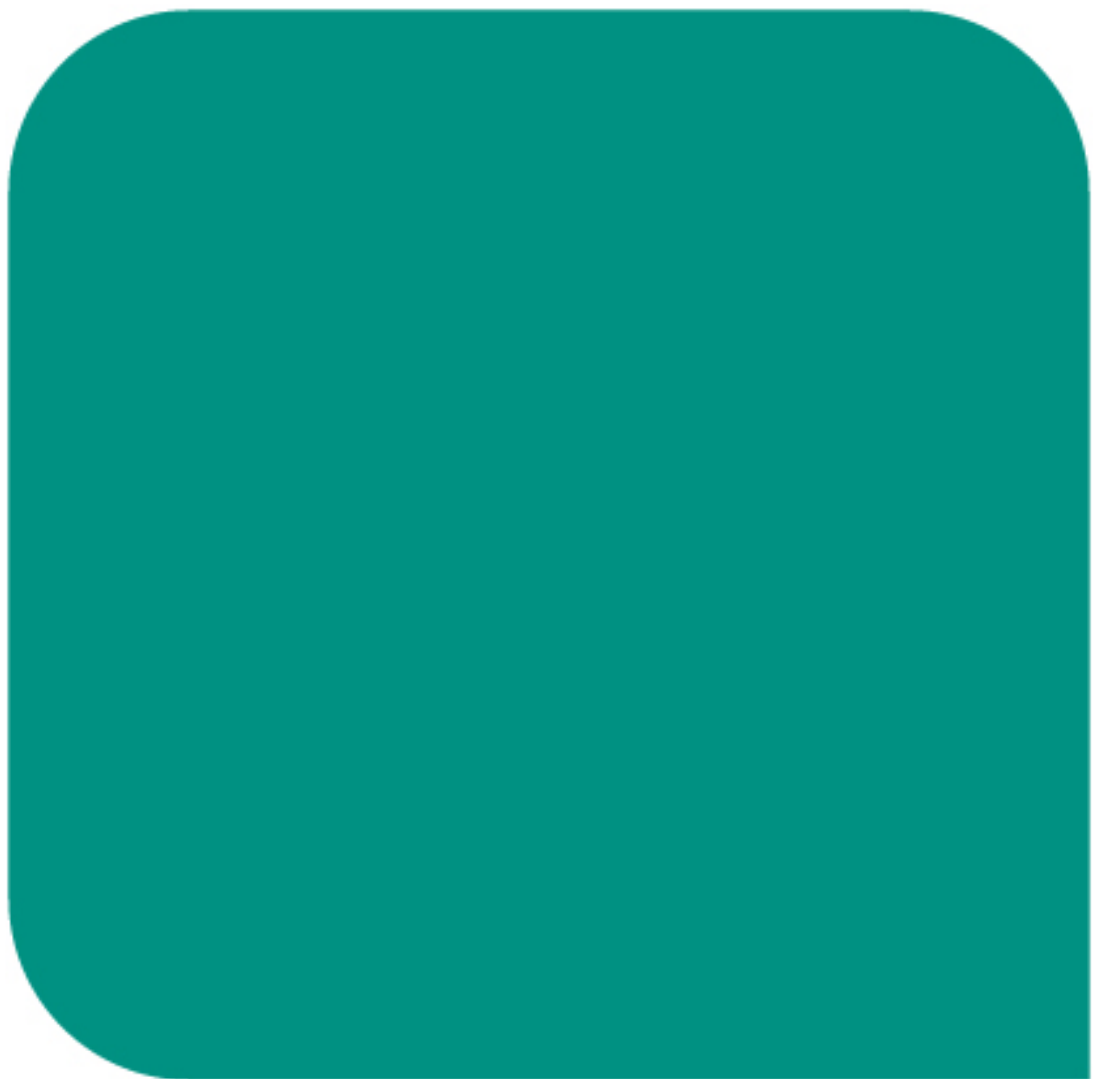




social care
institute for excellence

Newcastle Cathedral independent safeguarding audit (May 2019)



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

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

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

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

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE AUDIT PROGRAMME

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

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

1.2 ABOUT SCIE

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

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

1.3 THE AUDIT PROCESS

1.3.1 SCIE Learning Together and our approach to audit

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

1.3.2 Key principles informing the audit

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

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

1.3.3 Supporting improvements

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

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

1.3.4 Structure of the report

This report is divided into:

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

2 CONTEXT

2.1 CONTEXT OF THE CATHEDRAL

Newcastle Cathedral is Grade 1 listed and dates from the early 12th century. For over 900 years it has been at the centre of the city's civic life, as evidenced by its memorials and ledger stones which, together, reveal much of the heritage story of Newcastle and the wider region. It began life as a parish church, but in 1882 became the Cathedral for the City of Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

The Cathedral is the central place of Christian Worship for the Anglican Diocese of Newcastle, which stretches from the Tyne to the Tweed and across to Alston in Cumbria. It acts as the 'Mother Church' of the Diocese and hosts key diocesan occasions such as the installation of priests as well as housing the cathedra or the seat of the Bishop. The Cathedral community numbers around 270 people who live out their Christian faith. They are supported by the Dean and four Residentiary Canons (two of whom are full-time in the Cathedral, and two of whom have a percentage of their time allocated to the Cathedral), 11.5 lay staff, and 87 volunteers.

In recent years the Cathedral has committed to achieving a cultural change to be more outward-facing so that it will be a place for everyone and belong to everyone – 'Common Ground', providing welcome and hospitality to all, from casual visitors to community groups, and from event participants to the congregation.

This will involve removing the pews from the Cathedral, reconfiguring other areas of the building, and generally moving towards creating a more inclusive and welcoming space, as well as delivery of an ambitious activity plan supported by considerably more volunteers. These prospective changes are now to be supported by the successful (13 May 2019) bid for funds from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), with the go-ahead for the project Common Ground in Sacred Space (CGISS).

The CGISS Business Plan (November 2018) describes the aims of the Chapter as follows:

'...to work to conserve, develop and interpret the Cathedral in order that this sacred space and historic building may be accessed, understood and enjoyed by all who enter. The clergy and staff are welcoming to visitors and are growing more comfortable with the Cathedral's role as a visitor attraction. They understand that people visit and use the Cathedral for a range of reasons, from worship to interest in architecture, but the desire is for visitors to understand the purpose and heritage of the building as a focus for Christian worship and for people to engage emotionally with it.' (p 17)

2.2 CONTEXTUAL FEATURES RELEVANT TO SAFEGUARDING

Newcastle Cathedral is on a site above the River Tyne – its distinctive 'lantern' tower having lighted the way for ships using the river from mediaeval times. It sits next to the Mediaeval Keep and Black Gate, which are all that remain of the 'New Castle'.

There is little space outside the Cathedral, and its main entrance is on a busy road.

Whilst historically the Cathedral (together with the Castle) was at the heart of the town, the modern-day (predominantly retail) centre is a short walk away. Newcastle city centre as a whole is easily accessible by metro, buses and trains.

The Cathedral is open to the public every day from 7am to between 6 and 6:30pm, depending on when the daily Evensong service ends. It has three prominent doors at its west end, all within sight of each other. These comprise the main entrance, where the Welcome Desk is located. At present, there is not sufficient capacity, either in terms of paid staff or volunteers, to maintain a consistent presence at the Welcome Desk. There is always a vergers on duty in the Cathedral, but that person may be anywhere in the building at any given time.

There are two further doors which give access to the Cathedral during opening hours; they are both located off the small courtyard from St. Nicholas Churchyard, a small no-through lane which runs down the north side of the Cathedral. Both of these are in less obvious positions, and are sometimes used by members of the public to reach the toilets which are nearby within the building. These doors are not routinely observed, nor is there CCTV covering them, which means that people may be in the building without anyone knowing of their presence. There is evidence that the toilets are sometimes used for drugs activity. (More will be said about this under 'Vulnerable Adults' in section 3 below).

There is no choir school, and choristers travel by various means to reach the Cathedral for regular choir practice and services. Their activities are self-contained (apart from singing in services) in the choir block, a separate wing of the Cathedral with a secure entry door within the Cathedral and another secure door to the outside. This wing has its own toilet for the use of the choristers.

The Cathedral plays host to a number of educational visits, choirs from elsewhere, and other events. All of these bring members of the public into the building, and planning for these must have safeguarding as an integral aspect.

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

The Dean and Chapter are responsible for safeguarding for the Cathedral community, for setting strategic plans and reporting these to the Bishop and the Cathedral Council, and for implementing and overseeing safeguarding policies and procedures, as well as the provision of training. The Bishop and Council receive regular reports from Chapter. Safeguarding is on the Chapter agenda every month, and it has been kept updated about the preparations for the SCIE audit.

The Dean provides an annual report to the Bishop which includes safeguarding. He also reports on safeguarding to the Cathedral Council (three or four meetings per year) and at the annual congregational meeting. We were told of an increased awareness of safeguarding in Chapter.

The current Dean was formerly the Acting Dean (from January 2018), and before

that served as Archdeacon in the Diocese for 18 years, where he held the safeguarding lead and was responsible for recruiting the present DSA. He thus has a wealth of local experience and knowledge to bring to his new substantive position (from October 2018). Now, he sees his role as Dean as quite different: he is ultimately responsible for all safeguarding practice in the Cathedral community, and for 'ensuring that things happen', including embedding a new culture. He foresees a steep learning curve in response to the major changes coming with the CGISS project, where there will be more people with different purposes using the Cathedral at the same time.

