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Portsmouth Cathedral

Independent Safeguarding Audit

June 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.

Written by Susan Ellery and Jane Bee

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Social Care Institute for Excellence
83 Baker Street, London W1U 6AG

www.scie.org.uk

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1	The audit programme.....	1
1.2	The audit process.....	1
1.3	Structure of the report	2
2	CONTEXT	3
2.1	Context of the Cathedral	3
2.2	Contextual features relevant to safeguarding.....	3
2.3	Description of the safeguarding structure (including links with the Diocese).....	4
2.4	Who was seen in this audit	4
2.5	Limitations of the audit	5
3	FINDINGS – PRACTICE.....	6
3.1	Safe activities and working practices	6
3.2	Choirs and music	11
3.3	Case work (including information sharing)	15
3.4	Clergy Disciplinary Measure	17
3.5	Training	17
3.6	Safer recruitment.....	18
4	FINDINGS – ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORTS.....	20
4.1	Policy, procedures and guidance	20
4.2	Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser/ and Cathedral Safeguarding Officer.....	21
4.3	Recording and IT systems	22
5	FINDINGS – LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY	23
5.1	Quality assurance	23
5.2	Complaints about the safeguarding service	24
5.3	Whistleblowing	24
5.4	Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel, Diocesan Case work Scrutiny Group and Cathedral Safeguarding Committee	25
5.5	Leadership and management	27
6	CONCLUSIONS.....	32
	APPENDIX: REVIEW PROCESS	33

1 INTRODUCTION

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. Standard overview text

1.3 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

1.3.1 This report is divided into:

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

2 CONTEXT

2.1 CONTEXT OF THE CATHEDRAL

2.1.1 The leadership in each cathedral, as part of the audit process, is asked to supply a brief description of the institution. Portsmouth Cathedral's is here:

'From humble beginnings in 1180 at the heart of Portsmouth's original settlement, this church, dedicated to Thomas Becket, became a parish church around 1320 and a cathedral in 1927. It has been integral to the development of Portsmouth as a modern, vibrant city.

The Cathedral reflects the constantly changing, growing, and unfolding of the Christian faith, displaying a harmony of three distinct architectural styles which provide a source of light, warmth, and space.

The Cathedral is the mother church for a diocese that extends beyond the City of Portsmouth to include the Isle of Wight and parts of south-east Hampshire.

Portsmouth Cathedral is a parish church cathedral, meaning that as well as being the cathedral for the Diocese, it also serves a geographical parish and local community. It is a place for large civic, county, and diocesan events but also hosts weddings, funerals, confirmations, and baptisms for those who live in the parish and members of the congregation living further afield.'

2.1.2 Portsmouth has long been an important base for the Royal Navy and there are close ties with the Cathedral.

2.2 CONTEXTUAL FEATURES RELEVANT TO SAFEGUARDING

2.2.1 The Cathedral building has evolved over the centuries and is now a light and uncluttered space, even allowing for the removal of chairs due to social distancing requirements. There is an absence of side chapels and no ambulatory behind the high altar and the choirs sing in open spaces.

2.2.2 The Cathedral is situated in Old Portsmouth, close to the Solent. The auditors were told that a hundred years ago, when the Church of St Thomas à Becket was chosen to be the Cathedral, the area was economically poor. Old Portsmouth is now very smart. This gives the Cathedral a challenge in terms of being relevant to Portsmouth people as a whole as it is somewhat cut off on the edge of the city.

2.2.3 The Cathedral is a member of Inclusive Church, a network of churches and cathedrals whose mission statement says, 'We believe in inclusive church – a church which celebrates and affirms every person and does not discriminate. We will continue to challenge the church where it continues to discriminate against people on grounds of disability, economic power, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, learning disability, mental health, neurodiversity, or sexuality'. The Dean explained that they want people to come to the Cathedral because they experience it as welcoming, particularly in terms of sexuality and gender identity.

2.2.4 The Cathedral has a vision and strategy, agreed in 2020, that is headed by its intention to be 'a beacon and safe haven, anchored in Jesus Christ'. In terms of safeguarding, this is interpreted as the Cathedral being a safe place to be for all who come through the door.

