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# Independent safeguarding audit of Birmingham Cathedral

March 2021







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## About SCIE

The Social Care Institute for Excellence improves the lives of people of all ages by co-producing, sharing, and supporting the use of the best available knowledge and evidence about what works in practice. We are a leading improvement support agency and an independent charity working with organisations that support adults, families and children 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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First published in Great Britain in May 2021 by the Social Care Institute for Excellence

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 THE AUDIT PROGRAMME

- 1.1.1 The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) is delighted to have been asked to provide an independent audit of the safeguarding arrangements of the cathedrals of the Church of England.
- 1.1.2 This programme of work will see three cathedral audits in 2018, 16 in 2019, four in 2020, 17 in 2021 and a final three early in 2022. There are 43 in total. It represents a significant investment in cathedrals and an important opportunity to support improvement in safeguarding.
- 1.1.3 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. Cathedral representatives will play a key role in adapting the audit framework to their particular cathedral context. Only in this way will we achieve bespoke audits that are right for each place respectively. Bespoke audits will in turn optimise the usefulness of the audit process and outputs to supporting progress in effective and timely safeguarding practice. We look forward to working with you to this end.

### 1.2 THE AUDIT PROCESS

#### SCIE Learning Together and our approach to audit

- 1.2.1 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.

#### Key principles informing the audit

- 1.2.2 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

## Supporting improvements

- 1.2.3 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.
- 1.2.4 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.

## The process

- 1.2.5 The process will involve reviewing documentation as well as talking to key people, including focus groups. Further details are provided in the [Appendices](#).
- 1.2.6 The site visit will be either three days or 2.5 days. Cathedrals have been selected for the three-day audit to provide a broad base, or on the scale of an operation and/or where concerns may have been raised in the past for cathedral or diocese.

## Structure of the report

- 1.2.7 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

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### 2.1 CONTEXT OF THE CATHEDRAL AND DIOCESE

- 2.1.1 The leadership in each cathedral, as part of the audit process, was asked to supply a brief description of the institution. Birmingham Cathedral's is below.
- 2.1.2 Birmingham Cathedral (dedicated to St Philip) sits at the heart of Birmingham, occupying the only green space in the city centre. The building is over 300 years old, built as a parish church in 1715 and later consecrated as a cathedral for the city on the formation of the diocese of Birmingham in 1905. St Philips is a parish church cathedral, serving a parish that includes Birmingham Children's Hospital, Birmingham New Street Station and a huge diversity of retail and commercial activity. The congregation of Birmingham Cathedral is drawn from across the city and region. The greatest treasure of the cathedral (aside from the people) are the four stunning Burne-Jones stained glass windows, globally recognised as some of his finest work.

### 2.2 CONTEXTUAL FEATURES RELEVANT TO SAFEGUARDING

- 2.2.1 Birmingham Cathedral occupies an open, green space in the middle of the city, in an area which contains offices, shops, pubs and restaurants. Bus stops on one side of the square mean that the area is a hub for people entering and leaving the centre by public transport. Parking is limited. The accessible, central site is visited and traversed by an estimated 20,000 people every day.
- 2.2.2 The diocesan offices are located in a building on the square surrounding the cathedral. The DSA and her team are based there, as are a significant number of the cathedral staff, including the clergy and operational managers.
- 2.2.3 The diocese and cathedral share a number of functions, including finance, HR and safeguarding.

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

- 2.3.1 The House of Bishops' practice guidance *Key Roles and Responsibilities of Church Office Holders and Bodies* (2017) gives the Dean the role of providing leadership of safeguarding, and to encourage everyone to 'promote a safer church'. The present Dean has been in post since 2017 and holds the role of clergy safeguarding lead. On his arrival, he took the decision to locate all operational management responsibilities with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), with the clergy having oversight of the activities carried out in their respective areas of responsibility.
- 2.3.2 The Dean chairs the Cathedral Safeguarding Committee, which is attended by both Canons, and also attends the Bishop's Safeguarding Management Group (BSMG), which is Birmingham's equivalent of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel (DSAP).
- 2.3.3 The Canon Precentor has been in post since 2019. Her responsibilities for worship and music include oversight of the healing ministry and pastoral care team.
- 2.3.4 The Canon Missioner joined Birmingham Cathedral in July 2020. He has a range of responsibilities with safeguarding elements, including the management and oversight of the education programmes. He also oversees the outward-facing work of the cathedral, among the most significant of which is the partnerships with 'Let's Feed



Brum' and St Basil's, which is a youth homelessness charity.

- 2.3.5 The cathedral's Chief Executive Officer manages all the (six) heads of department. She is the Cathedral's lead officer for safeguarding and is sometimes described as the Deputy Cathedral Safeguarding Officer.
- 2.3.6 A *Sharing Arrangements* document is in place which describes the basis on which the Diocese permits the cathedral to share parts of the diocesan premises adjoining the cathedral. The primary focus of this document is on the practicalities of the use of office space, together with financial and accounting services. The document also sets out that 'the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor will act in the role of Cathedral Safeguarding Officer, supporting the Cathedral Chief Executive who will fulfil the role of Deputy Safeguarding Officer'.
- 2.3.7 The diocesan safeguarding team provides the cathedral with casework support, safeguarding training, and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) advice and support.

## 2.4 WHO WAS SEEN IN THIS AUDIT

- 2.4.1 The audit involved reviewing documentation, auditing case files, talking to people at the heart of safeguarding in the cathedral - such as the Dean, Clergy and lay Chapter members, safeguarding staff, music leads, and people managing the floor of the cathedral - and discussing safeguarding with other individuals with a range of roles and responsibilities. These activities and interviews took place over 2.5 days.
- 2.4.2 Further details are provided in the appendix.

### **Any limitations to audit (cross reference to review process in appendix)**

- 2.4.3 Because of COVID restrictions, a site visit was not possible. All interviews were held virtually, using digital technology.
- 2.4.4 Focus groups were replaced by an electronic questionnaire which was widely distributed to children with close links to the cathedral (such as choristers) and adults in a range of roles across the cathedral community. These included staff, volunteers, chorister parents and members of the congregation. The questionnaires were used to seek feedback on the awareness, understanding and impact of safeguarding arrangements across the cathedral. Fourteen people responded, all of whom were adults.

## 3. FINDINGS – PRACTICE

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### 3.1 SAFE ACTIVITIES AND WORKING PRACTICES

#### Precincts and buildings

##### *Description*

- 3.1.1 Managing and operating a place of worship that is situated on such an open site presents significant challenges. Its significance as an historic, Grade 1 listed building means that it receives up to 200 visitors every day, in addition to the estimated 20,000 people who cross the site daily during 'normal' times.
- 3.1.2 The cathedral is open to the public from 7.30am to 6.30pm during the week (it closes slightly earlier at weekends). Its location at the centre of the city in a large, open green space which is used and traversed by thousands of people each day means that many of those who enter the building may be vulnerable themselves, or a possible risk to others. It is also vulnerable to external threats, such as vandalism or terrorist attack, and various measures have been put into place to help manage this:
- Bollards at the end of each of the broad paths crossing the square prevent vehicular access.
  - CCTV covers various points within the building, monitored by the vergers, one or more of whom maintain a presence in the building all day, often with the additional presence of a chaplain.
- Lighting in the churchyard is good, and local authority CCTV is also in place in the outside area.
- 3.1.3 The cathedral is a member of the Colmore Business Improvement District (BID) and as such buys into the security provision operating in the area. The cathedral also has a good relationship with the city centre policing team, which is reportedly responsive to any call for assistance.
- 3.1.4 The small team of vergers comprises two full-time and two part-time vergers, with another available for a small number of hours each month. A single verger opens up at 7.00am and is on their own with the building open to the public for much of the day. Vergers have a variety of methods to summon assistance (radios, mobile phones). The team have all received basic safeguarding training and wear a uniform and lanyard so that they can be easily identified.
- 3.1.5 Chaplains provide a clergy response to visitors who seek this. When there is no duty chaplain available, there is no back-up arrangement. During the pandemic, the Dean and Canons have been more visible 'on the floor' outside normal services, and the Dean expressed a commitment to continuing to maintain this visibility once restrictions ease.
- 3.1.6 Entrance to the bell tower is from the inside of the building, via a door which can be opened only with a security fob. Access is carefully controlled by the tower officials, who work closely with the vergers.
- 3.1.7 Entrance to the Undercroft, where the choir rehearses, is sealed off from the main body of the cathedral by a gate at the top of the stairs which can only be opened from below. The lift which used to enable access to the Undercroft has been decommissioned. This means that there is no access into this area for people who have mobility difficulties.

- 3.1.8 There are a number of evacuation points, and fire drills take place regularly. Although there is a lockdown procedure in place in the event of an external threat, auditors were told that this was not practiced routinely.
- 3.1.9 Ordinarily, health and safety measures, including risk assessments, are the responsibility of the Head of Facilities, who also manages the Head Verger. The post of Head of Facilities was vacant at the time of the audit but the auditors understand that an appointment has been made and the new postholder will start work in early May.
- 3.1.10 There are plans in development which will mean more cathedral staff being based within offices in the cathedral building. The recent appointment of a Welcome Manager is the first step in developing a more comprehensive volunteer strategy which is likely to result in increased presence in the cathedral over much of the day.
- 3.1.11 Most people who gave feedback to the auditors via questionnaire said that they felt extremely or moderately safe in their cathedral activities.

### *Analysis*

- 3.1.12 The auditors found that, overall, management of the building and tower is good. Partnership arrangements with external agencies are good and help mitigate the vulnerabilities of the cathedral's location. Lone working, especially for the verger team, needs addressing.
- 3.1.13 Partnership arrangements with the local authority, the city centre policing team and Colmore BID seem strong and staff expressed confidence in them. This helps mitigate the vulnerabilities of the cathedral's location.
- 3.1.14 The auditors were concerned that there is no lone-working policy in place, and that vergers are regularly working on their own in an open building. The vergers have a range of duties so in practice, the main area of the cathedral may be entirely unsupervised for significant periods of time.
- 3.1.15 The planned relocation of staff to the cathedral will help mitigate this but until this happens, this is an area of vulnerability which should be addressed. The lack of access to the Undercroft is problematic and means, for example, that children who have poor mobility would not be able to join the choir, unless significant adjustments are made to current arrangements.
- 3.1.16 The current operation of the pastoral rota can mean that volunteers and staff may be unable to access a member of the clergy to speak with a vulnerable person seeking pastoral support from a minister. This is not entirely satisfactory.
- 3.1.17 During the COVID pandemic, the Dean and Chapter have worked to keep the building open and welcoming to worshippers and visitors when law and regulations have permitted, Social distancing measures have been carefully considered and reviewed, supported by documented risk assessments procedures.