There are four Residentiary Canons, two of which have full-time Cathedral responsibilities. The Canon for Education is the Cathedral Safeguarding Officer (CSO). He established, and chairs, the Towards a Safer Cathedral (TASC) group, and is a member of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Group (DSAG). The second is the Canon for Music and Liturgy, who is responsible for worship services and the music department. There is also a Canon Pastor, who is a longstanding volunteer canon. The Dean, the Residentiary Canons, the Canon Pastor and the Director of Operations (DoO) form a Senior Management Team which meets weekly and thus is able to respond promptly and flexibly to any urgent matters

The CSO has a background in senior posts in education, in both the maintained and independent sectors, and thus has safeguarding experience in relation to children and young people from that context. He came to Newcastle Cathedral as Residentiary Canon for Education in 2013, and in 2015 was asked to take over the lead for safeguarding. There was no job description or guidance for this role, and this has remained the case until now (when he is about to retire). The new Canon's role will be advertised as the Canon for Outreach and Discipleship. This role will also include Safeguarding Lead for the Cathedral, and the new job description includes a large section on safeguarding responsibilities.

The CSO is assisted by a lay member of the congregation who has acted as his deputy for the past two years. This arrangement provides a non-clerical/female as an alternative for people to approach about safeguarding concerns (to date, no safeguarding concerns had been raised with her. She will cover for the CSO upon his departure at the end of May 2019, until a new post-holder arrives in a few months' time.

The TASC group generally meets three times a year. It has representatives from across the Cathedral's 'departments', and is responsible for developing and overseeing safeguarding practice within the Cathedral community.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) and the Training and Policy Adviser from her team are not members, and we felt that the group currently misses out on their expertise and independence. Generally, the auditors felt that safeguarding could be strengthened and promoted were the group to become a sub-group of Chapter, with reporting duties into that body, new terms of reference and revised membership.

Safeguarding for the child choristers is described in detail in section 3.1.4, below. The responsibility for the children's safety and wellbeing is carried by the Director of Music (DoM), and he is managed by the Canon for Music and Liturgy.

The Cathedral Council has an Independent Chair and strong representation from local and regional professionals, who bring 'a wide spectrum of knowledge, good judgment, and local clout' to this body. They meet three times a year, and each Council meeting has an oral and/or written safeguarding report provided by the CSO, with a generous allocation of time for this agenda item. The Chair reports that the Cathedral takes safeguarding 'very, very, very seriously'. The Council's role is to receive proposals and annual reports, and then to 'advise and recommend' according to the Council's views. His experience of the Cathedral clergy and staff is that they are very responsive and open in all matters raised with them, with communication flowing well in both directions.

The College of Canons has a nationally prescribed role in relation to the Cathedral's annual report and budgets, and will normally meet once a year. In Newcastle, the Dean includes an account of the Cathedral's wider engagement with the community at this annual meeting.

Since 2015, the Director of Operations (DoO) has managed the team of non-clergy staff (apart from the Music Department), which includes: the Head Verger, Vergers/Assistants, Honorary/Voluntary Vergers, Administrator, Marketing and Finance Officers, and cleaner. She has responsibility for safe recruitment for paid staff, and for contracts/agreements with those using the Cathedral from outside.

A project manager has been appointed for the CGISS, and recruitment has commenced for a Learning/Activities Manager and a Volunteers Co-ordinator. Recruitment for these posts will follow standard Cathedral safe recruitment procedures. How safeguarding will inform the project as it is developed and delivered is yet to be considered. No reference is made to it in the documentation that we reviewed or in most of the conversations that we had during the audit. We understand that neither the DSA nor the DSAG has been engaged in planning for the project.

Volunteers are currently recruited by, managed and supported by the CSO and the Canon Pastor, who also has extensive experience in safeguarding. She is directly responsible for the Pastoral Care Team. All volunteers are now safely recruited, are required to undergo C1 training, and, depending on their role, to be DBS-checked. A proper induction for their work has been introduced in the past two to three years.

A significant number of volunteers fill the roles of Welcomers and Duty Chaplains. As such, they are particularly conscious of all visitors to the building and how everyone can be kept safe (see more in section 3, under 'Vulnerable adults'). There is a strong ethos of welcoming all to the Cathedral and offering help and support as needed, while at the same time being aware of the need for public protection and the safety of those working in the Cathedral.

During the CGISS project Stage 1 (the Development Phase) a new and comprehensive Volunteer Strategy was developed. Delivery of this strategy in Stage 2 of the CGISS Project (formally commencing late May 2019 with Permission to Start received from the NLHF), will aim to recruit significantly more volunteers, and institute a number of improvements:

- A new structure for the volunteer body, creating clearer lines of supervision and support by a structure of team leaders and senior stewards

- More robust cover for the Cathedral during full opening hours
- Strengthening volunteers' safeguarding focus and skills (across all volunteer roles)
- New methods of communication with volunteers, including an e-newsletter

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Cathedral and the Diocese of Newcastle has been in place for the past year and is due to run to the end of 2020, with a review at the end of each calendar year (although there was no review carried out in December 2018). The MOU stipulates that the DSA and her team will assist the Cathedral with advice and support, including about risk assessments, the administration of DBS checks, and the provision of training. A very experienced and skilled DSA leads this service for the Cathedral. She is well known and respected by Cathedral colleagues.

There is no regular scheduled meeting between the DSA and the CSO, missing the opportunity for a more collaborative relationship. Such an arrangement would be particularly valuable during the gap while a new CSO is recruited, and after that person, as new to Newcastle Cathedral, is in post.

The Cathedral's relationship with the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Group (DSAG) is discussed in detail in section 5.4.

The safeguarding audit carried out in summer 2018 concluded that 'clearer lines of accountability would assist the management of safeguarding in the Cathedral'. The independent auditors saw the need for better communications with employees and volunteers about the respective roles and responsibilities of individuals and bodies. More is said about this in section 4.1.8.

2.4 WHO WAS SEEN IN THIS AUDIT?

A full list of those seen is given in Appendix 1.

2.4.1 Any limitations to audit

We were unfortunately unable to have a conversation with the Head Verger as her contract had not been extended beyond the end of her probation period; this had happened immediately before the audit commenced.

The CSO, who was helpfully able to take full part in the audit, nonetheless was due to retire in the fortnight after our site visit. As a consequence, the new CSO (not likely to be in post for several months) will not have taken part in the 'looking ahead' aspect of the audit. There is now a new job description for this post which includes a clear account of the CSO role.

We were able to meet with the outgoing Independent Chair of the DSAG (a new Chair is not commencing until June 2019).

The CGISS represents a very significant turning point for the Cathedral. Although it will bring major disruption to the building over a lengthy period, everyone we spoke to sees it as a 'fantastic opportunity' to engage with the community more widely and

in more rich and varied ways. At the point of this audit, the CGISS project had been awarded their Stage 2 pass from the NLHF, but the team was awaiting formal Permission to Start. So it was not possible to have more than a general discussion about the safeguarding implications of the plans, including the building phase, the appointment of new posts and greatly increased number of volunteers, and the new activities and uses of the Cathedral after the culmination of the project.

There were no Blue Files with safeguarding content for the auditors to read. No individual came forward to speak with the auditors who had previously disclosed abuse, shared concerns, or expected help from the Cathedral to keep safe for any reason.

3 FINDINGS – PRACTICE

3.1 SAFE ACTIVITIES AND WORKING PRACTICES

3.1.1 Precincts and buildings

Description

The Cathedral does not have a surrounding close, nor is there very much outside space at all. The main entrance (west end) of the Cathedral consists of three large doors around the brow of a busy street, in full public view. The policy of the Cathedral is to have at least one person, and preferably two, inside these doors as a Welcomer and Duty Chaplain, particularly between the hours of 10am and 4pm. The Welcome Desk itself has an abundance of helpful information to signpost people to sources of help/advice and support, including posters which have photographs and contact details for the CSO and his Deputy and the DSA.

The two other doors, described in section 2.2, are in a side street which appears not to be busy and the doors are not overlooked. Overall, the Cathedral has minimal CCTV in place; there is no CCTV covering these doors, nor the toilet areas which are nearby inside the building. It is planned that the CGISS project will include a new and extended CCTV system which will include the new toilets, volunteer room and new east end entrance.

On our tour of the Cathedral, the CSO and his colleagues pointed out two areas that are not easily observed: one is the toilets adjacent to the Cathedral Hall (former café space) which can be, and are, used by staff, volunteers and members of the public; the other is the crypt, which is a small former worship area, now used for occasional storage and small-scale events, but nonetheless open and accessible to anyone. Virtually everyone we met with mentioned their concern about the risks posed by these areas.

We were told that there is always a Verger present in the building, who is responsible for opening and closing the building safely. Volunteers who work on the Cathedral floor told us how much they rely on and value the help of the Verger(s) during their shifts.

Staff and volunteers have clear information about where to find copies of safeguarding procedures, including health and safety measures such as evacuation. There is an updated copy of the very helpful 'Safeguarding information for staff and volunteers', issued March 2019, which is available at the Welcome Desk and in the Vestry, along with copies of all relevant Cathedral safeguarding policies/procedures and contact numbers. It is helpful that the Vestry is well known as the place to find essential documents.

