



STATEMENT

26 May 2022

Learning Lessons Case Review Report – William Scott Farrell

An Independent Overview Report by Independent Reviewer Chris Robson, detailing an independent Lessons Learnt Review of the recruitment and appointment of William Scott Farrell, has been published today.

In May 2019, William Scott Farrell pleaded guilty to charges of voyeurism and making indecent images of children from the time he was working as Director of Music at Rochester Cathedral. He also pleaded guilty to contact offences against a child dating back some twenty years to when he was working as Assistant Director of Music at Ely Cathedral.

In September 2002, William Scott Farrell left Ely to take up the position of Organist and Master of Music at Newcastle Cathedral, the Cathedral Church of St Nicholas for the Church of England Diocese of Newcastle, before moving to Rochester Cathedral in August 2008.

The Report summarises the key facts, lessons to be learned, and both good practice and failings in the Church of England's safe recruitment practices in respect of William Scott Farrell, and the appropriateness of responses by Church of England bodies to allegations and anonymous concerns raised across each diocese in which he held any post. It also brings to light findings disclosed as part of the learning lessons process, and failings on the part of Newcastle Cathedral in which processes were not fit for purpose relating to the safe recruitment and management of William Scott Farrell. Worse than that, it details abusive and inappropriate behaviour which is totally unacceptable.

Newcastle Cathedral takes its Safeguarding responsibilities extremely seriously and takes steps to continually learn, enhance and improve its response to allegations of abuse and, thereby, to ensure a safer environment for all. Newcastle Cathedral is wholeheartedly committed to:

- Promoting a safer environment and culture.
- The safer recruitment and ongoing support and management of all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the church.
- Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation.

- Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons.
- Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons.
- Responding to those that may pose a present risk to others.

The Very Revd Geoff Miller, Dean of Newcastle, said: “We remain appalled by what we have heard William Scott Farrell did and our thoughts are especially with those who have been hurt by his actions. We agree that this should never have been allowed to happen and add our sincere apologies to those of our sister cathedrals. Without hesitation we will make responding to the recommendations of the report our utmost priority. As we continue to hold these victims in our thoughts and prayers, we have sought to ensure that all appropriate safeguards are in place. We will continue to respond quickly to any advice and help we are given to do all we can to make our Cathedral a safe place for all.”

The Revd Canon Peter Dobson, Newcastle Cathedral’s Safeguarding Officer, said: “Our thoughts and prayers continue to be with all those who will be affected by the release of this report today, chiefly amongst them, the courageous survivors, for whom it has been a long road to arrive at this day. It is of paramount importance that we hear and respond well to the voices of survivors, and those who support them, as we continue to seek to make the Church a safer place for all.”

The Independent Report is available online [here](#).

If you or anyone you know has been affected by the findings in this report, we invite you to get in touch with Newcastle Cathedral.

Please visit our Safeguarding page, where you will find all the information you need about who to contact if you have any safeguarding concerns or require any support, and how we are working to ensure the Cathedral is a safe place for everyone:

<https://newcastlecathedral.org.uk/safeguarding/>

The Cathedral’s Safeguarding Officer is The Revd Canon Peter Dobson. Canon Peter can be contacted on either 07594 622882 or 0191 232 1939 or via email peter.dobson@newcastlecathedral.org.uk . Please contact him as soon as possible if you have any Safeguarding concerns. Also please don’t hesitate to contact him if you seek advice, guidance or further information relating to Safeguarding.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser is Carol Butler. She may be contacted on 07825 167016 or via email c.butler@newcastle.anglican.org .

If you have been affected by this or any Church related abuse, free, independent, and confidential support can be accessed via *Safe Spaces*:

<https://www.safespacesenglandandwales.org.uk/> or 0300 303 1056.

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FURTHER INFORMATION:

Please visit: www.newcastlecathedral.org.uk.

Follow @NewcastleCathedral on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) and @nclcathedral on [Twitter](#) and use #NewcastleCathedral.

For media enquiries, please contact:

Catherine Mair, Marketing and Communications Manager, Newcastle Cathedral via email: catherine.mair@newcastlecathedral.org.uk

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About Safe Spaces

Safe Spaces is a free and independent support service, providing a confidential, personal, and safe space for anyone who has been abused by someone in the Church or as a result of their relationship with the Church of England, the Catholic Church in England and Wales or the Church in Wales. Although the churches have funded the service, it is run independently by the charity Victim Support, who are one of the leading charities providing specialist support to survivors of abuse in England and Wales. If you have been affected, however long ago, *Safe Spaces* can provide you with support. You do not have to have told the police or the church authorities, and you do not have to still be involved with the church. Your information will not be shared without your consent unless you or someone else is in immediate danger. <https://www.safespacesenglandandwales.org.uk/>

About Newcastle Cathedral

Newcastle Cathedral is rich with historical meaning. From the Middle Ages to the present day it is a place where the stories of local people can be found. From the early civic leaders

and industrialists to politicians and craftspeople, the Cathedral holds the story of the City in its stones and monuments.

Visitors and worshippers alike can enjoy a fulfilling and emotive heritage experience in the Cathedral. There are so many interesting features to be found inside, whether this be in the superlative craftsmanship of the reredos carvings, the modern stained glass above the entrance to the crypt, the earliest piece of medieval glass in St Margaret's Chapel or the Regimental Colours whose final resting place is the Cathedral.

The Cathedral is Grade One listed and dates back to the early 12th century soon after Newcastle Castle was built by Robert Curthose. These two impressive structures, high above the River Tyne, and together representing Church and State, formed the focal point for the growth and development of one of the country's busiest medieval towns and inextricably link the heritage of state power, spirituality, and commerce.

As a medieval church, with the Castle representing the state on its doorstep, and a thriving market town all around, it had a very significant part to play in the town and many chose to be remembered here. Its history and heritage are inextricably linked with the merchants and industrialists who dominated the country's wool and coal trades, the latter fuelling the Industrial Revolution and, in the early post-medieval period, making Newcastle the third most important town in England after London and Bristol. Many of our monuments commemorate such people including some from County Durham who preferred to be remembered here.

Following substantial extensions in the 14th century, the Cathedral was in much the same form as it is now – and recognised as one of the most significant and largest parish churches in England. Aesthetically, it boasts one of the finest lantern towers in the country dominating the skyline since the 15th century.

Internally, the Cathedral contains one of the largest collections of monuments and ledger stones of any Cathedral in England. It also boasts medieval heraldic bosses, a fine wooden font cover with elaborate Gothic tracery, a superb collection of 19th and 20th century stained glass, and other outstanding examples of local craftsmanship such as the wooden screens and choir stalls which were carved in medieval style by Ralph Hedley in the mid-19th century prior to the building becoming England's most northerly Cathedral.

Newcastle Cathedral is the seat of the Bishop of Newcastle and the "mother church" for the Church of England Diocese of Newcastle, which stretches from the River Tyne to the River Tweed. Newcastle Cathedral is the focus for daily Christian prayer and worship; Diocesan celebrations, and civic services, as well as a spiritual place of quiet serenity set amid the busyness of a vibrant city.

Newcastle Cathedral Chapter is the governing body of Newcastle Cathedral and has executive responsibility for the operation of the Cathedral. It operates alongside the Newcastle Cathedral Council and the College of Canons to make up the governing body for the Cathedral.

Whether you live or work in Newcastle, or visit from farther afield, we hope that you will feel very welcome here. Please see www.newcastlecathedral.org.uk for details of opening times, and our services and events programme.