding arrangements. (New).**

This element has been altered in light of experience and feedback from the 2017 Independent Safeguarding Audit of the Diocese's Safeguarding arrangements. A Safeguarding Scrutiny Panel was established and met for the first time in December 2016. Not all external statutory agencies invited, took part. The Diocese received feedback from West Mercia Police and the Herefordshire Child and Adult Safeguarding Board Chairs in relation to its Strategy and Action Plan. The Diocese have subsequently been invited to take part in the local Safeguarding Board's Annual Audit and Quality Assurance processes. This will provide an effective means of scrutiny and oversight. The Diocese will aim to replicate the process across all Local Authority areas covered within its geography. The Diocesan Safeguarding Scrutiny Panel will be disbanded. External agencies, charities and other organisations will be approached and invited to attend meetings of the Safeguarding Working Group.

**1B Maintain safeguarding oversight at a senior leadership level within the Diocese. Bishop and Bishop's Chaplain**

The majority of safeguarding activity detailed in this strategy will be the responsibility of the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. The Diocese of Hereford has a single post - Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) who currently works to both the Bishop via the Bishop's Chaplain, and to the Independent Chair of the current Safeguarding Working Group. The DSA meets with the Bishop and the Bishop's Chaplain once per month in order to deliver a confidential safeguarding briefing. The DSA will attend Bishop's staff meeting and other key diocesan meetings when it is appropriate to do so. It will be the responsibility of the Bishop's Chaplain and the Diocesan Secretary to ensure that safeguarding activity is reported on at Diocesan Synod, Bishop's Council and Bishop's staff meetings.

**1C Maintain safeguarding oversight by an Independent Chair with appropriate expertise**

The Diocese has an Independent Chair for its Safeguarding Working Group. The DSA meets with the independent chair regularly to deliver a confidential safeguarding briefing. This consists of an update in relation to all current ongoing casework and an update in relation to all other safeguarding activity.

## **1D Create and maintain a Diocesan Safeguarding Working Group (HDSWG)**

This is a group made up of key personnel from within the Diocese and Cathedral and also clergy and lay representatives drawn from parishes. There is also the intention to invite membership from key statutory agencies, charities and other organisations. It meets quarterly and is led by our current Independent Chair. Its role is to take forward all work streams within this Diocesan Safeguarding Strategy and Action Plan.

## **1E Ensure that there is adequate resource in place to achieve Safeguarding activity**

The Diocese will need to ensure that there is adequate resourcing in place to carry out all the activity required. The Diocese will need to ensure it has a dedicated Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, an appropriate amount of administrative support, an appropriately funded budget and an appropriately funded and staffed DBS administration system. Access to the Diocesan Director of Communications will also be needed.

**Strategic Objective 2: Policy and Practice Guidance. Ensure that all National Safeguarding Policy and Practice Guidance are formally adopted and implemented within the Diocese.** The National Safeguarding Team are responsible for the formulation of National Safeguarding Policy and Practice Guidance. All policy and practice guidance are produced after extensive consultation both from within the Church and with external statutory agencies and other appropriate bodies and experts in the field. All policy and practice guidance is set within a revolving timetable of review by the National Team, this is to ensure that they are fully up to date and current according to legislation and developments outside the Church. The Diocese needs to ensure it adopts, implements and carries out all of its safeguarding activities in accordance with the National Policy and Practice Guidance. The Diocese should also ensure it uses the most up to date version of policy and practice guidance and should ensure it actively engages with consultation exercises.

**2A Implement and work according to National Policy – Protecting all God’s Children (2010).** This is the main policy document for the Church of England outlining how it will respond to safeguarding concerns with regards to children and young people. Please note that this policy is currently under review. The National Team are looking to amalgamate this policy with the one below and produce an overarching safeguarding policy for both children, young persons and adults. The new policy is due out during 2017.

**2B Implement and work according to National Policy – Promoting a Safe Church (2006).** This is the main policy document outlining how the church will respond to concerns about adult safeguarding issues. See above regarding this policy being currently under review.