Everyone we spoke to, including volunteers themselves, spoke of the challenges of 'covering' the building in the way that is aspired to. The aim is for there to be two people at the Welcome Desk, and no lone working. This is not achievable with the current numbers of volunteers. An important issue, raised with us by volunteers, is the lack of an easy and effective communication system while they are on duty.

Should they need help from a verger, including in an emergency, there is no reliable means of calling for them except by going to find them, possibly from anywhere in the building. The Welcomers and Duty Chaplains have 'panic buttons' which they wear on their wrists, but nothing enabling more nuanced communication. All were aware of the difficulties of monitoring any potentially anti-social behavior in the toilets.

The building is used for many kinds of events and group visits, and the constraints already mentioned regarding numbers of volunteers apply to these visits as well. However, the Cathedral make it clear that the safeguarding needs –for example, of school parties – are to be met by those responsible for the visit or event. There is a template for a risk assessment which is sent to schools and visiting choirs, and other groups well in advance of their visit. The contracts for corporate or commercial events are being revised currently to include safeguarding advice and requirements.

Analysis

Visitors to the Cathedral are as well looked after as possible, and all volunteers, staff and clergy are aware of the 'risk areas', such as the unmonitored toilets – concerns about which were included in the self-assessment for this audit. The suspected use of the toilets as a location for drug misuse by some visitors has implications for anyone else in the building, including children arriving for choir practice and walking through the building by themselves. We were impressed by the efforts made by all to try to mitigate these risks.

The plans for increasing the number of volunteers and improving the framework for recruiting, training and supporting them are sensible and will improve safety for all, if they are successful. The main aspiration, to be realised through the CGISS project, is to ensure that there are five or more volunteers in the building during opening hours, with at least two to three at the main west end entrance. There is also a hope that one of these will be someone with special skills in mental health issues on duty – a good example of how the Cathedral intends to improve and build on what it can offer to vulnerable people who visit the building.

The current concerns about lone volunteers and not being able to contact help easily (without leaving the front desk) should be addressed by the CGISS plans.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider:

The CGISS project is an opportunity to embed safeguarding in all aspects of looking after people who come to the Cathedral:

- How will the Cathedral plan for and recruit sufficient volunteers to welcome and care for visitors safely throughout opening hours?
- How will the major changes of the CGISS project address particular safeguarding needs – e.g.,
 - physical systems such as expanded CCTV, use of walkie-talkie radios in order to improve communication, surveillance and safety within the Cathedral building
 - arrangements for the toilets which are more secure

- How safeguarding, generally, can be incorporated into the planning of the CGISS

3.1.2 Vulnerable adults

Description

Like many urban churches and cathedrals, Newcastle Cathedral offers a place of refuge for adults who are vulnerable. This includes people in need of pastoral support, people who are homeless, and those who have care and support needs arising from mental health problems, learning disabilities, or other cognitive impairments such as dementia. The Welcomers and Duty Chaplains who serve in the Cathedral see themselves as providers of a warm welcome, practical advice and support, and spiritual care. They have extensive lists of advice and information which they can share, as well as signposting people to good local services.

Some of the volunteer team are older and there is understanding and sympathy for the challenges of advancing years.

There is a strong welcoming ethos in the Cathedral for the vulnerable adults who visit regularly. Tea and coffee and biscuits are available every day for those in need of sustenance. Once a month, there is a 'Night Church' which welcomes people for tea and toast. Homeless people often sleep in the pews during the opening hours of the Cathedral, and this practice is accepted and indeed welcomed by the volunteers and staff. We were told more than once how the Cathedral had opened its doors for two full days and nights during the period of inclement weather known as 'the 'Beast from the East' in March 2018, with pride in the humane approach which the Cathedral embodies.

In our focus group with Welcomers and Duty Chaplains, we were struck by the openness, calmness and compassion of the volunteers, who did not express any anxiety about challenging visitors or situations (although, as written above, they would like better communication equipment). They noted their reliance on the Verger team for support and praised the quality of this help.

There is an encouraging level of awareness about domestic abuse (DA) that has been fostered in the Cathedral, including active involvement in the White Ribbon Campaign, with leadership from the DSA and the Canon for Music and Liturgy; a sermon about DA; and prayers said for victims and survivors of abuse. There are signs in all the toilet cubicles, raising awareness and telling people about the help available in cases of DA. Training courses on DA are part of the diocesan programme on offer.

The Cathedral has held two vigils/services for anyone affected by sexual abuse within the Church, and a third is scheduled. These were led by the Canon for Music and Liturgy and the DSA, and were described as very moving and imaginative. They were advertised in The Link, the diocesan newsletter, and the Cathedral weekly notice – thus raising awareness at the same time as inviting people to attend.

A Pastoral Care Team, supported by the Canon Pastor, comprises volunteers who are safely recruited, trained to C1 level, and DBS-checked.

The Cathedral has a number of links with bodies in Newcastle which aim to address the social problems of a post-industrial city – for example, Tyne and Wear Citizens – and is particularly active in relation to efforts to help homeless and troubled adults.

Led by the Dean, the Cathedral has prioritised three outreach areas for the Cathedral in the coming year:

- homelessness
- mental health problems
- debt/money problems

Analysis

The Newcastle Cathedral community are exemplary in their care for vulnerable adults; their compassion is underpinned by understanding and empathy, as well as practical advice/information (e.g., about local services and help) and food, warmth, and a place to sleep when needed. We encountered pride and belief in all these aspects of their mission to the congregation and local residents/regulars, and visitors.

The physical alterations involved in the CGISS, alongside an expanded CCTV system, should address the risks of the accessible toilets. The current risks are well understood by the Cathedral team and are mitigated as much as possible.

The Cathedral not only helps vulnerable adults but, by its public activities and messages of tolerance, gives a higher profile to their needs and what might be done to support them, including in the Cathedral's involvement with wider city organisations.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider:

- CGISS: how will the current good practice in relation to supporting vulnerable adults be sustained during the changes ahead?
- How will the anticipated numbers of new volunteers be trained and supported to strengthen the services already on offer to vulnerable adults, and develop these further?

3.1.3 Children

Description

This section is about children who come to Newcastle Cathedral in various capacities other than as choir members. Choir children are considered in section 3.1.4.

Children are treated as inherently vulnerable in law, and it is well understood that all children must be kept safe. In Newcastle Cathedral, arrangements for young children's activities, such as Messy Cathedral and Creche, require parents/carers to stay with their children, alongside the volunteer helpers.

Parents do not need to stay with their children in Junior Church, where older children are included (although this may happen, if a younger child attends). Appropriate ratios are in place and generally exceed those required by Ofsted; there are always two volunteers on duty for a typical group of five or six children, plus the frequent parent. Volunteers helping with these activities are DBS-checked and are required to undertake safeguarding training C1. They are currently accountable to the CSO.

The Deputy CSO and her husband have been the main volunteers for Junior Church for several years. As in other areas, there are not enough volunteers to ensure that the couple are not on duty together, although they are aware that it is safer practice for there to be two independent adults, rather than a couple, looking after a group of children. There is also a concern about the distance from Junior Church to the toilets (two floors below); an adult accompanies a child to the toilets, as these are the accessible ones referred to elsewhere, but this may leave only one adult with the other children.

Children on school visits make up the largest numbers of visiting groups. The Cathedral provides thorough written information and risk-assessment templates for safeguarding to the school or organisation involved, well in advance of the visit. Cathedral staff and volunteers nonetheless maintain alertness and care during all such visits. The risks associated with the accessible toilets remain of concern to Cathedral clergy, staff and volunteers, in relation to school visits.

Most school visits take place entirely in the main body of the Cathedral, and include a tour of the building, as well as learning activities using tables in an open area at one end of the nave. These are supervised by the CSO and another dedicated volunteer who are normally involved throughout school visits. Where a school visit involves a spiritual teaching element, the separate education room(s) are used, again with supervision by the school's own teachers and the CSO and dedicated volunteer.

Visiting choirs, who are not singing with the Cathedral's choir (for example, during the summer), are given relevant information and asked to fill in a safeguarding risk-assessment form.

Commercial events and activities run by separate bodies may also include children. At present the contracts for these largely address health and safety, insurance, etc., and do not cover safeguarding information and requirements.

Analysis

Arrangements for visiting children are strong, and they are welcomed and made as safe as possible in the Cathedral. This is reflected in the safe recruitment and training of the volunteers who work with children, in Messy Cathedral, Creche and Junior Church. However, the problems of capacity in terms of volunteers continue to affect the tightness of these arrangements.

Safeguarding information and requirements need to be issued for a range of different/commercial events run by outside groups, of which there are likely to be many more in future. The DoO is currently producing and collating the paperwork for such visits and events, as part of the preparations for the CGISS project.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider:

- How can the Cathedral use CGISS as an opportunity to develop documents for the different kinds of visiting groups, events, etc., with messages about safeguarding as a core element for all of these?
- How can the standards of best practice be applied to arrangements for volunteers in Junior Church – and in all children’s activities?

3.1.4 Choir

Description

The music department is led by the DoM, supported by the Canon for Music and Liturgy. He has the ‘hands-on’ care and training of the children, and brings long experience from another Cathedral to this role. He sees safeguarding of the choristers as his prime responsibility. He uses the CSO for consultation if need be.

