

# **REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT CHAIR OF THE SAFEGUARDING ADVISORY GROUP TO CHAPTER**

**I January 2021 – 31 December 2021**

**CHAPTER MEETING: FEBRUARY 2022**

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## **Introduction and Outline of Report**

This report has been prepared for Chapter by Peter Spindler, the independent chair of the Safeguarding Advisory Group (SAG) and provides assurance on how well the Cathedral is performing on the issue of safeguarding. It draws upon data provided by Louise Wilcox, the Cathedral's Safeguarding Advisor (CSA). The following six sections detail how the Cathedral is working to ensure the wellbeing of vulnerable groups and strive for excellence in ensuring the safety of those who may be identified at risk of harm.

This is the fifth safeguarding annual report to be submitted to Chapter and is supported by the register of risks and the up to date action plan, both of which are attached as appendices to this report. Whilst much of the information will not be new to Chapter and the data is an amalgam of that already provided quarterly to them by the Cathedral's Safeguarding Lead (CSL), this is a report written for publication in the spirit of openness and transparency adopted by the Cathedral in its approach to safeguarding.

## **Safeguarding Governance Structures and Resources**

The pandemic has continued to impact significantly on life at the Cathedral during 2021 and footfall reduced significantly as a result however access has considerably improved on the 2020 situation. Furthermore, the dedicated CSA took on the additional responsibility of covering the safeguarding officer role at Westminster Abbey throughout the year so her capacity to drive forward change at the Cathedral was understandably reduced. I am however pleased to report that the momentum of safeguarding has been maintained with the SAG meeting virtually on three occasions, in March, June and September, and some significant outcomes have been achieved, not least a very satisfactory SCIE audit (see below). Issues such as the IICSA recommendations, security of the choir room and remote music teaching have been considered during the last year in addition to the routine safeguarding oversight. There have also been some good examples of collaborative working and capability building during the year.

The Safeguarding Lead Canon remains as the Precentor James Milne who works closely with the CSL, currently the Registrar, and the CSA. Together they exercise general oversight of all safeguarding policy and its implementation across the Cathedral together with the ancillary buildings and grounds and share oversight of relevant cases with its Choir School. They are supported internally by the Chaplain, the Assistant Chaplain and HR when appropriate; the Virgers provide an initial response on the Cathedral floor if the Chaplains or a pastoral team member are not immediately available and offer support as necessary. Externally, support is provided by the Diocese Safeguarding Advisor and me as independent chair of the SAG thereby demonstrating an effective team based approach to safeguarding.

## **Policy and Procedures**

The Cathedral's safeguarding processes are set out in the policy document '*Promoting a Safer Cathedral*'. This document was developed in its current format in 2014 and re-published in a revised and updated format in December 2017 having been adopted by Chapter earlier that month. It was modified slightly in 2018 and a more detailed revision was carried out in June 2019. The Cathedral Safeguarding Policy and appendices were reviewed during 2021 and will be adjusted in 2022 to reflect issues identified in the SCIE audit to enhance the current framework. Chapter should ensure the necessary revisions are completed as soon as practicable.

## **Summary of Safeguarding Activity in 2021**

The following sub-sections detail elements of the safeguarding arrangements currently in place at the Cathedral and issues that have arisen during the year:

*Safer Recruitment* – These practices form part of a network of checks and balances which will minimise the possibility of appointing inappropriate individuals to work with those at risk of harm. The Cathedral has a good grip on what posts require safeguarding measures to be in place and all HR staff and colleagues who form part of recruitment panels are trained to assist in selection interviews for these posts. In 2021 four regulated posts; Head of S&FL, Organ Scholar, Vicar Choral and Succentor, were filled through this process and in every case a properly trained interviewer was present.

*Vetting and Barring Checks* – The Cathedral continues to use *U-check* for its Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks to verify the suitability of those applying to roles which involve working with people at risk of harm. The following data has been provided for the past year:

- 13 DBS applications were submitted, and
- 13 satisfactory certificates were issued.
- There were no “blemished” returns.
- No returns are outstanding.

As a result, no safeguarding plans or risk assessments have been required as part of the safer-recruitment procedures.

*Training* – The Cathedral uses the national Church of England training framework but has faced some challenges in 2021 due to the pandemic and staff absence. In addition to the mandatory national training, the Cathedral provides localised safeguarding training to all pastoral volunteers. The CSA has enhanced collaborative working arrangements through the provision of joint, bespoke training for both the Cathedral staff and colleagues from Westminster Abbey. This is a pragmatic approach, which makes better use of resources and builds stronger links with a comparable institutions.