**2C Implement and work according to National Policy - Responding to Domestic Violence (2017).** This is a newly updated policy and outlines the pastoral responsibilities of those responding to domestic abuse within the church.

**2D Implement and work according to National Policy – Responding well to those who have been Sexually Abused (2011).** This outlines how the Church of England will respond to those who are survivors of sexual abuse. A major revision of this policy is planned for 2017.

**2E Implement and work according to National Practice Guidance – Safer Recruitment (2016).** This is the Church of England’s current guidance on undertaking safer recruitment practices for all paid and voluntary roles within the Church, particularly those who are deemed to be in regulated activity.

**2F Implement and work according to National Practice Guidance – Responding to serious safeguarding concerns related to church officers (2015).** This outlines how the Church of England will respond to safeguarding allegations involving church officers. This policy is currently being reviewed and amalgamated with the policy regarding risk assessment referred to below.

**2G Implement and work according to National Practice Guidance – Risk Assessment for Individuals who may pose a risk to children or adults (2015).** This outlines how and in what circumstances formal risk assessment should be undertaken in respect of those who may pose a risk to a child or an adult. This policy is currently being reviewed and amalgamated with the policy regarding responding to serious safeguarding concerns related to church officers referred to above.

**2H Implement and work according to National Practice Guidance – Joint safeguarding Guidance for single congregational local ecumenical partnerships (2015).** This outlines the responsibilities of single congregation LEPs in coming under the safeguarding policies of their respective denomination (Jointly with Methodist Church).

**2I Implement and work according to National Practice Guidance – Safeguarding in Religious Communities (2015).** This outlines expectations of religious communities to come under the umbrella of the local diocesan safeguarding policies and training.

**2J Implement and work according to National Practice Guidance – Joint Safeguarding Records Practice Guidance (2015).** This outlines good practice in respect of recording practices. (Jointly with Methodist Church).

**2K Implement and work according to National Practice Guidance – Learning and Development Practice Guidance (2016).** This is the Church of England’s framework for learning and development in respect of safeguarding, outlining key roles and responsibilities and training modules to be undertaken.

**2L Implement and work according to New National Policy and Practice Guidance -** Any new policy and practice guidance. The National Team are currently developing new policy and practice guidance in relation to: Responding well to spiritual abuse, complaints, whistle blowing and escalation. As and when new policy and practice guidance is introduced, the Diocese should look to adopt and implement it without delay.

**Strategic Objective 3: Training: Provide safeguarding learning and development at all levels of the organisation adhering strictly to the National Learning and Development Practice Guidance and using the national produced training modules.** This new practice guidance gives detail about the training that should be delivered in a Diocese. It outlines various types of training and how it applies to various roles within the church both in relation to licensed and lay people as well as paid workers and volunteers. It provides a flexible approach with the facility to combine modules. The Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser will be responsible for the organisation and delivery of all safeguarding training in the Diocese.

**3A Deliver Awareness / Foundation training for lay people.** This refers to National Training Modules C0 and C1. C0 is an online training package. C1 is a basic awareness module, of 3 hours duration. There is an expectation that it is delivered to the following people: Ordinands and independent students - pre ordination, Readers in training, Clergy with Bishop's permission to officiate, Parish Safeguarding Reps, Church Wardens, leaders of children's activities, spiritual directors, Bishop's Visitors, helpers at children's activities. This training should be repeated every 3 years.

**3B Deliver Leadership training for lay people.** This refers to National Training Module C2. This is a progression from C1 and is also of 3 hours duration. C1 and C2 can be combined. There is an expectation that it is delivered to the following people: Ordinands and independent students - pre ordination, Readers in training, Clergy with Bishop's permission to officiate, stipendiary and non-stipendiary curates, newly licensed readers Parish Safeguarding Reps, Church Wardens, leaders of children's activities, spiritual directors, Bishops Visitors, helpers at children's activities. This training should be repeated every 3 years.

**3C Deliver Foundation and Leadership for licensed ordained people.** This refers to National Training Module C3 and is a full days training. There is an expectation that it is delivered to all licensed clergy and renewed every 3 years. If Clergy cannot attend a full day's training (C3), they can attend C1 and C2 training.