The DoM is assisted in teaching the children by the Assistant DoM. Pastoral care and general practical support are provided by a female Music Assistant. All three are DBS-checked, trained in safeguarding (the DoM to C4) and hold Level 2 Emergency First Aid at Work qualifications.

Since his arrival (2017), the DoM has made changes to improve the ‘duty of care’ to the children. The choir does not use chaperones, and it is clear (see below) that the consistent and sympathetic care of the Music Assistant means the children are confident of being well cared for. For example, the DoM has arranged that she now sits in a position in the nearby aisle during services where she can see and be seen by the choristers, and can help if a child feels unwell or needs to leave the service for any reason. He told us that the children are aware of her whereabouts and how to contact her at all times.

All Lay Clerks/Choral Scholars/Regular Deputies have enhanced DBS checks and C1 safeguarding training.

There is no choir school associated with Newcastle Cathedral. Choristers – both girls and boys – are recruited from local schools, and there is a strong commitment to offer an egalitarian opportunity for children in the area to receive this superb musical training. Currently, there are 26/27 girls in the choir, and 14 boys. The boys leave the choir approximately aged 12–13, while the girls may remain until age 17. There are children as young as 7 in both choirs. The DoM told us that it is harder to recruit boys, with the smaller age ‘window’ for their voices, so that it is a continuous effort for him to recruit potential boy choristers.

Given the high standards and requirements of singing in any cathedral choir, it is normal for choristers to follow an exacting and rigorous schedule, and at Newcastle Cathedral it is no different. Apart from the summer holidays, in Newcastle Cathedral there are after-school rehearsals for each group twice a week, and Evensong performances every evening (boys’ and girls’ choirs alternating) plus Sunday services. The children are seen as the responsibility of the Cathedral when they

arrive in the choir block, which is the self-contained wing housing the Song School; it has a toilet for the use of the children, and this is not used by any adults (for example, lay clerks) while the children are in the building. As noted above, this wing has a secure entry door from within one aisle of the Cathedral building, and another secure door to the outside, where they are collected after services have ended. The children are not allowed to leave before they are collected by a designated adult.

(NB, the internal door to the choir block was broken for a period in 2018, and concerns were raised about the risks this presented. During this time, the Music Department put in place mitigating procedures for the choir's arrivals and departures.)

The arrangements for arrival are more complex because the children arrive at different times, within a half-hour or so of the rehearsal starting-point. There is no capacity for a staff member to be consistently on duty at the entry door. The younger children are brought by their parents/carers to the door of the choir block, while some older children may either be dropped off at the Cathedral entrance, or make their way on public transport to the building.

As part of their pastoral care, the children are given drinks and biscuits between the end of rehearsal and the service.

There is a brief but comprehensive document which sets out the care and safeguarding measures for the choristers, called 'Day activity at Newcastle Cathedral (including routine rehearsals/services)'. There is also a policy prohibiting photographs being taken of the choir children, and this is understood by all staff and volunteers working in the Cathedral. Signs informing visitors not to take photographs are put out by the vergers in advance of all rehearsals and services. The vergers will also back this up by verbal instruction if necessary.

The auditors met with a group of seven parents/carers of the choristers, and separately with nine choristers (eight girls and one boy), of different ages and length of time in the choir. We were told by the children that they feel able to speak to the Music Assistant (and others, if need be) about any concerns or problems. The children were uniformly enthusiastic about being choristers, had no complaints, and were thrilled by the choir trip to Brussels in 2018. The DoM had made sure that there was one adult to four children for that trip (all adults were C1 trained and DBS-checked), and they reported that they felt safe at all times. They also relished the appreciation of their singing from the audiences in Brussels.

Analysis

The auditors attended Evensong (boys' choir) and witnessed the boys' preparations for the service in their Song School. We were impressed by the way in which the boys were taught – to a very high standard – and looked after by the DoM and Music Assistant.

The DoM has made a number of effective changes since his arrival, which have improved the safeguarding of the children, and their sense of this. We heard (and read) evidence of careful, tighter arrangements for rehearsals and services (and a choir trip) and excellent pastoral care. We were pleased to hear directly from the

children and their parents/carers that the children feel safe and happy in choir. There was no sign that they experience the significant commitment required as overwhelming or too pressured.

Perhaps inevitably, we observed a sense of separateness of the Music Department. For instance, the DoM has not been involved in the plans for the CGISS, and he did not feel he could comment knowledgeably on wider operational safeguarding measures in areas outside the Music Department – this being an example of how safeguarding is currently not as seamless as it might be.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- There were no considerations in this area.

3.1.5 Bell ringing

Description

The auditors met with the current and previous Ringing Masters, both of whom have been at Newcastle Cathedral tower since the 1970s. The ringers group also have a Treasurer, and a Steeple Keeper, who is responsible for tower maintenance. The team number 13 or 14 Guild members, aged between 30 and 94. There is no one under 18 in the group. Several of the group are DBS-checked, and five have completed the C1 course. No bell-ringing training is done in the tower because the bells are too heavy for an inexperienced ringer, and in fact this generally precludes children from ringing there.

The group is quite separate from the Cathedral, and few of their members worship there. They are closely associated with the Durham and Newcastle Diocesan Association of Church Bell Ringers (a branch of a national association), whose safeguarding procedures they have adopted. We were given a copy of the procedures, which are extremely comprehensive – with an acknowledgement of the physical safety factors to be considered, as well as the more general safeguarding issues of potentially abusive behavior. As stipulated in the procedures, the team has a Safeguarding Officer.

The copy of the procedures we were given was dated 2017 and needs updating. It was interesting that contacts – for any safeguarding questions or concerns – did not include the CSO, but instead the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers for Newcastle and Durham.

The arrangements for safety in the tower are robust. The Ringing Masters are responsible for the security of entering and leaving the building on practice nights (one night a week). No one is allowed to be in the tower alone. If anyone under 18 is in the tower, a minimum of two adults must be present. A register is kept of who attends practices and services, including those who visit regularly. Both men felt that the bell-ringing network would help identify any concerning activity affecting their group.

Analysis

There are no children involved in the bell ringing team in the Cathedral. However,

there are scrupulous and thorough procedures in place for activities in the tower, and on visits. These are amplified by the experience and judgement of the Ringing Master(s). We had full confidence in the arrangements for the care and protection of vulnerable adults and any children who might visit.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider:

- There were no considerations in this area.

3.2 CASEWORK (INCLUDING INFORMATION SHARING)

When safeguarding concerns are raised, a timely response is needed to make sense of the situation, assess any risk and decide if any action needs to be taken, including whether statutory services need to be informed. In a Cathedral context, this includes helping to distinguish whether there are safeguarding elements to the situations of people receiving pastoral support.

Description

Brief case work is carried out by Cathedral officers where a concern or allegation does not reach the threshold for an investigation, risk assessment or ongoing casework. Where any of these arises, the matter is referred to and taken forward by the DSA and her team, or by a relevant statutory body such as the police or LADO.

We were able to review the brief records of 13 'cases' which had remained the responsibility of the Cathedral. These included two Safeguarding Agreements from the past three years. These records allowed us to see how the CSO (and in one instance, the Dean) responded to information received about a variety of safeguarding issues, involving both adults and children. Advice is regularly sought from the DSA and her team (as per the MOU), and is valued by the Cathedral. Information is shared with other agencies as required.

We found two instances regarding unsuitable behaviour by members of the Cathedral community, where the response was robust, via meetings and, in writing (in one instance). However, these incidents were not followed through, with the framework either of an agreement or at least of a review meeting and the implied monitoring that this represents. Our impression is that the outcome was taken on trust. In one case the same inappropriate behaviour was reported again two years later, but the response was repeated as before: the person was spoken with, but there was no review or monitoring put into place.

The DSA said that, in such circumstances, it would be her routine advice to plan for and hold a review.

The auditors reviewed one case where an individual was appointed to a post even though, during the recruitment process, the Cathedral received allegations about his previous abusive behavior elsewhere. Some years later, after he moved on from Newcastle Cathedral, the same historic allegations again emerged and are currently being investigated by the police. The question raised by the auditors was what could the Cathedral usefully learn from this history.

There are two difficulties about reviewing the events. First, the recruitment of the individual occurred before key staff and clergy were in their current roles, and they were thus not involved in nor informed about what had taken place – for example, in terms of a risk assessment. Second, the individual's HR records (paper) were sent on to his new employer, leaving behind no paperwork/documents about the recruitment process and decision-making.

Regarding the second point, the Cathedral has held a review of its decision to forward the individual's file to the subsequent employer, and is now clear that this would not happen in future, as a copy will be retained.

In relation to the first point, the auditors acknowledge the difficulty, in absence of records, of speculating about what happened during the recruitment and appointment process. Nonetheless, we felt it may assist safer recruitment practice going forward if there was a 'lessons learned' review of such a scenario.

Analysis

Safeguarding concerns which come to the attention of the CSO receive a prompt response, whether that is advice to colleagues, straightforward actions in dealing with a matter in-house, or discussion with/referral to the DSA. The arrangement with the DSA and her team provides an excellent level of advice and support, and substantive ongoing work where investigation, risk assessment, and/or casework are required. This means that generally safeguarding in the Cathedral is as effective as it can be.