2.2.5 The senior team at the Cathedral (the Dean, the two Cathedral Canons and the Chief Operating Officer) are all relatively new in post, with the exception of the Canon Precentor. As a team, they have worked mostly in pandemic conditions. They feel that they have brought fresh eyes to safeguarding as well as their combined experience in previous roles and dioceses.

2.2.6 The Cathedral Measure, agreed by Synod in November 2020, aims to put cathedrals onto a firm governance footing which is fit for the 21st century. When introducing the draft measure to Synod, the steering committee chair said:

'It provides for co-regulation of cathedrals by the Charity Commission of England and Wales and the Church Commissioners and brings them under the Charities Act.

'It provides for a clear governance structure, separating governance and management activities. It provides clarity over the roles and responsibilities of those involved in our cathedrals.

'It provides for better, professional control of finance, risk and audit. It clarifies issues of property ownership and, most importantly, it has safeguarding at its heart.'

2.2.7 These national changes mean, in turn, that certain of the governance and management structures at Portsmouth are also in the process of changing, although not until 2023. This includes the removal of the Cathedral Council as an instrument of formal governance, adjustments to the composition of Chapter and the proposed development of an Executive Senior Management Team (SMT).

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) states that the role of the Dean is to provide leadership concerning safeguarding, and to encourage everyone to Promote a Safer Church.

2.3.2 At Portsmouth, the safeguarding lead is delegated to the Canon Chancellor, but safeguarding is seen as the everybody's responsibility.

2.3.3 All safeguarding case work in the Cathedral is the responsibility of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor (DSA). A service level agreement (SLA) is in the process of being agreed between the Diocese and the Cathedral.

2.4 WHO WAS SEEN IN THIS AUDIT

2.4.1 The auditors had conversations with people in the following roles:

- The Head Verger
- The Office Manager
- The Chief Operating Officer
- One of the three Choir Matrons
- The DSA
- The Lay Safeguarding Representative

- The Dean
- The Tower Captain
- The Canon Chancellor
- The Headteacher and two safeguarding leads at Portsmouth Grammar School
- The Canon Precentor and previous interim Chapter Lead on Safeguarding
- The Organist and Master of Choristers (one person).

2.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE AUDIT

- 2.5.1** The auditors were able to conduct this audit entirely face to face so did not have the limitations imposed by working virtually. The only COVID-related adaptation was that focus groups were replaced by questionnaires. This brings the advantage that the auditors hear from a greater number of people with the disadvantage that opinions or feelings cannot be explored.
- 2.5.2** The only known limitation was the absence of case work records for the auditors to review – see section 3.3.

3 FINDINGS – PRACTICE

3.1 SAFE ACTIVITIES AND WORKING PRACTICES

Precincts and buildings

Description

- 3.1.1** There are significant challenges to running a place of worship that is open to the public. Managing the wellbeing of a large numbers of worshippers and visitors, some of whom may be vulnerable themselves, or a possible risk to others is a complex task.
- 3.1.2** Portsmouth Cathedral is not currently a major tourist destination and is a little apart from the better-known sites of HMS Victory and the Mary Rose, and from the retail and hospitality at Gunwharf Quays. Visitor numbers, pre-COVID, were about 30–40 a day.
- 3.1.3** The vergers team is very small, comprising a full-time Head Verger and a part-time verger, supported by volunteer welcomers and guides. The Canon on duty is always on call and usually available. A feature of Portsmouth Cathedral is the presence of the Dean and Canons in the building. When the auditors were shown the interior, it was clear that they were well known to the guides and other volunteers on duty.
- 3.1.4** There is no CCTV in the Cathedral. As noted above, the building is open and sightlines are generally good, but this was a concern to the auditors. However, given that there is rarely more than one verger on duty, it is probably better that they are on the floor than watching CCTV images from an office.
- 3.1.5** The vergers used to have hand-held radios but found they were not as useful as hoped, although the crackle given off by the handset made them feel safer as it indicated that someone was available. The Cathedral is considering a phone app that would raise an alarm although this does depend on people having smart phones.
- 3.1.6** The vergers have done Awareness and Foundation safeguarding training and have had some input on terrorism. They do not have Mental Health First Aid training, or de-escalation techniques training, or Domestic Abuse training.
- 3.1.7** Although the Cathedral would not seem to be an obvious target for terrorism or disruption, it is searched by the police and sniffer dogs before high-profile services and funerals, especially those involving the military. Training in anti-terrorism was said to be some time ago and did not include situations where people have to be locked down in the Cathedral. Evacuation procedures have been tested out.
- 3.1.8** The Head Verger described a situation where a verger was alone in the Cathedral when three men came in, all apparently inebriated, and behaved in a way that made them feel unsafe. The Organist arrived, by chance, and the situation resolved itself. Although they knew of the lone working policy (which was not available to the auditors), they were not sure it applied to their role.
- 3.1.9** One of the canons talked about services where there is a volunteer on the door but no verger present, leaving them to double up as verger as well as priest. This could lead to difficulties if anyone came in during the service and was disruptive.
- 3.1.10** On one occasion in recent memory, the police had been called to deal with someone who was showing acute symptoms of mental ill-health and the response was described as swift and respectful to the individual.