### **Questions for the cathedral to consider**

- When planning the forthcoming developments within the cathedral, what opportunities might there be to address issues of access and lone working and improve confidence of staff and volunteers?

### **Vulnerable adults**

#### *Description*

- 3.1.18 The Dean, Chapter and senior staff are particularly aware of the needs of vulnerable

adults both across the cathedral community (e.g. volunteers, members of the adult choir) and in the city. There is also a good awareness of mental health issues, and a recognition of the additional pressure that the pandemic has brought for so many, including children and young people. The newly appointed Welcome Manager will have a particular responsibility to develop the cathedral's volunteer group and oversee the wellbeing of volunteers.

- 3.1.19 The cathedral's central location, open doors and spacious surroundings mean that many vulnerable people either enter the cathedral or spend time in proximity to it. The Canon Missioner has a strong background in working with homeless people and sees this work as a priority for the cathedral.
- 3.1.20 The small pastoral care team provides Holy Communion for those members of the congregation who are unable to attend the cathedral in person but wish to maintain that link. The two Vulnerable Adult Advocates (VAA) are 'eyes and ears' in the congregation, looking out for those who may be vulnerable. Their role was developed in response to the introduction of legislation concerning the safeguarding of adults at risk.
- 3.1.21 Staff and volunteers are aware of who to contact if there is someone they consider to be either vulnerable, or who may pose a risk to others. In practice, the vergers are usually the first point of contact. The DSA is involved where appropriate and will make a formal referral to another agency when she considers it to be necessary. The recently introduced concerns form is widely known about and has been welcomed as an easy, practical way of expressing a concern. There was a high level of confidence expressed that a concern would be taken seriously and promptly responded to.

### *Analysis*

- 3.1.22 The auditors found a good level of awareness of and thought given to the needs of adults who are vulnerable. There is recognition of domestic abuse as a real vulnerability. Homeless people are welcomed into the cathedral. The auditors were left unsure about whether elderly people and vulnerable adults knew who to contact to raise a concern. The role of the Vulnerable Adults Advocates (VAAs) needs review.
- 3.1.23 The post of Welcome Manager is a good development which should significantly improve support to and oversight of volunteers.
- 3.1.24 Basic safeguarding training has been widely taken up, but being online, it has not facilitated discussion of how responses within Birmingham Cathedral might be developed. Responses by staff and volunteers were described primarily as immediate signposting to others, which may not always be appropriate. Potentially, staff and volunteers would benefit from more specific training in areas such as domestic abuse and mental health first aid.
- 3.1.25 One questionnaire respondent commented: 'Posters display who has a role in safeguarding, but the people concerned are not always known and some are rarely visible to the congregation. As a volunteer I have received training and know who to contact. Choristers are briefed on who to inform with concerns, but elderly and vulnerable adults do not have a similar briefing'.
- 3.1.26 The role of the VAAs is unclear. They have no role description and do not report to anyone specific, although they do attend the Cathedral Safeguarding Committee (CSC). Whilst the introduction of these advocacy roles some years ago served a useful purpose in raising awareness of the presence and needs of vulnerable adults, it may be that these roles need reviewing in the light of the very different circumstances which now pertain.

### Questions for the cathedral to consider

- What additional supports and training might benefit staff and volunteers who are in the position of identifying and responding to the needs of vulnerable adults?
- How can the cathedral be assured that elderly and vulnerable adults are clear on who to contact if they have a concern?
- What would be the best way for the Cathedral to assure itself that the needs and experiences of vulnerable adults are heard and responded to?

## Children

### Description

- 3.1.27** The cathedral runs or hosts a range of regular activities for children of all ages as well as involving them in the Children's Church on a Sunday. The involvement of children in the music department, as choristers, is discussed in the next section.
- 3.1.28** Between 2,000 and 3,000 children aged between 4 and 18 are welcomed into the cathedral each year through an extensive programme of school visits delivered by volunteers (who are all retired teachers). The post of Head of Learning, which manages this aspect of the cathedral's work, is currently vacant.
- 3.1.29** Multi-faith programmes are run for primary-, secondary- and college-age children and young people. Policies and procedures are well established; visiting schools and groups operate their own safeguarding procedures at all times and are provided with information by the cathedral to inform their own risk assessments.
- 3.1.30** There is one child bellringer, who is always accompanied by one or both parents. See paragraph 3.1.65.
- 3.1.31** There does not appear to be a lost child procedure (or similar).

### Analysis

- 3.1.32** Due to the limitations of the audit, and the Head of Learning post being vacant, the auditors were unable to fully assess the safeguarding aspects of the operation of the Children's Church, education visits and other activities for children.
- 3.1.33** All who responded to the questionnaires indicated that they were 'extremely' or 'moderately' confident about their own or other people's children's wellbeing, when in the care of the cathedral.

### Questions for the cathedral to consider

- How might the cathedral assure itself that children visiting the cathedral feel safe and well looked after?

## Choir

- 3.1.34** All cathedral choirs raise safeguarding issues, particularly for children. As young children, sometimes away from home, working towards a highly prized goal, firstly, there is the vulnerability of choristers to being groomed by people in positions of trust within the choir context. Secondly, the demands of regular public performance, in some contexts to elite standards, can be in tension or conflict with child welfare requirements and expectations.

### Description

## Children

- 3.1.35** There is a boys' choir and a girls' choir at Birmingham Cathedral. The boys' choir currently comprises 13 boys aged 8–14. The girls' choir includes 12 girls aged 11–17, a further two have reached 18. Two boys currently aged 16 sing with the lower voices, one each when the girls' choir or the boys' choir is the top line. The girls' choir also includes up to two Choral Scholars (normally university or Conservatoire students). Both choirs give regular concerts in the cathedral, in parish churches across the diocese and further afield.
- 3.1.36** There is no choir school; choristers are drawn from primary and secondary schools across the city and their diversity reflects the diversity of the city. Boys usually join the choir from Year 4 and girls from Year 6. Because of the pandemic, there has been limited recruitment over the past year, which has affected the numbers in each choir.
- 3.1.37** In normal times, the boys' choir rehearse and take part in services on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays after school and on most Sundays (morning or afternoon) in term-time. Practices and services for the girls take place on Tuesdays and Thursdays after school and on most Sundays (morning or afternoon) in term-time. This has varied during the past year, with many rehearsals taking place virtually.
- 3.1.38** Arrival and departure arrangements are determined individually, in conjunction with parents. During the week, children come straight from school by a variety of means, making their way through the cathedral and down to the Undercroft, which is where both choirs have tea and rehearse. The auditors understand that most choristers arrive after the time by which music staff are required to be in the Undercroft supervising tea. Music staff do not accept responsibility for the children until they arrive in the Undercroft. Historically, parents were encouraged to bring children to the Undercroft but parking restrictions around the cathedral makes this impracticable. If a child arrives early, they are expected to wait in the cathedral until the stated time of choir tea, and it has been communicated to parents that the cathedral staff cannot accept responsibility for them at that stage.
- 3.1.39** At departure time, choristers are escorted upstairs as a block by one or more adults. The departure arrangements for the girls are a mixture of independent travel and car-sharing. A record of travel arrangements is kept on the 'personal details form' for each girl. The boys are collected by their parents, some of whom will enter the cathedral and others will wait in their cars outside. Departures for the boys are complicated by the division of the boys into an early and late shift, which means staggered departure times. The auditors understand that this is being reviewed in advance of the end of lockdown and resumption of normal routines.
- 3.1.40** When in the Undercroft, boy and girl choristers have exclusive access to separate designated toilets.
- 3.1.41** During the pandemic, and the requirements for social distancing, rehearsals that have taken place on site have been in the body of the cathedral rather than in the Undercroft.
- 3.1.42** Choristers receive annual safeguarding training which is delivered by the lay Chapter safeguarding lead. They are given a colourful safeguarding leaflet, written in child-friendly language, which sets out how they will be looked after by the cathedral, how they can expect adults to behave, and who to contact if they are worried.

## Lay clerks

- 3.1.43** The cathedral choir comprises six lay clerks, all but two of whom have been recruited by the present Head of Music (HoM) since his arrival as Assistant HoM (AHoM) in



September 2014. It is a comparatively youthful group, with a high turnover, and the recruitment process included safeguarding questions. The lay clerks all receive basic and foundation-level safeguarding training, do not require a DBS check but are asked to make a Confidential Declaration.

- 3.1.44 Deputy lay clerks are used on occasions and are required to undertake basic safeguarding training. They are not DBS checked, and are kept under the supervision of a member of the music department staff. Two deputy lay clerks who are used very regularly have undertaken basic and foundation-level safeguarding training.
- 3.1.45 The lay clerks have their own code of conduct. They have no supervisory role with the choristers but are encouraged to behave as role models to the younger choristers. They use a different toilet and are not permitted in those used by the child choristers.

#### Staff and volunteers

- 3.1.46 The music department comprises the HoM, the AHoM, an organ scholar and two choral scholars, supplemented by six lay clerks, a voice coach, and administrative support. Librarian provision is provided by existing staff.
- 3.1.47 The HoM joined Birmingham Cathedral in 2014 as AHoM, becoming HoM in September 2018 after nine months as acting HoM following the retirement of the previous HoM in August 2017. He has introduced many changes to bring clarity and focus to the safeguarding and care of the cathedral's choristers, promoting a culture of safeguarding across the children's and adults' choirs whilst maintaining excellence of performance. This includes clarifying the use of the Undercroft area (see below) and the roles and responsibilities of the various staff and volunteers associated with the choirs. He leads the safer recruitment of all staff and volunteers associated with the music department and choirs. He is also a member of the Cathedral Safeguarding Committee.
- 3.1.48 Both before and during the pandemic, the HoM has been meticulous in ensuring that risk assessments for different aspects of the choir's activities are in place, that incidents are fully documented, and that safeguarding arrangements for all choir activities, including choir tours, are properly understood.
- 3.1.49 Music department staff are supplemented by a small number of volunteers, one of whom is the Children's Advocate. Volunteers are present during most rehearsals and during choir teas. Not all volunteers have a DBS check. The Children's Advocate is also a local authority-trained chaperone. She organises the choir teas and helpers' rota for the boys' choir. Supervision of the boys' tea should always be by two DBS-checked adults. In practice, although some of the volunteers do not possess a DBS check, there is always at least one and usually two members of the music department present. The girls manage their own tea arrangements, and are supervised by the two choral scholars, both of whom are DBS checked.
- 3.1.50 There is a system for recording incidents in a book which is kept by the HoM and regularly reviewed by the CEO. The HoM passes on any concerns about choristers in writing to the CEO. Entries in the incident book show that there are occasionally challenges in ensuring the availability of two, DBS-checked adults at all times when children are present. This is reflected in the various risk assessments. When a child wishes to raise a concern, auditors were told that this tends to 'happen around the edges' of set events such as rehearsals and the choir tea.
- 3.1.51 There has been recognition recently of the need to address the support and supervision needs of the choirs more systematically, in a way that is not entirely reliant on volunteers. The decision has been made to appoint a choir matron, and money has been set aside for this purpose.