Whilst keeping all staff and volunteers up to date with their training has not been easy, I am pleased to report that momentum has been maintained to a point despite the challenges in that most staff and volunteers currently attending the Cathedral were up-to-date with their training by the end of 2021. Some staff and volunteers are unable to access the training

remotely and are awaiting face-to-face training sessions, these will be taking place in February 2022. Many volunteers are considering whether they wish to resume a volunteering role post-pandemic and, whilst they are still listed as volunteers even though not attending, they remain on the table below as not up-to-date with their safeguarding training. Volunteers will be required to complete the training in the event of choosing to return to their roles at the Cathedral. This will need to be monitored by Chapter during 2022 as currently it appears that a few staff are not up to date with their training and currently working at the Cathedral. Furthermore, Chapter should be aware that there remain issues with record keeping and data collection relating to the training of volunteers, this too will need addressing in 2022.

The following table provides a detailed breakdown of the safeguarding training delivered in 2021 and what remains outstanding:

<b>Training</b>	<b>Total Completed 2021</b>	<b>Total to be completed</b>
<b>Basic (formerly C0)</b> required for all Church Officers, volunteers and staff	59 staff  49 volunteers	32 staff (primarily staff who need face-to-face training; the course is booked and all staff will have completed by end of Feb 2022)  52 volunteers (some need face-to-face training and are being booked onto courses, others are completing the online training; all will have done so by the end of Feb 2022)  43 volunteers who are not currently serving (and yet to make a decision about returning)
<b>Foundation (formerly C1)</b> required for all staff and volunteers who work with children/vulnerable adults	57 staff  3 volunteers	34 staff (as above, to be completed by the end of Feb 2022)  9 volunteers who are not currently serving (yet to make a decision about returning)
<b>Leadership (formerly C2 and C3)</b> required for all who have PTO, managers and staff who have significant contact with children and vulnerable adults as part of their duties	24	4 staff (course booked and will have completed by end of Feb 2022)

<b>Specialist</b> - Training Duty Pastoral Team Training (in-house safeguarding training)	4	0
<b>Senior Leadership training (formerly C4)</b> required for all senior staff	8	0
<b>Safer Recruitment</b> - for recruitment panels for positions working with children and young people	18	0

*Incident/Concern Reporting* – The regular identification and reporting of possible safeguarding presentations, incidents, concerns or issues is a good indicator of the safeguarding culture of an organisation. The Cathedral actively encourages people to speak out when they don't feel comfortable about a situation or when someone at risk presents in concerning circumstances. Incident/concern reports are submitted by proforma to the CSA for assessment and notification to the safeguarding lead for action. Again the effects of the global pandemic mean we cannot make a meaningful comparison of reports with previous years however, there has been a marked increase in reporting this year from 38 presentations in 2020 to 60 in 2021.

The Cathedral has successfully implemented the SafeBase case management system to enable effective oversight of incidents and track its safeguarding response to those in need. Use of this system attracted positive comment by the SCIE auditors who stated, “*case work and information sharing at St Paul's Cathedral is a strength*”. The reports for 2021 can be broken down as follows:

- 47 reports related to adults - 28 were mental health concerns and 19 were adults who were presenting as vulnerable
- 13 concerned children – many on visits and becoming separated from their guardians
- 22 of these incidents were significant and required referral to statutory services.
- 6 cases were referred to the London Diocese, or other Dioceses/Cathedrals for their oversight and consideration

No safeguarding management plans were required as a result of these presentations. The current Dean continues to maintain a robust stance on this issue having decided in 2019 that the Cathedral is not a suitable place for people on safeguarding plans to be managed, referring them back instead to their home parish for ongoing support. The CSA continues to work with the Virgers and Chaplains to identify a number of regular attendees at the Cathedral who are believed to be vulnerable or have mental health issues.

*Past Case Review 2* - The Cathedral has successfully completed its review of past cases as part of the wider Church of England initiative and submitted its return to the Diocese. 15 of its cases were submitted for consideration by the independent reviewers and one required a serious case management (core) group to be formed which is due to close soon. There were however no further recommendations from the reviewers and no additional action has been required as a result of this process which is a positive endorsement of action taken by the Cathedral in the past.

*Multi Agency Working* - The CSA has continued to build relationships with other statutory and non-statutory partners throughout 2021 despite the challenges of the pandemic. A good understanding is evident as to which cases should be referred to statutory partners and 22 incident reports (see above) were shared with social services, health or police. The CSA has also become a member of the City of London Multi-Agency Practitioners Forum, which meets quarterly to share best practice, trends and develop training initiatives.