- 3.1.11** The Cathedral has made changes to keep choristers safe before, during and after services and practice. They have exclusive use, indicated by signage, of public toilets at designated times before services (although the auditors saw the sign moved to one side by a visiting adult). They change separately to the lay clerks and the choral scholars, in different rooms.
- 3.1.12** The survey results showed that 72 per cent of respondents felt extremely safe in the Cathedral, and 13 per cent moderately safe. The remainder said that it was not relevant to their role or experience. When asked to what extent lone working is avoided, 23 per cent said extremely, 28 per cent moderately, 9 per cent not at all, and 40 per cent not relevant. The survey respondents were primarily either congregants, volunteers or parents of choristers (the latter group being unlikely ever to be alone in the building).
- 3.1.13** The Cathedral offices are in Cathedral House, which is just across the road from the Cathedral itself. This is a multi-use building; flats on the top floor are let to choral scholars, the Becket Hall on the ground floor is used by the choirs for practice and by the Toddler Group when it is meeting. The Becket Hall is also hired out to other organisations such as the Brownies, and other space on the ground floor is let to commercial companies such as an accountancy company. Apart from choristers, children using the Becket Hall enter from the street entrance walking through the communal area used by the commercial companies. Organisations renting Becket Hall or the Cathedral are required to have a safeguarding policy if their activity includes children or vulnerable adults, which is acceptable to the Cathedral. In turn, the Cathedral provides them with a copy of their safeguarding policy.
- 3.1.14** The verger team holds responsibility for Cathedral House as well as the Cathedral. In practice, a number of people take responsibility for locking up and setting alarms as they are the last to leave their part of the building.
- 3.1.15** Cathedral fire and intruder alarms are centrally monitored and are responded to by either the Dean, Canons or Head Verger. They would not attend alone, waiting for a second person before entering the building. The monitoring company asks Cathedral staff if the police should be alerted. Fire alarms automatically alert the fire and rescue service. Intruder and fire alarms in Cathedral House are not monitored by an external company.

Analysis

- 3.1.16** Being smaller than many cathedrals, as well as more open plan, Portsmouth has some innate advantages in terms of keeping staff, congregation, choirs and visitors safe. Clerical and lay staff work well together, keep a presence in the Cathedral and look out for each other. However, more could be done to equip the vergers, and probably the volunteers too, to feel and be safer.
- 3.1.17** The survey results would seem to show that people in a range of roles are quite likely to find themselves alone at times and some of those people did not feel completely safe.
- 3.1.18** The auditors did not see a lone working policy specific to the Cathedral at the time of the audit. A lone working policy was developed in 2019 and adopted by Chapter which references the Diocesan Policy. Since the audit, this has been incorporated into the Staff Handbook but is not shared with volunteers. It would seem beneficial to make sure that all staff and volunteers in the Cathedral, including the clergy, are aware of the policy and how it applies to them, as there is an issue about how people know about it and see it.

3.1.19 There does seem to be a deficit in training for public-facing roles in fields such as mental health, domestic abuse, terrorism.

3.1.20 Ideally, the vergers team would be large enough to allow for locking up and alarm-setting, whether in the Cathedral or Cathedral House, to always be their responsibility but the auditors understand that finances do not currently allow for that.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider:

- What practical steps could be taken to improve the safety and security of all those working in, using and enjoying the Cathedral and its surroundings?
- Who is best placed to develop procedures to promote consistent practices in relation to external threats and lone working?
- How confident is the Cathedral that there is sufficient capacity overall to ensure safety at the busiest of times?