## Parents

- 3.1.52** The HoM is usually the first point of contact for parents. Contact is usually initiated by email as the physical constraints of the building and its surroundings mean that direct contact with parents is less than would be the case in more accessible places. After services was described as the main opportunity to speak informally with parents.
- 3.1.53** Pre-COVID, parents, choristers and music department staff would meet together annually for a choir tea and social event, organised by the Children's Advocate, which was supplemented by occasional outings for the children e.g. to go bowling. In 2019, the annual tea coincided with chorister safeguarding training, delivered by the lay Chapter lead for safeguarding.
- 3.1.54** The five chorister parents who responded to the questionnaire expressed a high degree of confidence in the cathedral's arrangements to keep their children safe, with only one saying they were 'moderately' (as opposed to 'extremely') confident. All expressed a high degree of confidence that the response to any allegation of concern would be both timely and effective.

## St Philip's Singers (known as Pips)

- 3.1.55** The Pips is a voluntary choir with a membership of around 20 adults, most of whom are retired. It has never had any children as members. The choir ceased operating in March 2020 at the first lockdown and has not yet resumed. Rehearsals usually take place weekly on Wednesday lunchtimes in the Undercroft, directed by the AHoM, who keeps a paper register of attendees. Historically they have not undertaken safeguarding training.
- 3.1.56** The lockdown has presented the opportunity to review current arrangements, and the auditors understand that all members of Pips will be asked to complete basic safeguarding training before they return to sing, in recognition of the likelihood of the choir including vulnerable adults. Any concern that a member of Pips may have become a vulnerable adult, or any similar concern, will be noted using the Concern Form developed in 2021.

## Analysis

- 3.1.57** Chorister safety is a high priority. The proposed appointment of a choir matron will provide an additional safeguard.
- 3.1.58** The care and thought that has been put into keeping the children of both choirs safe and ensuring their wellbeing, both pre- and during COVID, is evident. Procedures and risk assessments are meticulous, and the incident book and other documents seen by the auditors show minute attention to detail. Parents express confidence in staff to keep their children safe and respond effectively to concerns.
- 3.1.59** The obvious limitations of the cathedral's location and layout are managed reasonably well, although auditors had some concerns over the drop-off arrangements, in particular. On winter evenings, for example, children would be arriving alone, in the dark, and are expected to make their way through a cathedral which may be empty (if a verger is otherwise occupied), or may be occupied by members of the public, before coming into the view and oversight of staff and volunteers in the Undercroft.
- 3.1.60** The limitations of a remote audit prevented full engagement with choir and choir parents. Whilst five parents responded to the questionnaire, no children did, and so their views on their experience as choristers are not available. The auditors wondered whether there would be benefits for the cathedral in introducing some regular and systematic methods for gaining feedback from both choristers and their parents, so that they can be assured that their actions, procedures and intentions are having the impact they would hope for.



- 3.1.61** It is very positive that the cathedral has recognised the need to strengthen support arrangements for the children's choirs by appointing a choir matron. The auditors support this proposal and would expect rapid progress to be made on consulting with children, parents and current volunteers, and making this a reality. Such a post should offer the opportunity to be more systematic in ensuring that concerns and welfare issues are identified and addressed quickly, and that areas of present vulnerability, e.g. drop-off and departure arrangements, are managed more consistently and safely.
- 3.1.62** The safeguarding leaflet for choristers is attractive, easy to read and informative. The auditors wondered whether this could be built on by the development of a handbook for child choristers (and perhaps one for choir parents, too) which brings together all the relevant information needed by choristers about expectations, behaviour, rehearsal times, etc, and to the development of which they could contribute. This could substitute for much of what is at present a very large number of different policy documents, not all of which are written with children in mind.
- 3.1.63** Similarly, the various methods of recording incidents, risk assessments, etc might benefit from a review to see whether they could be presented in a form which more easily enables oversight and the ascertaining of any patterns of concerns and vulnerabilities.
- 3.1.64** The DSA does not appear to have significant contact with the music department, although she does work with the CEO to maintain oversight of incidents and concerns. Auditors wondered whether there are ways in which she might become more visible to both children and parents, given that she is one of the main points of contact for raising concerns. This might enable, also, the development of a proportionate system of record-keeping in relation to each individual chorister, which brings together recording that is otherwise held in several different places.

#### Questions for the cathedral to consider

- How will the cathedral satisfy itself that safeguarding arrangements in the music department are accessible, fully understood by everyone and having the desired impact?
- What opportunities will the appointment of a choir matron bring to strengthen the support and supervision of choristers? How might the choristers, their parents and current volunteers be engaged in the planning for this role?
- How might the cathedral develop further its relationship with choir parents to ensure that they are all working together to promote the safety and best interests of the choir children as well as achieve high musical standards?
- How might the cathedral assure itself that the experiences and views of the choristers are regularly sought, understood and responded to?

## Bell ringing

### Description

- 3.1.65** The cathedral houses a peal of 12 bells and the ringers are members St. Martin's Guild of Church Bell Ringers, which is a voluntary association of bell ringers in the Birmingham area. The ringing team comprises 22 members, all of whom are over 18, and has four elected officials, including the Ringing Master and the Tower Keeper. One young person aged under 18 attends with her parents, both of whom are ringers themselves. The bells are rung for specified services on a Sunday, every Monday night, and for occasional special events. There is no practice night, and it is not a

teaching tower (teaching is carried out at other towers in the city). All ringing sessions are open to visiting ringers, but in practice there are rarely any.

- 3.1.66 Access to and from the tower is very carefully managed. There are three keyholders amongst the team. Ringers gather either outside the cathedral entrance or just inside and ascend the tower together. At this point nobody else is able to enter the tower. All leave together, with a keyholder setting the cathedral alarm if the vergers are no longer on duty. A register is kept of all attendees, which is published every year for the Annual General Meeting (AGM).
- 3.1.67 The relationship with the cathedral is a good one. The Canon Precentor maintains oversight of the tower, and the Dean chairs the AGM, as specified in the constitution. Additional meetings with the Dean are held by arrangement when needed. The team works closely with the vergers and communication is good. The bellringers are not present at any cathedral staff meetings or the annual cathedral communities meeting, however, although would welcome an invitation.
- 3.1.68 The team work to the safeguarding policies and procedures of the cathedral. All members of the bellringing team have undertaken basic safeguarding training, and two of the officials have also completed foundation (formerly C1) training. There is always a C1-trained person present in the tower. A member of the team described their awareness of the importance of safeguarding, saying 'safeguarding is how we do things'. Although none of the current ringers is known to be a vulnerable adult, the process to follow for raising a concern is known.
- 3.1.69 No members of the team are DBS checked, which is in line with guidance from thirtyone:eight (an independent Christian charity which helps individuals, organisations, charities, faith and community groups to protect vulnerable people from abuse), given that the tower is not formally a teaching tower.

### *Analysis*

- 3.1.70 The Tower Keeper is very alert to safeguarding issues and the potential safeguarding risks associated with the bell tower. Although the tower is not a teaching tower, and has a very restricted number of visitors, whether adult or child, there is always potential for visitors to come.
- 3.1.71 The auditors' view is that thought could be given to identifying further steps which could be taken to promote the alignment of the tower with the wider ambition of promoting a culture of safeguarding across the whole cathedral. This could include targeted training regarding vulnerable adults, and inclusion of the ringers in any whole cathedral communications arrangements.

### **Questions for the cathedral to consider**

- How might the cathedral promote the alignment of the tower with its wider safeguarding culture?

## **3.2 CASEWORK (INCLUDING INFORMATION SHARING)**

### *Description*

- 3.2.1 Casework in the cathedral is delivered by the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA). Lower-level concerns are responded to at a more departmental level, coordinated by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in her role as Cathedral Safeguarding Lead/ Deputy CSO, often after consultation with and advice from the DSA. The DSA and CEO meet fortnightly to discuss any cases, monitor the email records of lower-level interventions

and ensure that appropriate thresholds for intervention are maintained in respect of both children and vulnerable adults.

- 3.2.2 The Head of Music is alert to potential concerns about the choristers and puts such concerns in writing to the CEO, who maintains regular oversight of these emails. The welfare of choristers is referred to elsewhere in this report.
- 3.2.3 Good-quality recording is essential to being able to make sense of the development of situations over time, to allow cross-referencing between files, and so that others can pick up work as and when necessary, and readily understand what they are dealing with. The DSA keeps individual electronic files for each active case with which she is involved. These are subdivided to make them easier to follow. Each file seen was up to date with actions clearly recorded. It was not always clear, who had written the record, with many entries signed only with initials, but this appears to have improved in recent years.
- 3.2.4 The lower-level concerns are recorded at present via collections of emails. Very recently, in response to improved awareness across the cathedral, a concerns form has been introduced which will enable more systematic recording of relevant information and monitoring of responses. This is already widely known about and proving useful to a range of people across the cathedral, which is very positive.

#### Safeguarding agreements

- 3.2.5 Safeguarding agreements are a key mechanism to support offenders wishing to attend church, to do so safely. They should be underpinned by a risk assessment that details the risks posed by a worshipper, the measures in place to manage those risks, and therefore the reasons for the safeguarding agreement. Having a clear rationale for any restrictions helps people enforce the agreements with the level of diligence appropriate. Clarity about the risks that a safeguarding agreement is intended to address, also allows for a robust reviewing process, which allows them to be strengthened where needed, or indeed terminated if appropriate.
- 3.2.6 The auditors looked at the single safeguarding agreement that is in place at present. The file evidenced careful assessment, regular reviews, and a comprehensive safeguarding agreement that properly reflects the nature of the concerns. The large number of individuals involved in the core group was queried by the auditors, who were reassured that this number was needed to ensure the agreement was adequately monitored and the individual properly supported.
- 3.2.7 Appropriate involvement with other agencies was evidenced in the file, and a commendable alertness to potential wider safeguarding risks which may be posed by the individual outside the cathedral.