**3D Ensure that the relevant Diocesan Senior Staff attend and engage in Safeguarding Senior Leadership Training.** This refers to National Training Module C4, which consists of a full days training delivered by the National Safeguarding Team. Hereford Diocese attended this training in October 2015. It is also due to be retrained in October 2017.

**3E Deliver Advanced /Specialist training to licensed clergy and relevant lay people.** This refers to National Training modules S1- S5. These are individual training modules in relation to the following subjects: safer recruitment, responding to domestic abuse /violence, responding to sexual abuse, working with survivors, assessing and managing risk. Some of the modules are available and some currently being developed and will soon be subject to a pilot programme. Hereford Diocese will run those that are available and its own advanced training programme in relation to working with offenders in worship. These can be delivered individually over 2 hours or combined over 4 hours.

**Strategic Objective 4: Communications and Access to Safeguarding information for all. It is vitally important that the Diocese ensures that anyone involved with the Church, no matter what that involvement is, has access to up to date accurate information regarding safeguarding within the Church, including details about who to contact if there is a safeguarding concern.**

**4A Website.** The Diocese will develop and maintain a safeguarding page as part of its main website. This page will be kept fully up to date and contain detailed safeguarding information. It will provide access to all National Policy and Practice Guidance. It will contain details of how to contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser and other key contact numbers for the statutory authorities and relevant helplines and charities. It will contain Diocesan produced

information leaflets to accompany and compliment the National Policy and Practice Guidance. It will also contain information and leaflets and forms for Parish use in respect of safeguarding. It will contain details of forthcoming safeguarding training events and how to book on to the events.

**4B Newsletter.** It is recognised and acknowledged that not everyone has access to or uses the internet. It is vitally important to make available information in hardcopy format. The Diocese will produce a regular safeguarding newsletter that will contain up to date information. It will also provide detail of how to access or obtain other more detailed information such as policy documents. This newsletter will be circulated at a Parish level throughout the Diocese. Its contents will also inform other articles in other newspapers.

**4C Communications, Media and News.** It is acknowledged that on occasions a safeguarding case involving the Diocese may arise, that invites or attracts media attention. The diocese will need to ensure that it has access to suitable church media and communications advice when responding to any requests for information from these media and news organisations. The Diocesan Safeguarding adviser will ensure there is regular contact with the Diocesan Director of Communications. This person will also be a member of the Diocesan Safeguarding Working Group and may from time to time attend the Bishop's Safeguarding briefing.

**4D General Safeguarding Information and Presentations.** Separate to the delivery of the defined National Safeguarding Modules as part of the National Safeguarding Learning and Development Programme, there is a real need to promote safeguarding activity in the Diocese. This will consist of the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser going out across the diocese and engaging with a variety of audiences.

**Strategic Objective 5: Safer Recruitment. It is vitally important that the Diocese adheres fully to the principles of safer recruitment when engaging the services of people to work or volunteer within the church.**

**5A Safer Recruitment to include a DBS System.** The Diocese will maintain an efficient and effective assessment process of those who wish to work or volunteer in church. This will include identification of those people who need to be checked, an effective and efficient administration process in relation to the Disclosure and Barring Service, the verification of DBS applications and completion of confidential declaration forms. It will also include maintaining an effective system for identifying when DBS checks need renewing and a risk assessment process to respond to DBS disclosures. There will also need to be a system or process by which to assess when DBS checks should have been done but have not. Advice and information will also be made available regarding other elements contributing to safer recruitment such as the need to have: Job/ role profiles, periodic reviews and to take up references. Safer Recruitment training will be made available to people within the Diocese responsible for recruiting workers or volunteers.

Consideration needs to be given to the Diocese moving to an online DBS system.