Vulnerable adults

Description

3.1.21 People in the Cathedral deal with situations where pastoral care and safeguarding issues are intertwined and change over time, and so are not clear cut. In the context of cathedrals, the openness to visitors and wide range of roles in which clergy, staff and volunteers get involved in supporting vulnerable people, make it challenging. It creates the need for clear processes for:

- Recording, and clarity about the appropriate level of detail to record
- Reporting lines and requirements internally
- Risk assessing and decision making about when a referral to statutory agencies

3.1.22 At present, due to the anti-viral measures of logging in and wearing a mask, few if any local vulnerable people are visiting the Cathedral. In normal times, there is a small number known to the vergers and clergy. It was not clear how regular such visitors were and whether there would be any follow-up if they were noticed to have been absent for longer than usual. There was no formal recording.

3.1.23 The Head Verger talked about representatives from local charities coming to the Cathedral in the past, to describe their work and what help they might offer. This had not developed into formal agreements to signpost people or make referrals if wanted.

3.1.24 Half the adults who completed the survey were extremely sure that the Cathedral takes on a role in helping people who, due to personal circumstances or crises, need help to keep safe, and a further quarter were moderately sure. Most of the other quarter felt it was not relevant to their role.

Analysis

3.1.25 The rather remote position of the Cathedral means that it does not act as a magnet to people who are homeless or have other problems, even though, as a Navy city, Portsmouth has many ex-service people, some of whom are very vulnerable. Nevertheless, the auditors found a high level of awareness of vulnerable people amongst lay and clerical staff and a wish to make a difference.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- What can be done to improve overall confidence in identifying and meeting the needs of vulnerable adults and responding well to those in crisis?

Volunteers*Description*

- 3.1.26** The Cathedral relies heavily on the volunteers to keep the environment safe for everyone as there may not be a verger on duty. To date, volunteers who become vulnerable themselves and need support have not been a big issue, and it is accepted that a few will decide not to return after the pandemic. Pre-pandemic there were about 300 volunteers who are currently the responsibility of the Canon Chancellor, helped by the Office Manager. If a current bid for funding for a Visitor Experience Manager is successful, responsibility for the volunteers will transfer to them.
- 3.1.27** The Cathedral has an Induction Book for staff and volunteers which is admirably comprehensive, covering the vision and strategy for the Cathedral, governance (local and national), finance, relations with the Diocese and more. The safeguarding section gives the Cathedral safeguarding policy statement and clearly sets out who needs a DBS and which groups come under the safeguarding umbrella.
- 3.1.28** The Induction Book does not give information about what to do when one is worried about a child or person, or the signs and symptoms of child or adult abuse. Neither does it state the requirements for training set out below and this seems a missed opportunity. The auditors heard that there is currently no induction process for volunteers or any signed agreement.
- 3.1.29** A volunteer team of 10 lay pastoral assistants, organised by the Canon Precentor, visit people who are too old or unwell to come to the Cathedral. Pastoral assistants are offered one-to-one sessions with the Canon Precentor if they are worried by anything they notice on a visit.
- 3.1.30** All volunteers are trained in safeguarding at Awareness and Foundation level, and the lay pastoral assistants also have training in domestic abuse. A gap in volunteer training had been identified, as people who did not need a DBS did not automatically get safeguarding training. All volunteers must now do the training before they return to the Cathedral. This has met with some resistance and a few volunteers have chosen not to return.
- 3.1.31** The auditors met informally with a couple of volunteers whilst in the Cathedral and were impressed by their enthusiasm and their welcoming manner.

Analysis

- 3.1.32** The Cathedral has a loyal volunteer base, all of whom are now required to train at the basic level. It would make sense to think about which volunteers would benefit from a wider range of training, e.g. in mental health, substance misuse, domestic abuse.
- 3.1.33** The appointment of a Visitor Experience Manager would allow the Cathedral to pull together a more streamlined recruitment and induction process for volunteers as well as keeping in touch with existing volunteers. The possibility of a team structure in which each group of volunteers would have a team leader who met regularly with the manager was mentioned and this does work well elsewhere.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How can the Cathedral make sure that volunteers are properly inducted in safeguarding and that, should they become vulnerable themselves for any reason, this is noticed and responded to?