#### People requesting a safeguarding response

- 3.2.8 An important part of the audit was speaking to people who had come forward to disclose abuse, share concerns, or expected help from the cathedral to keep safe for any reason, to find out how timely, compassionate and effective they had found responses and support provided by the cathedral. The cathedral made this possible by identifying people in advance and publicising the audit so that people could contact SCIE. However, nobody came forward to share their views.

#### Analysis

- 3.2.9 The standard of casework is good. An absence of concerns recorded about adults may indicate a need for awareness raising. Record-keeping is good but files and accessibility could be improved.

- 3.2.10 The auditors saw the files of eight cases, not all of which remain active. These included cases relating to children, people who may pose a risk to others and one safeguarding agreement. They had been referred to the DSA from a variety of sources, both internal and external to the cathedral, by staff, volunteers and others. One issue had been picked up via the recruitment process, and another was a self-referral. There were no cases of vulnerable adults.
- 3.2.11 The standard of casework was good overall, and there were good examples of sensitive joint working between the DSA and others. Awareness of the needs and perspectives of victims was clearly evidenced. Decision-making and action were usually prompt. There were several examples of good liaison with external agencies, and information-sharing practice was good. One issue had been picked up as part of the safer recruitment process, which was good to see. In one case, there had been no review in the two years following an initial risk meeting. This had been rectified immediately it was pointed out and prompted reflection on how often such matters should be reviewed in the absence of further concerns.
- 3.2.12 Recording is comprehensive. Although subdivided and well kept, the case files can be difficult to follow as there is no summary information anywhere. This could be improved by the introduction of a front sheet which gives information about who is the subject, key dates and associated information, a short summary of the nature of the concern and a log of activity. This would enable rapid understanding of the case by someone less familiar with the details than the caseworker.
- 3.2.13 Some tidying up of the case files is needed to ensure that details such as specifying who a person being referred to is (e.g. their role in the cathedral, or their relationship to the subject), who is making the record and what their status is, are clear. This was notably better in more recent files, and in recent entries in older files, and will improve further once the anticipated national case management system is available.
- 3.2.14 Although everyone spoken with seemed familiar with the concept of a vulnerable adult, there was nevertheless an absence of concerns recorded about adults. This may simply reflect the current situation regarding COVID and lockdown. It might also indicate a lack of awareness and possible lack of clarity about thresholds for intervention which may be compounded by the lack of information regarding the cathedral's own volunteers.

#### Questions for the cathedral to consider

- How confident is the cathedral that all safeguarding concerns in respect of both adults and children are being identified, referred and responded to consistently?
- How might the cathedral assure itself that incident reporting processes, including the threshold for their application, are widely understood and used?

### 3.3 CDM

- 3.3.1 The auditors saw no cases involving the use of the Clergy Disciplinary Measure (CDM) in a safeguarding context.

#### Questions for the cathedral to consider

- None

### 3.4 TRAINING

- 3.4.1 Safeguarding training is an important mechanism for establishing safeguarding awareness and confidence throughout the cathedral. It requires good quality substance, based on up-to-date evidence, 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, who attended and who still needs to attend or requires refresher sessions.

#### *Description*

- 3.4.2 Birmingham diocese has a Safeguarding Training Strategy which is refreshed annually and approved by the BSMG. It is 'focused on building healthy communities with a culture of safety, in which the wellbeing of all is ensured and nurtured' and applies to the cathedral as well as all other parishes in the diocese. The strategy provides for both online and face-to-face training, within the framework of the Safeguarding Training and Development Practice Guidance issued by the House of Bishops and sets out in broad terms which roles should receive what level of training.
- 3.4.3 Online training has been widely taken up by staff and volunteers. Participative safeguarding training is delivered by the Safeguarding Training & Development Officer and Safeguarding Training Officer supported by a team of deanery and diocesan safeguarding trainers recruited to deliver safeguarding training. This has not been available over the past year, due to the pandemic, but will resume in due course. Records are kept by the diocese of who is due for and has received safeguarding training, and to what level. The cathedral's Administrative Assistant also maintains a spreadsheet which is an overview of who needs and has received what level of training (i.e. basic, foundation and leadership) and when it is due to be refreshed. Apart from domestic abuse and safer recruitment, no other training is referenced.
- 3.4.4 According to the strategy, Birmingham safeguarding team has developed some further training in response to specific needs. This training is in addition to the national training framework and aims to offer increased support for parishes and church. It is focused primarily on members of the clergy and parish safeguarding coordinators.
- 3.4.5 Auditors were told that it is now mandatory for all staff and volunteers to complete the appropriate level of safeguarding training. Most clergy, staff and volunteers have completed basic training, and a smaller number have completed foundation training. These are both online, although the diocese does provide support and face-to-face training for those who have difficulty with accessing or prefer not to engage with online training. Examples were given of volunteers no longer being permitted to work at the cathedral following their failure to complete training. Safeguarding training undertaken by staff members is logged in their individual HR file. In the absence of individual files for volunteers, safeguarding training is logged centrally.
- 3.4.6 The cathedral's level 2 safeguarding action plan (parish dashboard) identifies individuals and roles where safeguarding training has been either not undertaken or refreshed. These relate to staff and volunteers in roles which have direct contact with children and vulnerable adults.
- 3.4.7 The auditors were told of other bespoke safeguarding training that was delivered by various individuals to others within the cathedral, e.g. an annual training session delivered by the lay safeguarding lead at Chapter to choristers, and training delivered by the Vulnerable Adults Advocates (VAAs) to the pastoral care team.



## Analysis

- 3.4.8** There is a training strategy in place and most staff and volunteers have received the appropriate level of training. The auditors considered that a training plan would help provide a framework for assurance that all staff and volunteers are receiving the right training at the right time.
- 3.4.9** The Dean and Chapter and senior managers all recognise the importance of training in promoting the idea that it is everybody's responsibility to keep themselves and others safe. This is well understood. It is very positive that there is a strategy in place, overseen by the BSMG, which sets out a coherent framework for safeguarding training, with dedicated capacity within the diocesan safeguarding team to deliver it. It might be helpful for the cathedral to develop its own training plan, derived from the strategy, which sets out the safeguarding training requirements across the entire cathedral workforce, together with related groups such as choristers and even congregants. This would provide a baseline against which progress could be reported and individuals held to account. At present, no such systematic reporting is in place.
- 3.4.10** The past year has obviously been unusual in that no face-to-face training has been possible. There has been opportunity to ensure that everyone has completed their basic online training, which is nationally prescribed, but the records indicate that a significant number of volunteers are awaiting a date for face-to-face training from the diocese.
- 3.4.11** Whilst five of the 14 people who returned questionnaires found the training they had received to be 'extremely' adequate for their role, others were less impressed, with three saying that it was 'not at all' adequate. Those staff and volunteers who gave the auditors verbal feedback on the training they had undertaken, which was primarily the national online training, generally indicated that it had not taught them anything they did not already know. The auditors are not aware of any local system for gaining feedback on the quality and impact of training delivered by the diocesan safeguarding team and what is done in response.
- 3.4.12** Safer recruitment training has not been taken up within the cathedral. This is discussed in section 3.5. More specialised areas of training, such as on mental health, domestic abuse, and spiritual abuse do not appear to be available, although there is evidence that training in these areas would be desirable.

### Questions for the cathedral to consider

- How might a safeguarding training plan help the cathedral assure itself that all staff and volunteers are receiving the right training at the right time, delivered in the most effective way, and that this is having a positive impact?

## 3.5 SAFER RECRUITMENT

- 3.5.1** Nationally, safer recruitment practice is an essential part of the Church of England's approach to safeguarding. It is incorporated in the national *Promoting a Safer Church* policy, and the cathedral's safeguarding policy includes a commitment to 'safely recruit, train and support all those with any responsibility for children, young people and adults to have the confidence and skills to recognise and respond to abuse'.

## Description

- 3.5.2** Chapter has adopted the National Safer Recruitment Policy. The Diocesan level 2 parish dashboard action plan (February 2021) for the cathedral reflects the

importance of safer recruitment practice in all areas of activity, whether conducted by clergy, staff or volunteers. In all areas related to recruitment, the dashboard shows that action is needed.

- 3.5.3 Safer recruitment practice is evident when recruiting staff to posts which require a DBS check, for example, those in the music department. There is a policy statement concerning recruitment of ex-offenders. References are taken up prior to interview and discussed with the candidate during interview when needed. Interviews always include a safeguarding question, regardless of role, as part of the cathedral's commitment to creating a strong safeguarding culture.
- 3.5.4 The Administrative Officer (who is also PA to the CEO) oversees the DBS process and has kept a central record of all DBS checks, with dates of completion and due dates for renewal since she took up her post in 2019. She consults colleagues in the diocesan safeguarding team and thirtyone:eight when she needs to. The practice across the diocese is for DBS checks to be renewed every five years, and records are kept in the diocese to ensure this happens. The CEO would be consulted if there is a blemished DBS or where there are any concerns arising from the recruitment process, and the auditors saw evidence in a case file of this latter process working well.
- 3.5.5 The Administrative Officer is also the Parish Identity Verifier, and in this role she has completed safer recruitment training, as has a single volunteer. No other staff or clergy have undertaken safer recruitment training whilst at Birmingham Cathedral.
- 3.5.6 Practice in recruiting volunteers is underdeveloped, and there are no files kept. The new post of Welcome Manager is being allocated the lead responsibility for developing a Volunteer Recruitment Programme and maintaining proper records for volunteers. This is in recognition that this area needs focused attention.
- 3.5.7 The Administrative Officer maintains an oversight of HR files, ensuring that each contains all relevant information, including job description, details of references, DBS, ID, and safeguarding training. The Cathedral has no HR expertise within its staff group but can consult the diocesan HR team when needed. The cathedral also pays an independent body for employment advice.