We found two exceptions, where a robust internal response had been made to concerns, but without the follow-through which spells out to all concerned that the Cathedral remains watchful and protective over time, in order to secure the safest outcomes.

3.2.1 Adults who pose a risk or concern to others

Two agreements were seen (a third is underway at present), each relating to a registered sex offender who wished to worship in the Cathedral. The DSA and the CSO were both involved in the meetings to formulate the terms of the agreements, and will be involved in reviewing the arrangements. Other relevant professionals (for example, a Probation Officer, Police Risk Management Officer) are part of the communications about the agreements.

The agreements included not only protective restrictions regarding contact with children and young people, but a variety of positive supports and practical measures provided to help the previous offender and keep them behaving safely.

In one case, the records kept did not include a description of the background leading to the agreement; the CSO agreed to obtain this from the DSA and place it in the Cathedral's record.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider:

- How will those responsible for responding to concerns/allegations ensure that they routinely follow-up and review safeguarding concerns over time, rather than rely on trust that a message has been effective?
- How might a Cathedral safeguarding plan assist in identifying where a 'lessons learned' exercise or review would be appropriate and helpful?
- How can lessons be learnt regarding safer recruitment from the scenario described?

3.3 CDM

The auditors saw and heard of no cases involving the use of the Clergy Disciplinary Measure.

3.4 TRAINING

Safeguarding training is an essential activity for establishing safeguarding awareness and confidence throughout the Cathedral. It requires good quality content, based on up-to-date national guidance and policies, with relevant case studies, engaging and relevant to the audience. It also requires strategic planning to identify priority groups for training, details the training needs/requirements of people in different roles, and an implementation plan for training over time that tracks what training has been provided.

In Newcastle Cathedral, there are up to 100 members of clergy, staff and volunteers who have training needs. The numbers of staff and, in particular, volunteers will rise in the future through the delivery phase of the CGISS project.

Clergy

Senior Clergy are expected to train to C4 level. A C4 course was recently delivered for the Diocese by the National Safeguarding Team (NST), and was well-attended.

The Canon Pastor, a voluntary role, currently shares responsibility with the CSO for the volunteers, including the Pastoral Care Team, and is trained to C3.

Staff

All salaried (lay) staff are required to undertake C1 training. Depending on their roles and responsibilities, additional training is required and/or offered.

C4 training has been completed by the DoE, the DoM and the Cathedral Secretary.

Volunteers

All are required to have C1 training, although it is not clear that this should be undertaken before starting in role. The Cathedral has made considerable progress in ensuring that all, including older/longstanding, volunteers are compliant with this

requirement, although it is likely that the goal of 100 per cent remains unmet. There are questions about the accuracy of the records in the training spreadsheet (see Tracking system section below).

The Deputy CSO, who will shortly be covering the CSO role, has done the C1 training and the refresher. She works in the NHS, and has done their safeguarding training to Level 2, but is likely to need C2 (Leadership) training specifically for Church officers.

Quality of content

Training is delivered by the DSA and her Training and Policy Adviser, in line with the programme and required levels developed by the NST. Both have long experience in this field. The Diocesan Safeguarding Training Plan lists an impressive number and range of courses offered.

Face-to-face training is favoured by the trainers, and they have adapted the materials (e.g., case studies) to reflect the Cathedral context in the courses delivered there.

Specialist training regarding domestic abuse has been offered, but so far has not been well attended. The CSO and his deputy attended training about how to complete the parish safeguarding self-assessment.

Among volunteers and staff we spoke to, their feedback was that training was a) well understood to be necessary and helpful; and b) valued as a good experience. They want it to be delivered in a relevant way, which they believe it is.

Strategic training programme and delivery plan

There is a safeguarding training plan for the Diocese but not for the Cathedral. Should the Cathedral decide to produce an annual safeguarding plan for Chapter, a training strategy and plan should be included (with the scheduling and delivery remaining the responsibility of the DSA and her team).

The brief self-assessment provided for this audit described 'progress in ensuring that staff and volunteers are trained in safeguarding', which needs to be maintained.

Tracking system

The Cathedral Secretary keeps a spreadsheet for the training records, including reminders for three-yearly refresher courses. However, the independent audit conducted in August 2018 said that the list (at that time) was inaccurate. We have not been told of what action has been taken to update or correct the training records.

Analysis

The Newcastle Cathedral clergy, staff and volunteers are well served by the quality and range of training available to them. Courses are compliant with the NST's training modules and standards. They are delivered by skilled and experienced trainers, who are also keen to make the training accessible and relevant to all those who attend from the Cathedral.

A Cathedral safeguarding strategy and plan should be developed to underpin this good practice. This should indicate whether anyone is allowed to commence in their post before at least C1 safeguarding training.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider:

- How might the TASC group assist in developing a Cathedral training strategy for safeguarding?
- How will the Cathedral negotiate with the DSA and her team for training for the (anticipated) large number of new volunteers, including more specialist areas of training?
- How can the system for maintaining training records be made as accurate and efficient as possible?

3.5 SAFER RECRUITMENT

Description

Promoting and embedding safer recruitment are well understood by the Dean and Chapter, and with the CSO's efforts, they have made valuable improvements in this area over the past two to three years. The CSO now sits on interview panels and asks questions about safeguarding; two references are routinely taken up prior to interview. Everyone working in the Cathedral accepts the reasons for training (at least C1) and DBS checks (for relevant posts). Our focus group with volunteers reflected an appreciation of these measures, including the fact that a volunteer now receives an induction, which was not the case only a few years ago.

These standards, and their purpose, are set out in material which is produced for prospective staff and volunteers. The Cathedral website links readers to the national Safer Recruitment Policy, which is in place for the Diocese.

The auditors read six HR files – for three volunteers and three paid staff. The volunteers' files contained all the required documentation; the three staff files were similarly strong on safe recruitment documentation, but two did not include information about DBS checks and safeguarding training. This information is held in electronic spreadsheets, which were also provided to the auditors; but it would be helpful for the individual's HR file to include such records.

Any central record keeping?

HR records are paper files and held securely in the Cathedral, apart from Blue Files which are located in the Bishop's Office.

Other Cathedral staff and volunteer appointments

As above.

DBS

National guidance is adhered to in relation to which posts require DBS checks, and the CSO is responsible for compliance with this guidance. Updated checks are required every five years. A spreadsheet is maintained and monitored by the Cathedral Secretary.

Analysis

Effective safer recruitment is an important aspect of good safeguarding at the Cathedral. The auditors saw that the culture of safer recruitment is being embedded and is now widely understood, accepted and appreciated. The message about safeguarding is included in recruitment materials which are sent out, and in the newly produced 'Safeguarding information for staff and volunteers' (March 2019). HR files are generally well kept. There seems to be a good foundation for the step-change that is coming with the significant increase in staff and volunteer numbers.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider:

- How might recruitment files be developed to integrate information about DBS checks and safeguarding training, and the use of a checklist at the front of files?

4 FINDINGS – ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORTS

4.1 POLICY, PROCEDURES AND GUIDANCE

Description

The Cathedral's 'Towards a safer Cathedral policy' follows the guidelines of the Church of England and the Diocese of Newcastle. In a relatively succinct document, it states what the Chapter will do to achieve 'a safe and welcoming environment, and respectful pastoral care for all'. There is a strong commitment to achieving best practice for safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults, as well as those who work in the Cathedral.

Chapter adopted a new version of 'Towards a safer Cathedral policy' in June 2015, and this is reviewed annually. It is easy to find on the Cathedral website. With very few exceptions, the Cathedral's policy and procedures documents are comprehensive and accessible. There are links to these on the website, and a store of paper copies are kept in the safeguarding file in the Vestry. Most procedures are adoptions of diocesan documents. Policies which remain to be developed relate to the emails and the use of social media at work.

The 'Safeguarding information for staff and volunteers' (March 2019) provides a clear guide to all relevant policy, procedures and guidance, and where they can be found. A new staff handbook is due to be produced, and will include safeguarding for all roles of staff members and volunteers.

In relation to physical health and safety, there is a very full HR policy document available online and in paper copy.

The Cathedral has its own health and safety and 'lone working' policies. Complaints and whistleblowing policies have been adopted from Newcastle Diocese.

4.1.4 Detailed and careful risk assessments are conducted for the following, with procedures flowing from these:

- Junior Church (for example, staff ratios)
- Messy Cathedral
- Godly Play
- Night Church (for vulnerable adults)
- School visits (schools also receive information helping them to make their own risk assessments for trips)
- Choir trips
- Choir visits
- Chaplains and Welcomers

There is a concise but very thorough risk assessment regarding arrangements for the choir – titled 'Day activity at Newcastle Cathedral (incl. routine rehearsals/services)'. It does not have a 'safeguarding' heading, and it might be useful to re-badge it – for example, as 'Safeguarding Procedures for the Choir'.

The bell ringers have their own robust procedures for the team, for visitors, and for trips to ring elsewhere, adopted from the Durham and Newcastle Diocesan Association of Church Bell Ringers. The current version needs updating, as some contact information is out of date.

For those who work in the Cathedral, as well as visitors, there are prominent posters giving useful messages and information about safeguarding. There is also signposting information at the Welcome Desk, and posters aimed at victims of domestic abuse in toilet cubicles.