Children

3.1.34 This section is about children who come to the Cathedral in various capacities. It does not cover choristers who are referred to in the next section.

Description

3.1.35 The Cathedral does not currently have an Education Officer although it is hoped that finances will permit recruitment in the future. There have been no school visits since March 2020 due to COVID-19. Because this is an area of work that is in abeyance, the auditors did not review the associated policies.

3.1.36 Portsmouth as a city has areas of high deprivation and there is concern that school visits were not bringing in some of the children who would benefit the most as they were unaffordable. Just before the pandemic, the Cathedral launched a 'pop-up cathedral'; a tent that has images of the inside and outside the Cathedral printed on the canvas. The plan is that the tent can tour schools and give children a taste of being in the Cathedral. The potential to reach a much wider range of children is high.

3.1.37 The Cathedral has three child servers who have not worked since March 2020. They were always brought to the Cathedral and collected by parents and always worked with the Head Verger, who is DBS checked and has safeguarding training, or the Canon Precentor.

3.1.38 The Sunday School, known as Becket's Bunch, has also not met during the pandemic. The auditors were told that the children are aged between 3 and 11, and parents accompany the younger children. It takes place every Sunday during the 10:30am service and children leave the service as a group, returning after communion. There is one adult leader and one helper, and the Canon Chancellor often joined the group.

3.1.39 There is also a baby and toddler group that has not met since March 2020. The group starts with a brief service in the Cathedral and then crosses the road (with the help of a volunteer) to Becket Hall, in Cathedral House, where toys are set up. Parents stay with their children and the Canon Chancellor or other members of the clergy team would always join the session. Registration forms were held by the Cathedral office.

Analysis

3.1.40 The auditors found that the safeguarding arrangements for child servers, Sunday School and toddler group all seem to be good enough but rely on verbal transmission and mutual understanding. It would be good practice to write down how each activity is run and how children are kept safe and to use this as a basis for policy and practice guidance.

3.1.41 It was not possible to review arrangements for school visits or the use of the pop-up Cathedral as the Education Officer post is vacant and there is no current activity. When the post is filled, it would make sense for the post holder to review all the relevant policies and practice guidance.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How confident is the Cathedral that the policies and practice guidance that keep children safe is as robust as possible and is shared and understood by everyone who needs to know?

3.2 CHOIRS AND MUSIC

Choir

Description

- 3.2.1** All cathedral choirs raise a number of potential safeguarding issues. Young children, working towards a highly-prized goal all add to the potential for choristers to be groomed by people in positions of trust within the choir context. Secondly, the demands of elite performance can be in tension or conflict with child welfare requirements and expectations. We deal with each in turn below.
- 3.2.2** Chaperoning is a key mechanism for enabling the safety of choristers across cathedrals. It is a supervisory role with a number of different functions, not all of which relate to safeguarding. These include making sure that no children go missing, managing individual and group behaviour, appearance and dress as well as maintaining vigilance in identifying any potential grooming behaviours and risks of abuse.
- 3.2.3** Portsmouth Cathedral Choir is made up of 24 boy choristers, six probationers, six lay clerks and six scholars. Almost all of the boys attend Portsmouth Grammar School, an independent day school situated in close proximity to the Cathedral. Boys enter the choir at the age of 7 or 8 and leave at 13 or 14. Portsmouth Grammar School has a junior department as well as the senior school.
- 3.2.4** Since 2006 a choir called Cantate has provided opportunities for girls and teenage boys to sing at one evensong and a Sunday service weekly as well as other services. About two thirds of the girls attend Portsmouth Grammar School; others come mainly from Portsmouth High School, another independent day school, and a few from a range of schools as far away as Chichester. Girls usually enter the choir at the age of 10 and stay until they are 18.
- 3.2.5** The auditors were concerned to know whether the girls feel they have equality with the boys and are as highly valued. There was one comment in the children's survey that indicated that some may feel they don't have the same opportunities. The Organist and Master of Choristers (one person) shared that they had had a conversation with a senior girl chorister about equity. One of the changes brought about due to COVID and choir scheduling has meant that the girls have started to sing every week on a Sunday instead of half termly. All this matters because children and young people who feel as equally valued as others are, in the auditors' view, more likely to have the confidence to say when they have an experience that makes them feel unsafe.
- 3.2.6** Choir chaperoning is carried out by a team of three choir matrons; one, who takes the lead, works with the boys' choir and liaises with the Grammar School, one mainly with the girls in Cantate and one covers most of the morning rehearsals, before the school day. They do not have responsibility for liaison with other choir feeder schools; this falls to the Organist and Master of Choristers (see paragraph 3.2.8).