### *Analysis*

- 3.5.8 The auditors found that the cathedral is progressing its safer recruitment practice and associated record-keeping in relation to its staff. Practice in relation to volunteers is not adequate. The lack of staff trained in safer recruitment is a concern. It is helpful that there is already recognition that much work is needed in this area to bring practice up to a consistently good standard and ensure full compliance with national and local safer recruitment policy, procedures and guidance.
- 3.5.9 The auditors looked at three recent staff recruitment files in total, all of which related to staff in positions which had direct access to children and therefore where a DBS check was required. No files for volunteers were available, and there were no relevant clergy blue files.
- 3.5.10 The staff files seen were electronic, well kept and clearly organised. The front sheet gives a helpful overview of key processes such as DBS check and references. There is some good practice evidenced in the small number of files seen, albeit with some minor examples of this not being consistently completed/ documented. Safeguarding was included in the contracts of employment seen, although not in the job descriptions. It was not possible to ascertain from the files whether the DBS check required for the post included barring information, and neither was this information available on the central spreadsheet.

- 3.5.11 It is unclear whether there has been a systematic review of all staff and volunteer posts to ascertain which post needs a DBS check and at what level. The introduction of a confidential declaration for every applicant, regardless of post or staff/ volunteer status could help in promoting the message that safeguarding is everybody's business, as could the inclusion of a safeguarding statement in every job description.
- 3.5.12 Training in safer recruitment is an urgent requirement for all people involved in recruitment.

**Questions for the cathedral to consider**

- What steps need to be taken to ensure that Birmingham Cathedral becomes fully and consistently compliant with all aspects of the national Safer Recruitment Practice Guidance and how will this be monitored?
- How could safeguarding be further embedded in all areas of safer recruitment and associated HR processes?



## 4. FINDINGS – ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORTS

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### 4.1 POLICY, PROCEDURES AND GUIDANCE

- 4.1.1 All parts of the Church of England must adopt or take account of the House of Bishops' Promoting a Safer Church Policy Statement (2017) within their own safeguarding policy. The Policy Statement must actively underpin all safeguarding work within the church and the drive to improve safeguarding practice.
- 4.1.2 This has been supplemented by more recent practice guidance *Key Roles and Responsibilities of Church Office Holders and Bodies* (2017) which sets out more explicitly than before the safeguarding expectations for cathedrals.
- 4.1.3 Both these documents and other national guidance provide a broad framework for cathedrals to work within, but do not provide sufficient detail to enable them to be implemented fully at a local level. Each area therefore needs to review the national guidance and supplement it with local procedures and practice guidance.

#### *Description*

- 4.1.4 The Dean and Chapter adopted the Birmingham Cathedral Safeguarding Policy Statement and the Promoting a Safer Church Parish Policy Statement on 26 June 2018. The former is specific to the cathedral and comprises a series of commitments to different aspects of child and adult safeguarding, and formerly adopts the policy and practice guidance of the Church of England and the Church of England – Birmingham. It identifies by name the DSA as Cathedral Safeguarding Officer (CSO) and the CEO as Deputy CSO and specifies the HoM as a parish identity verifier to process online Disclosure and Barring Service applications.
- 4.1.5 The Promoting a Safer Church statement is adopted by the cathedral in its role as a parish church in the Diocese of Birmingham. The two documents are both overlapping and complementary, and together provide the context for the various policies, procedures and guidance which sit below them.
- 4.1.6 The safeguarding policy statement makes reference to safer recruitment, DBS checks and training, and contains information on how to raise a safeguarding concern. It makes provision for annual review by the Chapter and a commitment to regular monitoring.
- 4.1.7 The safeguarding page of the cathedral's website includes links to the cathedral's policy statement and to the Diocese of Birmingham's website, where all the related diocesan policies, procedures and guidance are found, together with the House of Bishops Parish Safeguarding Handbook.
- 4.1.8 The cathedral's staff handbook contains numerous policies and procedures of relevance to staff, but no reference to safeguarding. The code of conduct, e-mail and internet policies contained within the handbook address reputational matters for the cathedral but do not contain explicit reference to safeguarding (other than a reference to a different code of conduct for lay clerks, which is not included in the handbook). Each new appointee is given a hard copy of the handbook and signs to confirm receipt.
- 4.1.9 Cathedral staff (but not volunteers) can access the staff handbook as well as cathedral specific safeguarding procedures via a secure Dropbox folder. There is no equivalent handbook for volunteers, nor is there electronic access available for volunteers to access cathedral policies and procedures.
- 4.1.10 The cathedral, and particularly the music department, have been very proactive in

developing policies and procedures appropriate to business whilst subject to COVID-related restrictions. These include a procedure for Zoom rehearsals. There is a very comprehensive policy on streaming, videography, photography, and audio recordings which is explicit in its references to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

- 4.1.11 The Cathedral Safeguarding Committee (CSC) is responsible for providing advice and expertise on safeguarding policies, procedures and practices to Cathedral Chapter, clergy and staff, ensuring that national and diocesan changes are reflected locally, and monitoring the implementation of good safeguarding practice in the cathedral.
- 4.1.12 Auditors did not see an information-sharing protocol and do not know whether there is one in place.

### *Analysis*

- 4.1.13 The auditors found that diocesan and cathedral-specific policies and procedures are comprehensive, but not systematically reviewed or always easily accessible. There are some gaps in policies, e.g. lone working, and practice (e.g. lockdown procedure).
- 4.1.14 It is sensible that the cathedral's safeguarding policy framework is aligned to that of the diocese. The diocesan procedures appear to be comprehensive, up to date and compliant with national requirements. Although directly signposted from the cathedral's website, it might be useful to check whether policies and procedures make it explicit that they apply to the cathedral as well. Cathedral-specific policies and procedures are similarly comprehensive, but not always formally 'badged' and dated. Many are very recent.
- 4.1.15 Reviews of policy and procedure do not appear to happen regularly, and auditors did not see evidence of a systematic approach to assuring that staff and volunteers understand the procedures, know where to access them, and are confident to use them. Due to the limitations of the methodology, the auditors were not able to check this out as part of the audit. The absence of reference to safeguarding in the staff handbook is unfortunate and could possibly be remedied when the document is next reviewed.
- 4.1.16 One of the challenges with policies, procedures and practice guidance is ensuring that everyone has access to the most up-to-date version. Access to electronic versions makes this far easier. Whilst staff can access the cathedral's Dropbox folder, volunteers cannot. Development of an intranet or equivalent may assist in improving access and enable all policies etc to be kept in one place, rather than within departments.
- 4.1.17 Although there is a section on the use of the internet in the staff handbook, in these days of significant communication via these platforms with all the risks this entails, a clearer policy on this requires development. Such a policy can then be incorporated into the relevant handbooks for all those undertaking a role in the cathedral community.
- 4.1.18 Neither Chapter nor the CSC has a schedule for reviewing and updating safeguarding policies, procedures and practice guidance, and for monitoring their use and effectiveness.

### **Questions for the cathedral to consider**

- How might the cathedral assure itself that its safeguarding policies, procedures and guidance are comprehensive, up to date, accessible, understood, consistently applied and effective?

## 4.2 CATHEDRAL SAFEGUARDING ADVISOR AND THEIR SUPERVISION & MANAGEMENT

### Description

- 4.2.1 The House of Bishops' Practice Guidance *Key Roles and Responsibilities of Church Office Holders and Bodies* (December 2017) requires cathedrals to appoint a safeguarding professional as Cathedral Safeguarding Officer (CSO) to work with the Dean, the Chapter and cathedral staff to implement House of Bishops' policy and guidance. In Birmingham, this function is delivered by the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) within the terms of the draft agreement between the diocese and cathedral dated 15 January 2019. This is in the form of a letter which is primarily about the use of the diocesan offices by cathedral staff. Point 25 of the letter says: 'The Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser will act in the role of Cathedral Safeguarding Officer, supporting the Cathedral Chief Executive who will fulfil the role of Deputy Safeguarding Officer.'
- 4.2.2 The DSA has an undated job description, which focuses heavily on her role as a caseworker. It references and is derived from the national Diocesan Safeguarding Advisors Regulations 2016 but does not make use of the model job description contained in the national Key Roles and Responsibilities practice guidance, which was published in October 2017 (after the current DSA was appointed). It makes no reference to any role within the Cathedral.
- 4.2.3 The DSA took up her post in August 2016, following an open recruitment process, after a 30-year career in the police force during which she worked primarily in child protection and in the management of sex offenders. At that point, the previous postholder, known as the Bishop's Children's Safeguarding Adviser, had just retired, and the Church of England was working to develop good safeguarding policies and practice guidance. *Key Roles and Responsibilities* was published the following year, together with *Promoting a Safer Church* and *Responding Well to Domestic Abuse* – all key safeguarding documents.
- 4.2.4 The DSA post was initially for three days per week, which has since been increased to four.
- 4.2.5 The DSA is a member of a small safeguarding team which includes a full-time policy, safer recruitment and training officer, a trainee assistant DSA (32 hours worked across five days) who oversees safer recruitment and DBS, a training assistant, and a training support officer. The DSA is line managed by the Diocesan Secretary. She also receives regular (approximately every two months), independent professional supervision from an experienced social work professional, who is also a member of the Bishop's Safeguarding Management Group (BSMG). There is a contract which sets out the terms of this supervision, and a written record of the supervision is provided by the supervisor to the DSA. This supervisor would provide feedback the DSA's line manager within the diocese on an exception basis. There is no formal feedback to the cathedral about the DSA's performance.
- 4.2.6 In addition, there is a Safeguarding Scrutiny Group comprising two Archdeacons and the Bishop's Chaplain who maintain oversight of the work of the DSA on behalf of the BSMG.
- 4.2.7 There is a mutual arrangement with Hereford Diocese which provides for DSA cover when the postholder is on leave or otherwise unavailable. A part-time member of the safeguarding team is also being trained to act as Assistant DSA. This will increase DSA capacity to five days per week (Monday–Friday) on paper.

- 4.2.8 Since the DSA's arrival, there has been considerable work done to bring the policies and procedures across the diocese up to date and compliant with the rapidly emerging national guidance, to develop work with adults in response to the Care Act 2014, and to develop the training offer to reflect these national and local changes. This has led to the DSA becoming more visible, and more involved with casework at an earlier stage. She will make referrals to external agencies where appropriate.
- 4.2.9 The DSA meets fortnightly with the cathedral CEO, who is the cathedral's Safeguarding Officer (and referred to in the cathedral's agreement with the diocese as the Deputy CSO). They jointly audit the new concerns forms, accident and incident report. By agreement with the CEO, the DSA does all the cathedral's casework above an agreed threshold and offers verbal and written advice to the CEO when requested. The DSA works hard at making herself accessible to staff and volunteers, and is well known; her picture, together with that of the CEO and the three advocates, are displayed in key locations throughout the cathedral.
- 4.2.10 The DSA attends CSC, where she gives an update on policy and casework. She has also attended Chapter twice, by invitation, and provided a short, written report on safeguarding to Chapter, written jointly with the CEO, in September 2020.
- 4.2.11 The DSA has no formal relationship with the Chapter safeguarding lead, other than both attending the CSC meetings.