Opportunity: A major element of the planning for the CGISS project is to construct a new framework for managing and supporting volunteers, and being clearer about their roles. The new role descriptions might helpfully describe the elements of safeguarding in their specific role(s) – for example, compliance with procedures about ‘who to tell’ about concerns, never to make decisions or act alone.

Job descriptions for new staff will also benefit from the inclusion of safeguarding responsibilities.

Many volunteers and congregation members are older, and may lack either the equipment or facility to access the online policy/procedure documents.

Analysis

The materials we viewed were largely appropriate and well constructed. If you are working in the Cathedral in whatever capacity, you have good information about how to respond to concerns and who to tell/consult. The principle of never acting on your own is well understood.

A new staff handbook (for staff and volunteers) is needed; the old one is 11 years old, and makes no mention of safeguarding. The next version should use the opportunity to remedy this and to place safeguarding, and the message that ‘safeguarding is everybody’s business’, prominently at the beginning of the document.

The safeguarding section of the handbook should also include (as suggested by the audit, summer 2018) a clear description of lines of accountability in the Cathedral, and the roles and responsibilities of all individuals and bodies in relation to safeguarding.

The CGISS project will require a review of some procedures – for example, in relation to contracts for outside bodies using the Cathedral. The Cathedral will be able to make sure that safeguarding is consistently woven into all these.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider:

- How will the Cathedral ensure that any new policies and procedures (e.g., staff handbook and contracts for other organisations using the building) give a consistent message that ‘safeguarding is everybody’s business’?

4.2 CATHEDRAL SAFEGUARDING ADVISER AND THEIR SUPERVISION & MANAGEMENT

Description

The responsibilities of the CSA are undertaken by the DSA. She is a qualified social worker who has held a number of senior posts, in both local authorities and large voluntary organisations. She is employed by the Diocese (0.6 of a full-time post) and is line-managed by the Diocesan Secretary. She has independent professional supervision from a social work professional.

Her team includes an Assistant DSA, with a police background, and a Training and Policy Adviser. The capacity of the team is seen as adequate for the services they provide for the Cathedral.

The services provided by the DSA and her team are set out in the MOU. As noted elsewhere in this report, this document needs to be reviewed, and is likely to need updating in view of the major changes brought by the CGISS project.

Analysis

The Cathedral benefits from having an experienced and thoughtful DSA, who is keen for herself and her team to be involved as usefully as possible in safeguarding in the Cathedral. The arrangement for her to have both internal and independent supervision is seen as a positive framework. In relation to the Cathedral, the DSA does not sit on the TASC group, and there is no regular meeting between the DSA and the CSO – both missed opportunities for more fruitful collaboration.

The Dean previously served for many years as Archdeacon in the Diocese, with lead role for safeguarding. He has a longstanding and trusted relationship with the DSA, and is not alone in appreciating her expertise and knowledge as valuable resources for the Cathedral.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider:

- How might collaboration between the DSA and the Cathedral be strengthened: - e.g., by establishing a more regular consultation link between the CSO and the DSA, and the DSA becoming a member of the TASC?
- How will the MOU take into account the changes expected from the CGISS project, and will there be sufficient capacity to meet expanded safeguarding needs, including training?

4.3 RECORDING SYSTEMS AND IT SOLUTIONS

Description

All casework files are held in the Diocese by its safeguarding team. The CSO does not normally have access to these.

The log of 'cases' (brief casework) dealt with in the Cathedral is kept securely as paper records. The only people with access to this are the Dean and the CSO.

Electronic spreadsheets of persons trained and DBS-checked are kept securely by the Cathedral Secretary.

Analysis

The Cathedral's recording systems, in relation to safeguarding, are relatively simple and small in scope. They are adequate for their purposes. There is a high level of awareness of the need to keep them securely stored.

Questions for the cathedral to consider:

- There were no considerations in this area.

5 FINDINGS – LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

5.1 QUALITY ASSURANCE

A safe organisation needs constant feedback loops about what is going well and where there are difficulties in relation to safeguarding, and this should drive ongoing cycles of learning and improvement. Potential sources of data are numerous, including independent scrutiny. They need to be tied into strategic plans and supporting accountability.

Description

The auditors saw and heard of examples of quality assurance (QA) in practice. Chapter meetings now have safeguarding as a regular agenda item, with an oral report and tabled papers from the CSO, and an annual written report also from the CSO. The Dean provides an annual report to the Bishop which includes safeguarding.

There was a safeguarding self-assessment (parish template) in 2017 and an independent assessment by the DSA and Training and Policy Adviser in 2018. Both were valuable exercises, although they appear to have been shared in a limited way. It is unclear whether the actions from the 2017 audit were made known to the TASC group or Chapter. The 2018 audit did not result in a written action plan, so there was no mechanism for reviewing progress.

The role of the Cathedral Council is limited to 'advise and recommend', but it is clear that the Independent Chair and his membership give full attention to safeguarding. It is a consistent item on their agenda, and the Council receives oral and written reports from the CSO – with 'as much time as needed' given to this in their meetings.

The DSAG, as noted earlier in this report, does not have the capacity at present to give Cathedral-specific attention and feedback, which means it cannot fulfil its remit of holding the Cathedral to account – as a 'critical friend'. This represents a significant gap for the Cathedral.

Should the TASC group become a sub-group of Chapter, it would be in a position to improve information-sharing and awareness, and give Chapter the tools needed to check how they are doing in terms of safeguarding. A Cathedral safeguarding action plan would provide a built-in framework for checking how well the Cathedral is achieving its stated aims.

Currently, the TASC group meets only three times a year, and it is unclear whether or how its minutes are shared with others.

The DSA has independent supervision, which represents another form of potential feedback regarding safeguarding planning, decision-making and activities in the Cathedral.

Finally, there is an annual congregational meeting to which members of the congregation are invited, and where their views can be heard.

Analysis

Chapter is required (as specified in the Church of England *Key Roles and Responsibilities of Church Office Holders and Bodies Practice Guidance 2017*) to review safeguarding progress annually. In order to do so, it requires evidence of activity and impact. Currently, safeguarding is a regular agenda item for Chapter, and an annual report is provided by the CSO.

However, the frameworks already in place (Chapter, DSAG and the TASC group) need to be strengthened and adapted to provide greater information-sharing, and greater scrutiny, monitoring and challenge. The usefulness of the TASC, in becoming a sub-group of Chapter, would also be enhanced by more regular meetings, new terms of reference, and including more independent membership (especially the DSA).

Other voices among those who use the Cathedral can be promoted in imaginative ways that encourage feedback about safeguarding and how it is experienced. These would also serve the purpose of keeping safeguarding prominently in people's minds, and demonstrate the Cathedral's commitment to keeping them safe and well.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider:

- What quality assurance mechanisms – e.g. self-audit; routine bench-marking against other cathedrals; lessons learnt from other cathedrals; survivor feedback; staff feedback; learning reviews from casework, independent feedback from outwith the Cathedral and Diocese – can the Cathedral use to monitor and develop safeguarding practice?
- How can these different mechanisms be brought together into an organisational learning framework?
- How can the whole Cathedral community, including congregation members and visitors, be included in feedback about safeguarding?

5.2 COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE SAFEGUARDING SERVICE

Description

The Cathedral Chapter has adopted the Diocese of Newcastle complaints policy. This was in use by the Diocese in November 2016, when the Diocesan SCIE audit was carried out. That audit's final report stated the following:

There needs to be a process to cover complaints about the way safeguarding issues have been managed, as distinct from safeguarding concerns. This could be included in the general complaints procedure or as a standalone process. (2.9.1)

A consideration for the Diocese concerning complaints about safeguarding is as follows:

Develop a complaints procedure that relates to safeguarding, either as part of the general complaints process, or as a standalone document.

This means that the Cathedral has adopted a complaints policy that, in 2016, was regarded as needing to be changed, in particular in relation to complaints about the way safeguarding issues may have been managed.

Analysis

The auditors would suggest that the Cathedral considers these 2016 findings and updates its complaints procedure.

It is also important that complaints policies are visible and accessible, and should be more broadly available than in the Vestry office. (The auditors could not find the complaints policy on the Diocesan website.)

Questions for the Cathedral to consider:

How can the Cathedral respond to the following concerns?

- The need to develop a complaints procedure that relates to safeguarding, either as part of the general complaints process, or as a standalone document.
- The need to consider the various ways that an updated complaints policy can be easily and readily accessible

5.3 WHISTLEBLOWING

Description

Effective whistleblowing procedures enable workers to raise concern about a range of behaviours (sexual abuse, bullying, fraud etc.) without the fear that their disclosures will lead to any harassment or negative impact on their personal work role/environment.

The whistleblowing policy provided to the auditors was adopted from the diocesan policy, and dated May 2016. It contains out-of-date information about personnel. The 2008 Staff Handbook also has a (different) small section (Para. 17) entitled Whistleblowing Policy. We were told of no examples of either policy having been used.

Analysis

The content of the whistleblowing policy is appropriate, but it needs updating to be consistent, useful and reliable

Questions for the Cathedral to consider:

- How might the Cathedral regularise and update all information about whistleblowing, so that staff and volunteers receive helpful and accurate information?

5.4 CATHEDRAL SAFEGUARDING ADVISORY PANEL

Based on the national guidance in *Roles and Responsibilities* for Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panels, the panel should fulfil a key role in bringing independence and safeguarding expertise to their oversight role, and should be expected to contribute to a strategic plan. No specifics are provided in relation to cathedrals, with the apparent assumption being that cathedrals are part of diocesan structures.