- 3.2.7** The Cathedral as a whole has strong links with Portsmouth Grammar School, who often use the Cathedral premises. A half-termly liaison meeting provides a formal opportunity to share information and review concerns (as well as noticing success), whilst daily communication is strong. The choir matron for the boys was previously a teaching assistant at the Grammar School so knows the school well and was said to be proactive in raising any issues, e.g. the scheduling implications of sports day. They are also part of the liaison meetings.
- 3.2.8** The auditors were concerned to know about communication with the other feeder schools for the choirs. The Organist and Master of Choristers described copying the safeguarding lead at Portsmouth High School into the weekly bulletin, and the intention to finalise a written agreement between school and Cathedral. Most of the contact with other schools is via parents but the Organist and Master of Choristers keeps in contact with headteachers and invites them to choir events.
- 3.2.9** Each year, the Cathedral appoints five choral scholars, generally known as ‘gappers’, who are mostly pre-university students and mostly male, and an organ scholar. Portsmouth Grammar School runs the recruitment process and formally employs the scholars, who spend much of their time working in the school. The choral scholars sing in the ‘back row’ at all Cathedral services and the Cathedral provides rented accommodation.
- 3.2.10** The auditors were concerned by the potential for a blurring of boundaries between the choirs, the organ scholar and the choral scholars, especially the older girls and boys in Cantate. The Portsmouth Grammar School headteacher and the senior school safeguarding lead were very clear that their policy and induction spell out the legal implications of being in a Position of Trust, and the Cathedral staff were equally clear that the Position of Trust transfers to the Cathedral as the choral scholars have some supervisory responsibilities to the choirs.
- 3.2.11** The choral and organ scholars have their own Cathedral-based handbook as well as all that is provided by the Grammar School as their employer. The auditors found less clarity about the Position of Trust in this handbook than as described in the school staff handbook. It was made clear that non-family visitors aged under 18 are not allowed in the scholar’s accommodation.
- 3.2.12** The safeguarding section states, ‘All scholars are expected to assist in the supervision of the choristers on a rota of duties. We expect a high standard of behaviour from all choristers both at school and at the Cathedral. The scholars are encouraged to help enable this both through their own department but also in their expectations of choristers’. The choir matron gave the auditors her own checklist of induction material for the scholars, all of which might be included in a revised handbook.
- 3.2.13** The boys’ choir and Cantate have their own separate handbooks. The safeguarding section of Cantate does not spell out that the choral scholars are in a Position of Trust and that relationships between choral scholars and choir members are proscribed. This poses a question about how a parent, who might find it natural for their daughter to be in a relationship with a choral scholar, would know the implications of the scholar’s employment.
- 3.2.14** In terms of all the choir-related handbooks, the policy on the use of social media was a further concern. It is not addressed in the Cantate handbook. The boy choristers’ handbook would seem to be quite dated, in that it refers to child protection rather than safeguarding. Behaviour is broadly addressed but the use of social media is not. As a

result, it is likely that a choir parent would be unaware that their child should not be friends on social media with any adult related to the choir, and nor should he ever be contacting an adult without a parent being involved or having photographs taken.

- 3.2.15** The scholars' handbook is clearer and states, 'It is a condition of employment that choral scholars are not 'friends' on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat (or any other social networking site) with any members of the Cathedral or school community who are under 18 or of school age. Along with the school's acceptable use and data protection policies, you are asked to read the school's social media policy as a requirement of your employment before you start work'.
- 3.2.16** The auditors did not see any policies relating to behaviour or comportment of the lay clerks, who sing in the 'back row' for both the boys' choir and Cantate. The Church of England's Code of Safer Working Practice sets requirements for behaviour, but it is not referenced in handbooks produced by Portsmouth Cathedral.
- 3.2.17** The auditors saw a minor incident log (see section 3.3) that related to the choirs, and showed that, in the period before March 2020, several incidents of bullying were dealt with in the boys' choir. Bullying is not specifically addressed in either the Choir Handbook or the Cantate Handbook; although no incidents of bullying between girls were recorded, it is a possibility. Most of the survey respondents were extremely sure that bullying would be dealt with but 18 per cent felt moderately or not at all sure.
- 3.2.18** Before the pandemic, both choirs kept up a very active schedule of foreign tours. These were described as good for choir recruitment and for the choirs as a whole. The auditors saw risk assessments and tour plans for the most recent tours and judged them to be well thought-through and comprehensive. The choir matrons accompany each tour as well as the music staff.
- 3.2.19** The choir surveys showed that all choristers feel safe and well cared for during all choir activities. Nearly half were not sure what to do if they felt unwell before a service. Most knew who they would talk to if they felt worried and most felt that bullying is dealt with well. Quite a sizeable minority, 36 per cent, felt moderately, and not extremely, confident that their worries would be listened to and that people would help.