### Analysis

- 4.2.12 The auditors concluded that the DSA is well qualified for her role and works well with the CEO. Working relationships with the diocese are good but the service level agreement (SLA) between cathedral and diocese needs reviewing and strengthening.
- 4.2.13 The DSA is well qualified for her role, very experienced, and widely respected by her key contacts within the cathedral, who involve her appropriately with specific cases and value the advice that she gives (which they always follow). She has made strong relationships with key individuals, in particular the CEO. She has worked hard to assist both diocese and cathedral in bringing their policies, procedures and working practices up to date and fit for purpose.
- 4.2.14 The DSA took up post a few months before the Dean and has worked with him to promote the development of a culture which is becoming increasingly proactive in its thinking about safeguarding. She is well known throughout the cathedral and regarded as a first point of contact for raising concerns, alongside the CEO.
- 4.2.15 In the view of the auditors, the standard of casework provided by the DSA is good, and her judgements and advice are proportionate and appropriate. The DSA values the clinical supervision she receives. The auditors note, however, that there is no means of feedback from her clinical supervisor into either the DSA's formal performance appraisal within the diocese, nor back into the cathedral. It would be beneficial to consider how arrangements for the quality assurance of the DSA's casework may be put into place to provide additional assurance.
- 4.2.16 The DSA's job description is undated but appears to date from her appointment in 2016. It does not fully reflect the model job description for a DSA (as relevant to the cathedral setting) outlined in *Key Roles and Responsibilities* (2017). The agreement between diocese and cathedral (sometimes referred to as a draft SLA includes reference to the DSA working in the cathedral does not specify what this means in practice.
- 4.2.17 The auditors understand that the draft SLA is due for review. This could offer an opportunity to review the role and expectations of the DSA in the cathedral, together

with the diocese, in the light of recent national guidance and specify these more clearly. This could include considering how the cathedral receives assurance about the quality of the work carried out by the DSA on its behalf, the role of the wider safeguarding team (for example, the trainers), and whether the capacity of each is sufficient to meet the needs of the Cathedral. It is the view of the auditors that this would be desirable.

- 4.2.18 The auditors note that there appears to be little direct engagement by the DSA with the music department, and would suggest that, if this perception is correct, that this is reviewed, to ensure that her knowledge and oversight includes this particularly challenging area, and that she becomes more familiar to the choristers and their parents. The intention to recruit a choir matron offers an opportunity for the DSA to advise on the job description and become more visible, as does the anticipated return of the choirs to the cathedral following the easing of lockdown restrictions.

#### Questions for the cathedral to consider

- How might the cathedral work with the diocese to ensure that its requirements for a safeguarding service, to include casework, are adequately assessed, provided and reflected in the SLA?
- How might the cathedral receive assurance about the quality of casework delivered on its behalf by the DSA?
- How might the role of the DSA with the music department be more visible, so that she becomes more familiar to children, parents, staff and volunteers?

### 4.3 RECORDING SYSTEMS AND IT SOLUTIONS

- 4.3.1 Having effective, safe and useable IT systems supports good recording and makes sure that information is secure, but accessible to those people with a legitimate need to see it.

#### *Description*

- 4.3.2 Birmingham Cathedral has both IT and paper-based systems. Electronic spreadsheets of persons trained and DBS checked are kept securely by the PA to the CEO; access is limited and carefully controlled. The same applies to HR files. As noted above, there is no central collection of volunteer records; in the past, heads of departments and clergy have kept information relating to volunteers in their sections, but there are plans to change this in coming months and replace it with a central system with common standards.
- 4.3.3 Records relating to clergy are held in the diocesan office. The DSA's casework files are also kept within the diocesan office, where the DSA is based. Access to all the various files is restricted to specific, named people.
- 4.3.4 The music department keeps records of information about choristers which is relevant to their safety and wellbeing, including medical details and contact numbers. The auditors did not see where these are kept, but understand they are kept securely by the HoM. They are accessible only on a 'need-to-know' basis. Different groups elsewhere within the cathedral keep appropriate records for their own use, for example, regarding visitors to the bell tower.
- 4.3.5 The auditors were unable to check out the understanding of the requirement to seek consent for keeping personal information.

- 4.3.6 The auditors examined a sample of different electronic files, including those held by the cathedral (staff, casework, concerns, incidents, risk assessments) and those relating to aspects of cathedral life which were held within the diocese. These comprised relevant casework files.

#### *Analysis*

- 4.3.7 The cathedral's recording systems, in relation to safeguarding, are relatively simple and small in scope. The auditors were satisfied that arrangements for the secure storage of and access to records were of a good standard. The CEO recognises the need for a better system for recording and monitoring of concerns, rather than persisting with the current practice of holding trails of emails. Any new system will need to enable easier monitoring.
- 4.3.8 As safeguarding activity increases, and more information is expected for monitoring and quality assurance purposes, the current recording systems, which are a mixture of electronic, spreadsheet and paper based, are likely to prove increasingly unwieldy and demanding of administrative time. As commented above, any replacement will need to be easily completed, overseen and monitored, facilitating the ability to share important information, spot patterns of concerns and respond appropriately.

#### **Questions for the cathedral to consider**

- What improvements can be made to recording incidents, concerns and risk assessments which improves the ability to highlight and address issues of concern?



## 5. FINDINGS – LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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### 5.1 QUALITY ASSURANCE

- 5.1.1 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*

- 5.1.2 According to its terms of reference, the independently chaired Bishop's Safeguarding Management Group (BSMG) is the body responsible for scrutinising the effectiveness safeguarding arrangements across the diocese, including the cathedral.
- 5.1.3 Within the cathedral itself, Chapter holds that responsibility and has safeguarding as a standing agenda item which is recorded in the minutes. There is a written or verbal update from the CEO in her role as Cathedral Safeguarding Officer (CSO) at each meeting. The DSA attends Chapter by invitation.
- 5.1.4 Chapter is assisted by the Cathedral Safeguarding Committee (CSC), which is chaired by the Dean and has a responsibility for monitoring and scrutiny.
- 5.1.5 There is further information about BSMG and CSC in section 5.4 below.
- 5.1.6 Whilst there is no overarching safeguarding strategy and plan in place, the action plan arising from an independent safeguarding audit commissioned by the cathedral in 2016, together with those areas identified in the (very recently completed) parish dashboard, provide a baseline against which to measure progress.
- 5.1.7 There is not yet a mechanism in place for gathering feedback from those who receive a safeguarding service, despite efforts to achieve this.
- 5.1.8 There are several examples of data which are gathered and held for monitoring purposes, for example, in relation to training, safer recruitment, DBS checks. These are not used systematically to demonstrate progress or focus activity.

#### *Analysis*

- 5.1.9 The auditors concluded that quality assurance activity is at an early stage of development. More needs to be done to provide systematic assurance of progress towards achieving the objective of creating a safe church. This might include a regular programme of auditing aspects of activity, evaluating the impact of training, and seeking feedback from staff, volunteers, survivors and others who have used the safeguarding service.
- 5.1.10 Until now, much attention has been focused on promoting a safeguarding culture across the cathedral, rectifying gaps in policies and procedures, and embedding safer recruitment practice. This is all very positive. Understandably, there has also been much activity and attention devoted to preparing for the safeguarding audit.
- 5.1.11 The structure for scrutinising and evaluating performance is in place (through the CSAP and BSMG as well as Chapter), which is helpful. It is also good that there is a safeguarding action plan, albeit that this tends to reflect activity rather than giving a sense of strategic direction. It could be improved by making clearer what outcomes are being aimed for and how 'success' will be measured, as well as agreeing some non-negotiable bottom lines such as engagement with training.

- 5.1.12 Alongside putting administrative systems into place which enable the capture and provision of data on performance and outcomes, the development of a Promoting a Safer Church action plan, as specified in the national document, might be helpful in setting the strategic direction and underpinning a systematic approach to developing and assuring safeguarding arrangements. This could be operationally 'owned' by the CSMG and provide the basis for reporting to Chapter and the BSMG.
- 5.1.13 Building a quality assurance framework with supporting systems that will give feedback on progress against the action plan, coupled with proportionate, written reporting at all levels with good information on progress and areas of challenge will provide assurance to the Chapter that it is making good progress with its commitment to promoting a safer church for all.

#### Questions for the cathedral to consider

- How might the cathedral develop a framework for quality assurance, incorporating internal and external scrutiny, in which feedback is sought from a range of children and adults including survivors of abuse and assurance is provided to Chapter and BSMG of progress in creating a strong safeguarding culture and compliance with the expectations of Promoting a Safer Church?

## 5.2 COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE SAFEGUARDING SERVICE

- 5.2.1 A complaints process is required so that anyone who has contact with the safeguarding service knows how to complain should they need to. A strong policy is clear about who complaints should be made to, and how they can be escalated if necessary. Positive features include an independent element, and clarity that raising a safeguarding concern and making a complaint about a safeguarding service are two distinct and different things. The outcome of complaints enables an organisation to learn from those who have had to use their service, enabling them to make any necessary changes or improvements.
- 5.2.2 The cathedral has a complaints policy and accompanying procedure, both of which are available via the safeguarding page of the cathedral website as well as via the page containing more general policies and procedures. There is no reference to the policy and procedure in the staff handbook, and neither specifies whether they should be used to make a complaint about the safeguarding service.
- 5.2.3 There is a diocesan procedure in place for making complaints about the safeguarding service, which sets out the process to be followed by a complainant and clarifies that the procedure is different from making a safeguarding referral, raising a grievance or whistleblowing. This is not referenced within the cathedral's complaints process.
- 5.2.4 The auditors were not given any information about how the complaints procedure works in practice and how information from complaints is used to improve practice, but consider that there is potential for confusion over which policy/ procedure to use by someone wishing to make a complaint about the safeguarding service, which it would be beneficial to address.



### Questions for the cathedral to consider

- What benefits might there be for the cathedral in including the Diocesan Safeguarding Complaints Procedure alongside its own policies and procedures?