*London Regional Adult Safeguarding Forum* – This was initiated by St Paul's in 2019 and involves colleagues from Westminster Abbey and Southwark Cathedral sharing best practice and examining the links between spiritual and pastoral care with safeguarding. It met virtually in July with limited attendance from other institutions and I hope that this will be reinvigorated in 2022 as it is a useful forum to learn from others and share experiences.

*Cathedral Safeguarding Practitioners' Network* – St Paul's remains an active member of the Cathedrals Safeguarding Network which met November 2021.

*Hackney Children's Choir* – Hackney Children's Choir and the Senior Choir continued meeting throughout the pandemic, using Zoom as a platform for rehearsal. Primary schools were also supported by weekly live singing via Zoom and Teams. This activity was fed into the Cathedral's digital risk assessment tool.

*Serious Case Management Groups* – The Cathedral currently attends two long running national SCMGs (formerly core groups) although there has been limited engagement or update from these. One further group is currently managed by the diocese as part of the PCR2 process.

*Working with the Diocese* – A new director of safeguarding has been appointed for the diocese and he has been an active member of the SAG, working closely with the CSA. SCIE have identified a gap in the Cathedral's engagement with the Diocese Safeguarding Advisory Panel and I suggest the Chapter safeguarding lead or the CSL attend these meetings to ensure a cohesive approach with the diocese.

*The Truth Project* – In 2020, the Cathedral engaged the Truth Project, established by IICSA, to support the Chair of the Guild of Companions, who in turn disseminated information about the Project to Guild Members. The Cathedral subsequently received some reports of concern about past behaviour at the School; these matters have passed to the Diocese as appropriate. In 2021, a few individuals met with the Dean and CSA to discuss their experiences and this engagement is ongoing.

### **Risk Register**

The SAG has continued to oversee a detailed 12 point risk register following the Cathedral's standard format for the management of risk (see Appx A) and a risk management sub-group has been established to manage the detail. The register is linked to the Action Plan and allows for cross referencing of issues between the two documents. One risk remains as red and nine are amber. Whilst I am satisfied that all identified risks are being addressed appropriately, the capacity of the CSA to manage this document has been reduced and I expect there to be a renewed effort in 2022 to bring this up to date.

## **Safeguarding Action Plan**

The Action Plan (see Appx B) is designed to drive the business of safeguarding at the Cathedral capturing a list of longer term activities underway and is additional to the routine actions arising from the SAG meetings. 31 substantive actions in total have been generated and 23 of these have been completed. The remaining nine are all being progressed and set for completion in 2022.

## **SCIE Audit**

The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) was asked in 2018 to provide an independent audit of the safeguarding arrangements of the cathedrals of the Church of England. The overarching aim of each audit is to support safeguarding improvements and to that end, their team visited St Paul's in November 2021. The SCIE methodology does not conclude findings with recommendations, instead they provide the cathedral questions to consider in relation to the findings so that they may decide how best to tackle the issue at hand. A significant amount of preparatory work was initiated by the CSA, overseen by the SAG and a full review of previous SCIE published audits was discussed to identify any gaps in the arrangements, some 33 issues for consideration were identified and addressed.

SCIE provided a draft 43 page report to the Dean in December for a critical read containing 27 "questions to consider". None of these cause me any significant concern and the final 16 conclusions in Chapter 6 were in the main very positive about the safeguarding framework in place, concluding that "*Safeguarding is a commonly understood priority across the Cathedral and many opportunities are being taken to further reinforce this culture*". This is a very satisfactory outcome for St Paul's and the full report will be made public in early 2022. The SAG is overseeing the response to the findings which will need to be made public via a template action plan and I would urge Chapter to review progress after six months to ensure the issues raised have been addressed.

## **Concluding Remarks**

I am pleased to report that the overall Cathedral's safeguarding response remains effective despite the challenges posed by the ongoing pandemic. The team continue to demonstrate a clear commitment to managing the risks and enhancing the Cathedral's framework to ensure those most at risk of harm are safe to attend and worship at St Paul's. As ever there is always more that can be done to enhance the existing safeguarding arrangements during 2022, not least in developing a meaningful response to the helpful observations provided by SCIE in their audit.

I want to conclude by commending the outstanding professionalism and commitment of the CSA, Louise Wilcox, who has worked extended hours for 14 months to manage the safeguarding arrangements across what are arguably the two most iconic places of worship in the UK and still deliver positive outcomes for the vulnerable. She is owed a debt of gratitude for her efforts summed up by SCIE as follows "*the CSA at St Paul's Cathedral is highly effective, well recognised and regarded.*"

Peter Spindler  
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February 2022