Description

There is a Newcastle Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Group (DSAG) of which the CSO is a member. Since late 2015, it has been chaired by an independent professional who works full-time as the business manager for an LSCB. Its membership is appropriate, and includes someone from local authority children's services, and a representative from adults' services.

We were told that the DSAG meets only twice a year, and then for 1.5 hours for each meeting. Its meetings are largely confined to a review of the annual Diocesan Safeguarding Action Plan. The outgoing Chair confirmed that it has not had the capacity to give separate attention to safeguarding in the Cathedral, which for many intents and purposes, is seen as a larger historic urban church.

There are plans for increasing the activity of this group, including more meetings per year. This may allow for a more discrete focus on safeguarding in the Cathedral.

This would be especially helpful during the different phases of the CGISS project. At the time of the audit site visit, the DSAG had not received information about the CGISS project, and had not been asked to contribute to considering its safeguarding implications.

Analysis

At present, the DSAG does not allow time for independent scrutiny or challenge specifically for the Cathedral's safeguarding arrangements (see also section 5.1, above, on Quality Assurance). There appears to be a lack of communication, in both directions, between the Cathedral and the DSAG, which may mirror a degree of compartmentalisation which we have noted within the Cathedral. The result is that the Cathedral does not benefit as it might from the safeguarding expertise of the DSAG.

As we have seen, the Cathedral's safeguarding arrangements are likely to be reviewed as an outcome of this audit and a new job description for the new CSO, but principally in response to the major changes represented by the CGISS project.

Therefore, this should be seen as an opportune moment to strengthen the DSAG's relationship with and usefulness for the Cathedral.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider:

- How might the Dean and Chapter and the DSAG together negotiate a 'critical friend' role for the DSAG towards the Cathedral?
- How may the review of the MOU with the Diocese be used as an opportunity to ensure the needs of the Cathedral are met in the longer term? This could include an expectation of a strengthened QA role for DSAG, and annual safeguarding reports from DSAG to Chapter to promote accountability. It may also be helpful to compare the terms of reference of the DSAG and the Cathedral's internal group (TASC), so that they operate as complementary rather than overlapping bodies.

5.5 LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Safeguarding can only begin to be embedded within the Cathedral if the leadership and management (both theological and on a practical level), ensure it is at the centre of everything that they do.

Safeguarding leadership falls in the first instance to the Dean, in that he leads on all aspects of life in the Cathedral. However, safeguarding leadership takes various forms – strategic, operational and theological/spiritual – with different people taking different roles. How these roles are understood, and how they fit together, can determine how well led the safeguarding function is.

5.5.1 Theological leadership

The remit for theological leadership in relation to safeguarding is clearly always with the clergy and especially with the Dean of the Cathedral. This is extremely valuable in helping congregations and clergy to understand why safeguarding is a priority and intrinsic to the beliefs of the Church of England. This aspect of the leadership role is the foundation for the culture of the Church and is critical in terms of making it a safe place for children and vulnerable adults.

5.5.2 Strategic leadership

Description

Strategic leadership for safeguarding in the Cathedral lies with the Dean and Chapter. The new Dean has been in his substantive role since October 2018, and has set out his vision for safeguarding. He has made it his job to meet individually with clergy and staff, specifically to explore their understanding and experience of safeguarding and to satisfy himself that there is acceptance of and commitment to this as the highest priority. He intends to be robust and proactive in dealing with safeguarding matters 'head-on'. At the same time, his long experience has taught him that it is the 'grey areas' of safeguarding that present the most challenges.

Analysis

The Dean provides a strong lead for the Cathedral community, and actively promotes the importance of safeguarding. There is potential for the Chapter to give even more attention to safeguarding, via the activities of a safeguarding sub-group. This would support and strengthen the strategic leadership of the Dean and Chapter.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider:

- How might the Chapter's strategic leadership role be strengthened? The auditors have suggested the establishment of a safeguarding sub-group (the current TASC group), with a reporting framework which would include a safeguarding action plan. This would underpin their responsibility for all safeguarding matters in the Cathedral.

5.5.3 Operational leadership and management

Description

Operational leadership for safeguarding is delegated, principally, to the Canon for Education, the CSO. He is assisted by the Canon Pastor (a voluntary role), especially in supporting the work of volunteers. There is a Deputy CSO who is a volunteer and member of the congregation, and leader of Junior Church (see below).

The DoM is responsible for safeguarding for the boys' and girls' choirs, and is supported by the Canon for Music and Liturgy.

The DoO is not a member of Chapter, but performs the role of Chapter Clerk and attends every meeting, giving a verbal report at every meeting which is minuted. As a member of the Senior Management Team, she meets weekly with the Dean, CSO, Canon for Music and Liturgy and Canon Pastor. Her roles in relation to HR and outside contracts mean that safeguarding is an intrinsic aspect of her job.

The DSA is delegated (as per the MOU) to carry out investigations, risk assessments, and ongoing case work, on behalf of the Dean and Chapter. The last of these, in particular, involves working with and sharing information with statutory and non-statutory agencies.

Analysis

The responsibilities outlined above are relatively newly allocated. Before 2015, the CSO role was undertaken by the previous Canon for Music and Liturgy. He had no job/role description as CSO, and this continued to be the case after the current post-holder (the Canon for Education) assumed the role. This raises the potential for safeguarding to operate, to a degree, on 'custom and practice', which is not always a very reliable guide.

The self-assessment (parish template) conducted in 2017 will have provided a useful baseline for what was going well and what needed to be done differently, and we

saw and heard evidence that improvements were made after that exercise.

There is a risk relating to the forthcoming gap before a new CSO arrives. Interviews for the new Canon will take place at the end of July, with someone in post hopefully by the end of November 2019. The Deputy CSO has been asked to cover this period.

As the CSO is/has been a full-time Cathedral clergy member, the deputy has been used relatively little. She is therefore not so familiar with the paperwork, processes and building as the CSO.

Due to the imminent departure of the CSO and the unfortunate timing of the Dean's extended leave, there had been little time for a full handover with the outgoing CSO. The deputy assumed there would be a conversation with the Dean as soon as practicable after his return, but this had not happened at the point when the auditors interviewed her (10 days before the departure of the CSO).

We have since heard from her that a meeting with the Dean has taken place, and she is clearer about her new responsibilities. She will be supported by the DSA, and will need to attend higher levels of safeguarding training.

The MOU, which sets out how the Diocese shares safeguarding with the Cathedral, is also only 18 months old, and has not yet been reviewed. The feeling is of systems which are still in flux.

Having said that, everyone we spoke with was clear that the CSO is the person to contact regarding any safeguarding matter. His deputy and the DSA were also seen as sources of help and advice.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider:

- How will the Cathedral make safe and secure preparations for interim safeguarding arrangements and supports needed for the period until the next CSO is in post?

5.5.4 Culture

All cathedrals should strive for an open, learning culture where safeguarding is a shared responsibility, albeit supported by experts, and which encourages people to highlight any concerns about how things are working so they can be addressed. It represents a necessary and challenging aspect of the leadership role of the Dean and Chapter.

Description

This report has already described the Cathedral's many areas of effective safeguarding activity and acceptance of their importance. There are robust and thoughtful arrangements for children who visit the Cathedral and for the choir children. Care and compassion for vulnerable adults and a heartfelt welcome to homeless and troubled visitors (some regular) are commitments welcomed by the Cathedral community and are very much a part of their culture.

Many steps have been taken to spread and embed the profile of safeguarding in the Cathedral community – e.g. safer recruitment, clear training requirements for all, prominent signage publicising the CSO, Deputy CSO and DSA, as well as the special services and prayers for those affected by domestic abuse. All of these show the importance of safeguarding.

Participants in the audit expressed their full confidence in the CSO – and had more familiarity with him than with the DSA – as the principal source of information and advice in safeguarding matters. This echoed a message in two official documents we saw (one a previous annual report, and the other the Volunteering Strategy and Role Descriptions, November 2018) which included the statement ‘Safeguarding in the Cathedral is the responsibility of the CSO’. Some people who work in the Cathedral, in whatever capacity, seem to have accepted this – potentially in a way which does not allow for the different message, that ‘Safeguarding is everybody’s responsibility’.

There are some areas of activity which have not been consistently shared, either with formal bodies, staff/volunteers or the congregation. Examples are:

- In 2017, a safeguarding self-assessment form was completed by the CSO and his deputy, based on the template used by parishes. This useful document provided a baseline for safeguarding activities in the Cathedral, and showed where progress needed to be made – much of which had been achieved by the time of review in 2018. The CSO undertook responsibility for these actions. However, the form itself and the subsequent actions were not widely shared, either with the DSA or the TASC group or in Chapter – or, indeed, with the congregation. This way of working does not give the message that ‘Safeguarding is everybody’s business’.
- In summer 2018, an independent safeguarding audit was undertaken by the DSA and the Training and Policy Adviser, which identified a number of deficits. There was no resulting action plan, although it has become clear that some identified gaps have been remedied.

One function of an action plan, apart from the guarantee of follow-up and review, is that it should enable a wider group to know about what is happening and to invest in the changes.

In our view, all information about safeguarding needs to be as openly and widely shared as possible, so that everyone becomes aware of its importance and the roles they can play.