## 5.3 WHISTLEBLOWING

- 5.3.1 Effective whistleblowing procedures enable workers to raise concerns about a range of issues (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.
- 5.3.2 Birmingham Cathedral has a Whistleblowing Policy which applies to cover all paid employees, clergy, volunteers, church officers, consultants, contractors, casual workers and agency workers and strikes a positive tone throughout as to the importance of whistleblowing, the value placed on it by the cathedral and the protections afforded to those who do blow the whistle. Those wishing to do so are directed to the Whistleblowing Officer (the CEO) or the Chapter representative in the first instance.
- 5.3.3 The policy states that a complainant may be accompanied by a colleague or union representative to any meetings held under the policy, and gives details of Protect, an independent whistleblowing charity, as an external route of seeking external advice.
- 5.3.4 The auditors were not given any information about how the Whistleblowing Policy works in practice and noted that the policy is not included or referenced in the staff handbook, nor with other policies and procedures on the relevant page of the cathedral website. The Whistleblowing Policy that is signposted via a link on the cathedral's safeguarding page is that of the diocese and contains different information about how to raise a concern. This could cause confusion to anyone seeking to use the policy.

### Questions for the cathedral to consider

- How might the accessibility of the cathedral whistleblowing procedure be improved?

## 5.4 CATHEDRAL SAFEGUARDING MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND BISHOP'S SAFEGUARDING MANAGEMENT GROUP

- 5.4.1 Based on the national guidance in *Key Roles and Responsibilities* for Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panels, any safeguarding panel should have a key role in bringing independence and safeguarding expertise to an oversight, scrutiny and challenge role, including contributing 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

- 5.4.2 The CSC was established by the Dean when he arrived in Birmingham in 2017 and meets three times per year. Terms of reference have been agreed, which mirror those of the BSMG (see below), and assign to the CSC a range of advice, monitoring and scrutiny responsibilities. The CSC is chaired by the Dean; membership includes both Canons, the Chapter designated lead for safeguarding, the DSA, the CEO, the Head of Music, the Head of Communications and Marketing, and the advocates for children and vulnerable adults. An independent member has recently been recruited. It is not a formal subgroup of chapter and the terms of reference do not specify accountability.

- 5.4.3 The CSC does not have a standard agenda. Meetings have not been minuted; this was rectified at the CSC meeting in January 2021. Minutes of the January meeting indicate that a number of matters were highlighted as needing attention, such as developing a role description for the Chapter safeguarding lead. The auditors understand that a prime role of the CSC has been to be a forum for information exchange. More recently, it has overseen preparation for the safeguarding audit, and in the process has identified areas needing attention.
- 5.4.4 The BSMG functions as the Diocesan Safeguarding Panel (DSAP), as set out in Key Roles and Responsibilities. Its terms of reference were confirmed in May 2019. It meets three times a year, is independently chaired and membership includes a number of clergy, the DSA and other members of the diocesan safeguarding team, together with provision for two external professionals. The Dean attends on behalf of the cathedral, and the Bishop also attends regularly. The terms of reference include three subgroups, the Policy Reference Group, Training Reference Group and Casework Scrutiny Group.
- 5.4.5 The BSMG works to a standard agenda, and minutes indicate that each meeting has a specific area of focus which reflects the work of the subgroups.

### *Analysis*

- 5.4.6 The auditors consider that both the CSC and BSMG could be further developed to support the cathedral's strategic and operational responsibilities and strengthen scrutiny and accountability.
- 5.4.7 The auditors welcomed the recognition that the CSC is not yet fulfilling the role that it needs to in overseeing safeguarding arrangements across the cathedral. In the absence of a safeguarding strategy and action plan, the two action plans noted in section 5.1 above indicate that much is needed to ensure that all policies and procedures are up to date, widely understood and consistently implemented (safer recruitment, for example). Safeguarding practice should be strong and responsive to the needs of children, vulnerable adults and survivors of abuse, those who pose a risk are being safely managed, and the cathedral workforce is suitably trained.
- 5.4.8 To achieve this, the auditors consider that it would be beneficial to review the CSC terms of reference and consider what exactly the Chapter would like to be the function of the CSC, who it therefore needs to include as chair and members, how it might go about its business, and what its relationship should be with Chapter and the BSMG. The development of a Promoting a Safer Church action plan, as specified in national guidance, might provide a useful framework for the work of the CSC.
- 5.4.9 Whilst the Dean is expected to report matters of relevance to BSMG, there is no written report expected or received, and the minutes do not indicate a robust scrutiny and challenge function in relation to the cathedral. National guidance is not specific in relation to the role of the DSAP (BSMG in Birmingham) with cathedrals, other than by the inclusion of a representative member. This provides an opportunity, in the view of the auditors, to consider how the BSMG might be developed into an active scrutiny body in relation to safeguarding in the cathedral. This could provide extra assurance to the Dean and Chapter, from outside the cathedral itself, that they are meeting their safeguarding responsibilities.

### Questions for the cathedral to consider

- How might the CSC be developed in order that it supports the operational leadership of safeguarding and assists Chapter with its strategic responsibility for Promoting a Safer Church?
- How might the scrutiny and challenge function of the BSMG be developed in relation to the cathedral?

## 5.5 LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.5.1 Safeguarding leadership takes various forms – strategic, operational and theological – with different people taking different roles. How these roles are understood, and how they fit together, will determine how well led the safeguarding function is.

### Theological leadership

5.5.2 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 safer place for children and vulnerable adults.

5.5.3 The Dean has always prioritised safeguarding, seeing it as an integral part of his ministry. Since his arrival he has sought to build a culture in which safeguarding is collectively owned. The Dean described preaching about safeguarding including when IICSA was published and at the Christmas Eucharist. The cathedral takes part in Safeguarding Sunday and safeguarding is a theme that goes into prayers. The Dean described his visibility as having increased during COVID, but that it could be better during normal times.

5.5.4 The majority (13 out of 14) of those who gave feedback for the audit consider that safeguarding is a priority in the cathedral, and that the Dean is active in communicating its importance. Slightly fewer (11 out of 14) felt that safeguarding, and the safety and wellbeing of others, formed a significant part of the message of sermons, with three considering that it formed no part at all.

### Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- Is there more that the Dean and Canons can do to share positive public messages around the vital importance of safeguarding and its integral place in cathedral life and the mission of the Church of England?

### Strategic leadership

#### Description

5.5.5 Chapter is directly responsible for the governance of the cathedral and comprises the Dean and the two Residentiary Canons, along with four members nominated by the Cathedral Congregation and three Bishop's appointments.

5.5.6 The House of Bishops' *Key Roles and Responsibilities* practice guidance assigns different and overlapping roles to Dean and Chapter, with the former having a clear leadership role in relation to safeguarding, and Chapter having a strategic and oversight role in relation to the Church of England's Promoting a Safer Church

safeguarding policy. The role of the Chapter safeguarding lead, which is held by a lay member, is not yet clearly defined. The two Canons each have oversight of areas of activity which include safeguarding elements, notably the music department and pastoral care in the case of the Canon Precentor, and wider responsibilities for vulnerable adults, in particular, as part of the outward facing role of the Canon Missioner.

- 5.5.7** The Annual Report for 2019 describes the vision for the Cathedral as ‘a transforming presence at the heart of the communities we seek to serve. The process of enacting our vision is guided by three strategic priorities: PRAY, SERVE, GROW.’ The strategic plan accompanying this vision includes reference to preparing for the safeguarding audit.
- 5.5.8** The Dean has sought to demonstrate his commitment to safeguarding very visibly, for example, through his chairing of the CSC, and his attendance at BSMG.
- 5.5.9** Whilst 65 per cent of respondents thought that safeguarding is an obvious priority in the cathedral, 35 per cent thought this was only moderately obvious, one of whom thought it was not obvious at all.

### Analysis

- 5.5.10** Since his arrival in 2017, the Dean has worked with Chapter and managers to raise the profile of safeguarding across the cathedral, and to foster a sense of collective ownership and responsibility. The Dean and Chapter are thoughtful about the challenges they face and committed to promoting a safeguarding culture. They are very respectful of the professional support and advice of the DSA.
- 5.5.11** The inclusion of safeguarding as a standing agenda item at Chapter is a positive indication of the priority it is given. The designation of a suitably qualified and experienced member of Chapter as safeguarding lead is welcome.
- 5.5.12** The auditors consider that the underdeveloped quality assurance framework and lack of a strategic safeguarding plan could mean there is a risk of Chapter not fully meeting its responsibilities for strategic leadership of safeguarding, as set out in *Promoting a Safer Church*.

### Questions for the cathedral to consider

- How might the strategic leadership role of Chapter be strengthened and differentiated from the more operational aspects of safeguarding?
- In what ways might the role of the Chapter safeguarding lead be developed to provide an effective link between the strategic and operational aspects of safeguarding?

## Operational leadership and management

### Description

- 5.5.13** When he took up his post, the Dean drew a clear distinction between the strategic and operational functions of the cathedral, assigning all operational management responsibilities to the CEO and their team. The CEO manages the heads of departments (music, facilities, learning, communications and marketing, commercial events) and is the designated safeguarding lead for the cathedral (sometimes being referred to as the Deputy CSO). The CEO does not have a role description for either her CEO or her Deputy CSO role.
- 5.5.14** The posts of Head of Facilities and Head of Learning are vacant at present; the new

post of Welcome Manager has just been appointed to. The postholder will have the responsibility for developing the cathedral's practice with volunteers. In the meantime, the CEO has been effectively carrying these vacancies, supported by staff around her.

- 5.5.15** Together with the DSA, the CEO is a first point of contact for those wishing to report a safeguarding concern. The two work closely together, meeting fortnightly and ensuring joint oversight of all lower-level concerns which do not meet the threshold for referral to the DSA. The CEO is in the process of reviewing the SLA with the diocese, to ensure it is up to date.
- 5.5.16** The CEO has worked very closely with the Head of Music to ensure that there is a comprehensive framework of policies, procedures and practices which promote good safeguarding. As a result, they have identified the need for a Choir Matron, and funding has been allocated to achieve this in 2021. Together with the DSA, the CEO monitors the music department incident book (amongst others) to ensure that all concerns are properly responded to. This has led to the development of a form for reporting concerns which, although only very recently introduced, is widely known about and already well used. A similar arrangement for regular monitoring of the resulting reports has been put into place.
- 5.5.17** Similarly, productive working with the Head of Communications and Marketing is evident. There is an impressive range of methods of communication in use, both paper based and digital, and extensive use of social media. Appropriate policies have been developed to support this. Visually attractive posters and leaflets highlight safeguarding contacts, and regular newsletters, service sheets etc. also promote safeguarding. The auditors were impressed that there had been thought given to how people might gain access to safeguarding information or a safeguarding response during lockdown, when the cathedral building was closed; posters were displayed in the churchyard containing relevant details. There is a communications plan for safeguarding. Shortcomings in the cathedral website have been identified (such as the lack of a search function) and are in the process of being rectified.