**Strategic Objective 6: Casework and working with those who pose risk in worship. The Diocese needs to maintain an effective and efficient mechanism to manage safeguarding casework to include working with offenders and people who pose a risk.**

**6A Casework.** It will be the responsibility of the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser to carry out all church related safeguarding casework. A variety of matters relating to safeguarding are referred to the DSA for advice and action. These will vary between a disclosure of a safeguarding matter that needs referral on and action by statutory agencies to advice and guidance on any number of things that loosely relate to safeguarding. The DSA will engage in casework in a timely and efficient manner. The DSA will ensure that all relevant referrals and consultation with statutory agencies and other organisations are made when appropriate to do so. The DSA will maintain accurate up to date safeguarding records adhering to both the National Practice Guidance on record keeping and principles of the Data Protection Act. The DSA will deliver a safeguarding briefing to the Bishop and his chaplain at monthly intervals. The briefing will consist of an overview of safeguarding casework. The DSA will also engage in regular independent supervision with an appropriate qualified individual. independent chair.

**6B Working with offenders and others who pose risk, in worship.** Many individuals with a background in offending or a risk of doing so become involved in church activities for a variety of reasons. The church, quite often is the only place left for some people to go to gain support, companionship and pastoral care. The church plays a vital part in supporting these individuals. It is imperative that the Diocese ensures it has effective and efficient systems and processes in place to manage and engage with such individuals. This aspect of work currently forms the largest part of the existing safeguarding casework and is the responsibility of the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. The DSA will ensure that risk assessments and risk management plans are completed in a timely and efficient manner in relation to all persons that we are made aware of that are either offenders with a conviction that presents risk to children and adults or who are not convicted offenders but have a background or history that suggests that they may pose a risk to children or adults. We may become aware of a person posing a risk by way of a DBS disclosure. Consultation with key statutory agencies regarding these individuals will take place and their points of view will feature as part of those risk assessments and risk management plans. All offenders will need to be party to a formal “agreement to worship”. The DSA will be responsible for formulating these agreements and monitoring their operation. The DSA will work with Clergy and other key people in the relevant parish where such individuals wish to worship or work or volunteer.

**6C Dealing effectively with an allegation affecting a church officer.** The Church of England has produced Practice Guidance giving detailed information as to how the Diocese should respond when an allegation is made against a Church Officer. National Training Module C4 also provides a learning and development opportunity for senior Diocesan and Cathedral staff in how to respond when an allegation is made. It is imperative that all senior staff in the Diocese remain up to date with how to respond in this instance. The DSA would take the lead and convene relevant core group meetings and guide the Diocese through the incident ensuring that the practice guidance is adhered to all times.

**6D Whistleblowing and or Complaints Process.** The Diocese has a whistleblowing / complaints process for anyone within the Diocese who has concerns about a safeguarding incident, person or matter that they believe is not being dealt with in the correct manner or they believe will not be taken seriously.

The first port of call for anyone with a concern of this nature should be the DSA. The DSA will deal with each matter in a confidential way and action it outside of the Diocese if there is a need. Close ties are maintained with the National Safeguarding Team for this reason. The existence of this process needs to be suitably advertised and made accessible to all.

**Strategic Objective 7: Engaging with Survivors. The Diocese needs to develop and maintain a means by which it effectively engages with survivors of abuse. This is to enable survivors to have a voice and a way of shaping and influencing things. There is also a need to provide access for survivors to listening, healing and specialist pastoral support.**

**Strategic Objective 8: Quality Assurance and Audit. There needs to be an effective mechanism to ensure that every required safeguarding activity is delivered thoroughly and to the highest of standards throughout the whole of the Diocese at every level of the church.**

**8A National Safeguarding – Independent Auditing of Diocesan Safeguarding Arrangements for the Church of England. Audit Inspection – May 2017 and follow up.** The National Safeguarding Team via the Archbishop’s Council have commissioned the Social Care Institute for Excellence to carry out a national inspection of safeguarding arrangements. This will affect every Diocese in the country. The inspection takes the form of a 3-day field work visit, where inspectors will assess what arrangements the Diocese has in place. The Diocese had its inspection between Tuesday 2nd May and Thursday 4th May 2017.

This Audit has now taken place and the Diocese is soon to receive the Final Audit Report. The Diocese will need to respond appropriately to the report findings making all relevant changes to this strategy and the accompanying safeguarding action plan. The National Safeguarding Team have indicated that there will be a follow up review to see how Dioceses have implemented any findings and recommendations. There will also be a new national programme of auditing and inspection going forward.