The fact that safeguarding has not yet been included in the planning for CGISS raised a question for the auditors about its inclusion in the planning process. The Cathedral has explained that safeguarding is not a formal requirement of the NLHF (which the auditors find concerning), but has acknowledged that it is nevertheless best practice to ensure safeguarding is embedded into all project planning, particularly given new staff and volunteers coming on board in the very near future. There is now a clear opportunity to embed a safeguarding culture in the imminent delivery stage of CGISS.

Analysis

Members of the Newcastle Cathedral community are fully aware of and accept the need to protect and care for children, young people and vulnerable adults. We did not encounter any resistance to safeguarding measures, and the auditors heard robust messages about this 'culture' from two sources:

- A volunteer: 'Safeguarding has to be at the forefront of your mind – when anyone comes in the front door'
- A Canon (volunteer): 'We all have corporate responsibility for safeguarding'.

Overall, however, we found a view of its being broadly the responsibility of the CSO, and we noted that some important safeguarding data is shared in a very limited way – for example, the self-audit/baseline document. This does not support a culture of 'safeguarding is everybody's business'.

We did not hear from anyone about some of the more complex aspects of safeguarding (although the Dean spoke of the challenge in dealing with 'grey areas'): how difficult it is to remain alert, and how hard to perceive and accept that a trusted colleague might be guilty of abusive behavior. These are the kind of nuanced areas of safeguarding which do nonetheless need to be confronted and to be part of the understanding of those who work in the Cathedral.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider:

- In the midst of major changes (CGISS), and many new staff and volunteers joining the Cathedral, how will the Dean and Chapter expand and strengthen the various means of promoting the message that 'Safeguarding is everybody's business'?
- How can the less straightforward messages about safeguarding become part of the understanding and culture of those who work and worship in the Cathedral?

6 CONCLUSIONS

Led by the Dean and Chapter, and with commitment from a new CSO since 2015, the Cathedral has made positive progress in safeguarding for all who serve, worship in, and visit the Cathedral.

Good safeguarding practice is evidenced across all departments, supported by the following developments:

- Establishment of 'Towards a Safer Cathedral' (TASC) group, with representatives from all departments
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Diocese, with flexible access to a skilled and experienced DSA and team
- Updated and more accessible policies/procedures and guidance for clergy, staff and volunteers.
- Strengthened safer recruitment
- A training programme which is tailored to the Cathedral's needs and is valued by participants
- Emblematic activities supporting care of victims of domestic abuse and survivors of abuse within the church, and the Dean's commitment to three areas of missioner work: homelessness, mental health problems and debt/money. This range of activities appears to have the support of all the Cathedral community
- Visible and effective signage, including posters in toilet cubicles, with information about all aspects of safeguarding

Awareness of the need to protect children is reflected in all areas of activity, including risk assessments. The Music Department's care for choristers is particularly impressive.

The Cathedral stands out as a community which welcomes and cares for vulnerable adults in humane and practical ways.

Some areas remain to be further developed:

6.1 BEING LINKED-IN

A more collaborative approach is needed within the Cathedral and between the Cathedral and the DSA and her team. A reviewed and revised MOU could assist in this, alongside a new job/role description for the next CSO. A regular meeting between the DSA and the CSO would bring benefits, and the TASC group should include the DSA, given her significant safeguarding role within the Cathedral.

Re-positioning this body as a sub-group of Chapter, and increasing its frequency of meetings, would enhance its effectiveness and status, and would strengthen Chapter's oversight role in relation to safeguarding.

6.2 SAFEGUARDING IS EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS

The auditors found two examples/documents which included the statement that 'Safeguarding in the Cathedral is the responsibility of the CSO'. This is potentially misleading and should instead read something like 'Safeguarding in the Cathedral is everyone's responsibility although it is led by the CSO'. The same message should be embedded in training and prominently presented in all written and oral communication, including from the pulpit.

Wherever possible, safeguarding should be highlighted and be given as prominent and accessible a position as possible – for example, in the Annual Report and the new Staff Handbook. This may mean placing the safeguarding 'section' at or near the beginning of such documents.

Every opportunity should be taken to share information about safeguarding, not only to raise awareness and achieve compliance with policies and procedures, but to create a feedback loop for voices from the Cathedral to be heard. A communications strategy and framework would support dialogue about safeguarding across the whole Cathedral community, and would help to develop a culture of safeguarding by all and for all.

6.3 IMPORTANCE OF SCRUTINY AND CHALLENGE FROM 'CRITICAL FRIENDS'

The TASC group needs to be strengthened, by becoming a sub-group of Chapter with formal terms of reference. It should produce and continuously review a **safeguarding action plan**, which would then report to Chapter and enable greater oversight.

A Cathedral safeguarding action plan would also serve to clarify the safeguarding roles and responsibilities of clergy, lay staff and volunteers.

The DSAG does not currently have capacity to give time and discrete attention to safeguarding in the Cathedral. This should be part of its remit, and it is hoped that extending its capacity may make this possible, when a new Chair takes over in June 2019. It is important that the DSAG is kept fully informed of the progress of CGISS, as its multi-agency establishment could be a vital critical friend for all safeguarding aspects of the project.

CGISS: In relation to safeguarding, the Cathedral's biggest risks and opportunities lie in the CGISS project which will bring major changes at every stage. Thus far, safeguarding has not been woven into the thinking and planning for this project. The DSA has not been asked for her input, nor has the DSAG.

New staff and large numbers of volunteers will need to be safely recruited, and will then require safeguarding training; this needs to be carefully thought through with the diocesan training team.

Opportunities are great: there will be a new CSO who will now have a job/role description. The MOU review can take account of the enlarged areas of activity within the Cathedral. A new staff handbook will be needed for the greatly expanded

and altered groups working in the Cathedral. In particular, the (hopefully) much greater numbers of visitors, using the 'common ground' alongside those who worship in the Cathedral, will all need to be kept safe and well. And the welcome to vulnerable adults in the community will need to be sustained.

Overall, we concluded that Newcastle Cathedral is well placed to meet these complex challenges, and to continue the progress they have made over the past two to three years in safeguarding those who work in, use and visit the Cathedral. The actions arising from this audit will need to be very clear, particularly given the major activity arising from the CGISS project.

APPENDIX: REVIEW PROCESS

DATA COLLECTION

Information provided to auditors

In advance of the audit, Newcastle Cathedral sent the following documentation:

- Self-assessment summary (for this audit)
- Brief description of cathedral context (contained in Business Plan)
- Relevant sections of the Business Plan with organograms and people profiles
- Diocesan Safeguarding Action Plan
- Cathedral Risk Register (2018)
- Annual Report 2018, with safeguarding report by the CSO
- Job description of the DSA
- Plan of Cathedral at present; plan of Cathedral with new layout post-capital works (CGISS) – approximate completion 2021
- Diocese/Cathedral MOU
- DSA audit undertaken August 2018
- Whistleblowing policy
- Health and Safety policy
- Staff Handbook (2008)
- Choir risk assessment and specific risk assessment for trip abroad
- Safeguarding handbook for staff and volunteers (2019)
- Minutes of last three meetings, TASC group
- Relevant sections on safeguarding of the last three Chapter meetings
- Diocesan Training Plan
- List of training undertaken by Cathedral staff and volunteers
- Safeguarding posters/notices from noticeboards, and in toilet cubicles

And given to us during the site visit:

- DBS spreadsheet
- Bell Ringers safeguarding policy/procedures (given to the auditors during the audit)
- DSAG minutes (last three meetings)
- St Nicholas Cathedral: Planning for Mission 2015–2020 (leaflet)
- Risk assessment for Chaplains and Welcomers

Since the site visit, the auditors have requested and received the following documentation:

- Self-audit based on the parish template, 2017 (and second version, updated 2018)

- Risk assessment and other explanatory materials sent to schools in advance of visits
- List of members of TASC
- Copy of Diocesan Complaints Policy

Participation of members of the Cathedral

During the audit, a Learning Together session was held at the start and end of the site visit, to discuss Newcastle Cathedral's safeguarding self-audit, and the auditors' initial findings. The auditors were taken on a tour of relevant parts of the Cathedral and precincts, and observed an Evensong service and the pre-and post-service arrangements for the choir.

Conversations were held with the following (most individually, some including two people):

- Dean
- Cathedral Safeguarding Officer
- Pastor Canon
- Director of Operations
- Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser
- Diocesan Training and Policy Adviser
- Independent Chair of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Group (outgoing)
- Director of Music
- Tower Captains (2)

Telephone conversations were held with:

- Deputy Cathedral Safeguarding Officer (shortly to cover the role of CSO)
- Independent Chair of the Cathedral Council

Four focus groups were held with:

- Choir parents (7)
- Choristers (9)
- Volunteers (Welcomers and Duty Chaplains) (5)
- Members of the congregation/Church Wardens (8)

We are extremely grateful to all who attended these groups, who very kindly gave up their time, participated positively, and made a valuable contribution to our understanding of safeguarding in the Cathedral.

The audit: what records / files were examined?

The auditors read 13 (out of 15) brief case notes, and 6 recruitment files (for salaried staff and volunteers).

After the audit

Members of staff, clergy, and volunteers were extremely responsive to our requests for either clarification or additional information, mainly via email. We are grateful for their help and patience.

Limitations of audit

As above in section 2.4.1.