### *Analysis*

- 5.5.18** The auditors judged that the operational leadership of safeguarding in Birmingham Cathedral is strong. The commitment of the CEO to 'strive for excellence' is evident. There are many examples where close working has identified gaps or problems, and solutions found. The recent appointment of a Welcome Manager, together with planned appointments to the other posts of Head of Facilities and Head of Learning, will further strengthen the operational leadership of safeguarding and reduce the demands on the CEO.
- 5.5.19** The separation of strategic leadership and oversight responsibilities of the clergy from the operational management responsibilities of lay staff has been well received and said to be working well. There remains some confusion about how strategic and operational responsibilities interact, which are exemplified in the CSC. These would benefit from being clarified. The auditors also concluded that the role of the CEO could usefully be described as the safeguarding lead for the cathedral, rather than as 'Deputy CSO.'



### Questions for the cathedral to consider

- How might the structures and systems within the cathedral be developed to ensure that the relative responsibilities for strategic and operational safeguarding leadership are clear and that there is proper accountability for activities and progress in delivering the Promoting A Safer Church policy?

## Culture

### Description

- 5.5.20** The most critical aspect of safeguarding relates to the culture within a cathedral and extent to which priority is placed on safeguarding individuals as opposed to protecting the reputation of the church. Also integral is the ability of all members of the church to 'think the unthinkable' about their friends and colleagues. SCIE's experience auditing safeguarding in faith contexts more broadly, suggests that in areas where there is experience amongst senior clergy of previous serious abuse cases, a culture of openness and humility in approaching safeguarding issues can be stronger. A cultural move away from responses which give too much attention to reputational issues and the welfare of (alleged) perpetrators, as opposed to the welfare of victims and survivors is also important.
- 5.5.21** Any cathedral should strive for an open, learning culture where safeguarding is a shared responsibility, albeit supported by experts, and which encourages people to raise concerns about how things are working so they can be addressed. An open learning culture starts from the assumption that maintaining adequate vigilance is difficult and proactively seeks feedback on how safeguarding is operating and encourages people to highlight any concerns.
- 5.5.22** The Dean gives high priority to culture as the underpinning of good safeguarding. The cathedral's self-assessment reflects this; they are justly pleased at evidence of progress in this area. It was clear to the auditors that much thought and effort has been spent on developing a culture of safeguarding awareness throughout the cathedral. This is reinforced by visual cues (noticeboards, weekly message sheets).
- 5.5.23** When asked, people told the auditors that safeguarding has changed and developed at the cathedral over time and it is now a safer place. All respondents to the auditors' survey agreed that there is a culture in the cathedral that does not tolerate bullying, mistreatment, abuse and misuse of power, and a norm of treating adults and children with respect and care. One respondent commented: 'Safeguarding needs to be put higher up in the agenda of the cathedral. I have not observed attention to safeguarding as a high priority. I may be wrong, but please reassure me?'

### Analysis

- 5.5.24** The attention given to building a safeguarding culture was evident. The auditors wondered what further steps could be taken to embed safeguarding across the cathedral as 'everybody's business'.
- 5.5.25** The focus on building a safeguarding culture has been very positive and considerable progress is evident. Collective ownership is visible. Although not particularly explicit within the cathedral vision, the auditors judged that safeguarding is a commonly understood priority but could be communicated more effectively to the wider cathedral community.
- 5.5.26** Less evident is how the cathedral learns from the experiences of survivors and others who have received a safeguarding response. This is referred to in section 5.1 above.

**Questions for the cathedral to consider**

- What further steps could be taken to embed safeguarding across the cathedral as 'everybody's business' and test out how effectively this is being achieved?

**Links with the National Safeguarding Team**

**5.5.27** Links with the NST are generally made directly via the DSA.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

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Birmingham Cathedral has thought carefully about its own strengths and weaknesses and has a good awareness of where it would like to make improvements.

- The Dean has worked effectively with Chapter, CEO and managers to promote a safeguarding culture. Developing a safeguarding plan and the role of the Chapter Safeguarding Lead could help strengthen strategic leadership of safeguarding. Further steps could be taken to embed safeguarding across the cathedral as 'everybody's business'.
- Operational leadership of safeguarding in Birmingham Cathedral is strong.
- Both the CSC and BSMG could be further developed to support the cathedral's strategic and operational responsibilities and strengthen scrutiny and accountability. Quality assurance activity is at an early stage of development.
- The DSA is well qualified for her role and works well with the CEO. Working relationships with the diocese are good but the SLA between cathedral and diocese needs reviewing and strengthening.
- Diocesan and cathedral-specific policies and procedures are comprehensive, but not systematically reviewed or always easily accessible. There are some gaps, e.g. lone working, and practice (e.g. lockdown procedure).
- Safer recruitment practice and associated record-keeping in relation to its staff is progressing well. Practice in relation to volunteers needs considerable development. The lack of staff trained in safer recruitment needs addressing.
- There is a training strategy in place and most staff and volunteers have received the appropriate level of training. A training plan would help provide a framework for assurance that all staff and volunteers are receiving the right training at the right time.
- The standard of casework is good. An absence of concerns recorded about adults may indicate a need for awareness raising. Record-keeping is good but files and accessibility could be improved.
- Chorister safety is a high priority. The proposed appointment of a choir matron will provide an additional safeguard. Management of the building and tower is good. Partnership arrangements with external agencies are good and help mitigate the vulnerabilities of the cathedral's location. Lone working, especially for the verger team, needs addressing.
- There is a good level of awareness of and thought given to the needs of adults who are vulnerable, and recognition of domestic abuse as a real vulnerability. Homeless people are welcomed into the cathedral. The auditors were left unsure about whether elderly people and vulnerable adults knew who to contact to raise a concern. The role of the Vulnerable Adults Advocates needs review.



## APPENDIX: REVIEW PROCESS

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### DATA COLLECTION

#### Information provided to auditors

- Interior floor plan
- Self audit – undated
- CCPAS safeguarding audit – 3/2016
- Safeguarding action plan – 2016
- Safeguarding Action Plan Level 2 – 25/2/21
- Birmingham Diocesan Board of Finance Limited Annual Report – 2019
- Birmingham Cathedral Annual Report and Accounts – 2019
- Birmingham Cathedral Organisational Chart – February 2020
- Structure, governance and management – undated
- Seating plan for socially distanced Eucharist

#### *Policies, procedures and guidance*

- Promoting a Safer Church
- Parish Policy Statement – 26 June 2018
- Birmingham Cathedral Safeguarding Policy Statement – 26 June 2018
- Concern Form – undated
- Cathedral complaints policy – 26/2/19
- Whistleblowing – undated
- Streaming Policy – current
- Remote Meetings Policy – current

#### *Leadership and accountability*

- Chapter minutes – 15 December 2020
- Chapter Minutes – 26 January 2021
- Chapter Minutes – 23 February 2021
- Safeguarding report – September 2020

#### *Cathedral Safeguarding Committee*

- Birmingham Cathedral Safeguarding Committee (BCSC)
- Terms of Reference – undated

- Minutes of the meeting of the Safeguarding Committee – Tuesday 19 January 2021

#### *Bishop's Safeguarding Management Group (BSMG)*

- Bishop's Safeguarding Management Group (BSMG) – Terms of Reference & Membership 9 May 2019
- BSMG Minutes of meeting –14 May 2020
- BMSG Minutes of meeting – 23 September 2020

#### *Cathedral safeguarding advisor and team and their supervision & management*

- Draft SLA Cathedral DBF – March 2020
- DSA Job description – undated

#### *Recruitment*

- Birmingham Cathedral policy statement on the Recruitment of ex-offenders – undated

#### *Staffing and training*

- Birmingham Cathedral staff handbook – undated
- DBS records for last three years – 2021
- Birmingham Training Strategy 2020-21 – Safeguarding – 14.5.20
- Welcome Manager – job description – current but undated
- Safeguarding sheet – training – 10 February 2021

#### *Choir/ music*

- Scan of incident book – 2 July 2003–30 January 2020
- Choir tour incident book – February 2020
- Email communications DH – AP – September 2017–August 2020
- What happens in a week in our traditional pattern – February 2020 (updated Jan 2021)
- Choir Timetable with Safeguarding Risk Levels pre-COVID – undated
- Birmingham Cathedral Deputy Lay Clerks – February 2021
- Safeguarding Risk Assessment for Teenage Lower Voices – undated
- Birmingham Cathedral Choir Safeguarding Risk Analysis during COVID – current but undated
- Birmingham Cathedral Choir Safeguarding Risk Analysis pre-COVID – undated
- Birmingham Cathedral Choir Timetable with Safeguarding Risk Levels during the COVID-19 pandemic – current but undated
- The St Philip's Singers (Birmingham Cathedral's voluntary choir, known as Pips) – February 2021

- Birmingham Cathedral Choir Procedures for Arrival, Departure, Absence and Evacuation – current but undated
- Safeguarding Information for Choristers and Parents at Birmingham Cathedral Choir – undated
- Birmingham Cathedral Choir Procedure for Zoom Rehearsals and Theory – current but undated

#### *Safeguarding practice/ comms*

- General Risk Assessment – Education – 22.10.17
- Risk assessment for school visits – undated
- Safeguarding Children Leaflet – 2021

#### **Participation of members of the cathedral**

Conversations were held with the following people: • The Dean • The Canon Precentor • The Canon Missioner • A Lay Chapter member (Chapter safeguarding lead) • The Chief Executive Officer • The Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) • The Head of Music • The Head Verger • The Independent Chair of the Bishop's Safeguarding Management Group • The Office Administrator (with responsibility for DBS and training record keeping) • The Tower Captain • An Associate Priest with pastoral care responsibility • The Communications Manager • The Advocates for Children and Vulnerable Adults

Questionnaires were distributed widely, enabling participation by adults in a range of roles across the cathedral community.

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

The auditors reviewed: • Eight case records • email trails in respect of 14 additional cases • three staff HR files for evidence of safer recruitment.

### **LIMITATIONS OF AUDIT**

No choristers or other children/ young people returned questionnaires, although invited to do so.

No survivors responded to the invitation to speak directly with the auditors.

COVID restrictions meant that the entire audit had to be conducted virtually.