**8B National Safeguarding Yearly Self-Assessment.** The Diocese is expected to complete a self-assessment of its safeguarding arrangements. Information is required regarding all areas of safeguarding activity. The self-assessment takes the form of an in-depth online survey. It is the responsibility of the Diocesan Safeguarding adviser to research the information required and consult the Diocesan Safeguarding Working Group and then submit the findings. The survey gives a clear indication of all the elements and activities needed to support safeguarding.

**8C Diocesan and Parish Audit.** There is a need for the Diocese to create its own audit and inspection regime to parish level. This will allow the Diocese to identify areas for development, areas of risk and where to target its activity.

**8D Blue Clergy File and Safeguarding File Review.** The Diocese should maintain a robust process of Blue Clergy File Review. When a member of the clergy applies to leave the Diocese either in relation to a new post or retirement a safeguarding review of that file is conducted by the DSA. The same applies for any member of the clergy applying for a post to join the Diocese. Separate from and in addition to these reviews, the DSA should maintain a robust system of periodic blue clergy file - safeguarding reviews. Safeguarding files are kept separate from blue clergy files. These relate to any safeguarding matter

reported. These files will be stored securely in the Bishop's office, managed and maintained by the DSA. They will also be subject to regular review and auditing. All files, both safeguarding and blue clergy, will be maintained and appropriately weeded in accordance with the Data Protection Act, guidance published by the House of Bishops and the National Practice Guidance on Safeguarding Record keeping.

**8E Management Information.** All safeguarding activity within this strategy will generate vast quantities of vital management information. The Diocese will need to ensure it maintains an effective and efficient process to store and analyse this information. Accurate records of compliance with safeguarding requirements to parish level will be needed. Accurate up to date records of DBS checks results and renewals will be needed. Accurate records of who has been trained to what level will be needed. A case-management system will be needed regarding casework, risk management plans and agreements to worship.

**8F Information Sharing Agreements.** The DSA, when carrying out safeguarding casework, will need to work closely with statutory agencies and other key organisations. Much of this contact will involve discussions and disclosures of a confidential nature. No disclosure or discussion will take place outside of a legal right to do so. The Diocese should still seek to formulate an information sharing agreement with key statutory agencies in order to put some control additional control and formality around such disclosures and discussions.

**8G Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse.** The Government have commissioned an independent public inquiry into how various institutions and agencies have dealt with child sexual abuse. The Church of England along with other faith based institutions are currently being examined as part of that Inquiry. The Inquiry is looking at the Church of England and their examination is set to last for at least the next 18 months. The National Safeguarding Team in London are co-ordinating the Church of England's response to the Inquiry. The church is being asked to submit vast quantities of detailed information going back many years. The National Team are sending out data and information requests to every Diocese across the country. The Diocese has been and will continue to respond to these information requests. The DSA is responsible for collating any information needed to respond to a request. The DSA will seek senior leadership oversight prior to the submission of any information.

**Strategic Objective 9: Work in Partnership with Statutory Agencies and other Organisations and Charities to assist in tackling ALL emerging safeguarding issues to include: Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Modern Day Slavery, Human Trafficking, Domestic Abuse including Honour Based Violence and Female Genital Mutilation. (FGM). (Other new safeguarding issues may emerge and these will be included.)**

**Notes** This Safeguarding Strategy (with the exception of Strategic Objective 9) was formally presented to Diocesan Synod on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2016. Synod voted extensively to formally adopt the Strategy but made a request for the inclusion of a further Strategic Objective to include the Church playing an active role in tackling issues such as Child Sexual Exploitation. Strategic Objective 9 has subsequently been added and includes the Church taking an active role in tackling **ALL** emerging safeguarding Issues.

This Strategy was presented to Diocesan Synod on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> July 2017 together with a progress report. A full strategy refresh is planned for 2018 and this will be presented to Diocesan Synod when it meets in July 2018.

This Safeguarding Strategy was scrutinised by the Diocesan Safeguarding Scrutiny Panel when it meets at 12 midday on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2016.