Analysis

- 3.2.20** In relation to the choirs, the auditors' main concern was the potential for choral scholars to think that the Position of Trust does not apply when they are on Cathedral-based duties. Overall, the requirements given for conduct are too vague for the circumstances. At school, the scholar is in a teaching position and the boundaries are clear whereas their duties in the Cathedral might easily lead to gathering socially afterwards and losing the distinction that underpins a supervisory relationship.
- 3.2.21** When the auditors talked to the two safeguarding leads and the headteacher at the Grammar School, all were very open to sharing their relevant policies with the Cathedral. It would make sense for the scholars' handbook to 'lift' relevant sections from the school's handbook or Terms of Employment so that it is obvious that the same rules apply.
- 3.2.22** The use of social media policies are not fit for purpose at present, but the support of the Grammar School again gives the Cathedral a straightforward way to bring them up to standard.
- 3.2.23** The Code of Safer Working Practice, mentioned above, might provide a code of conduct for all adults working in the Cathedral.

- 3.2.24** Although the Organist and Master of Choristers shared that systemic bullying was an issue in the boys' choir a number of years ago, and the auditors saw evidence of bullying prior to March 2020, incidents are currently rare. The auditors were told that sometimes the senior boys call out the younger boys when they spot bullying behaviour, which is very positive. This is a further area in which the handbooks and expectations could be strengthened.
- 3.2.25** The two choir handbooks feel somewhat dated; the boys' handbook refers to a 'recent' article by a writer who died several years ago. More importantly, when read together it is striking that the boys' handbook is the Choristers Handbook whilst the girls' handbook is the Cantate Handbook. This could read as the boys being the lynchpin of the choral tradition with the girls as accessories. Revised handbooks (or a handbook) might be developed with the help of the older choir members and parents.
- 3.2.26** On a more positive note, it is clear that choir members enjoy what they do and feel safe doing it.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How might the Cathedral draw on processes and policy already well established in the school in order to strengthen safeguarding for the Choral and Organ scholars and for all regarding social media and online safeguarding?
- How confident is the Cathedral that the girls in the Cantate feel valued and as much part of the make-up of the choristers as the boys' choir?
- How might the Cathedral seek feedback from choristers and parents in order to be assured that arrangements for their safety and wellbeing are working as well as possible?

Bellringing

Description

- 3.2.27** Bellringing is another activity that has had to adapt to pandemic conditions as the potential to spread the virus in a busy bell tower is high. Usually there is a core group of six to 12 Sunday ringers and a larger Thursday practice group of about 30 ringers. The Cathedral is unusual in having a peal of 12 bells which attracts ringers from quite a wide area, who may ring there as well as at their parish.
- 3.2.28** No under-18s have rung the bells recently but the Tower Captain would be very open to them in the future. The young person's parents chaperoned all the one-to-one lessons that are a necessary part of learning to ring. The Tower Captain shared experiences of working with vulnerable adults in the team, not discussed here in order to preserve confidentiality.
- 3.2.29** DBS checks are made on the Tower Captain and Secretary, as well as the Deputy Captain and one other ringer who is also the Steeple keeper and has access to the tower at all times and trains new ringers.
- 3.2.30** Safeguarding training (Awareness and Foundation) has been undertaken by all of the above and is to be rolled out to all the ringers based at the Cathedral.
- 3.2.31** Visiting groups of ringers often ask to visit and, as of recently, all visitors must sign the Cathedral safeguarding policy before arrival.
- 3.2.32** The bell tower is accessed from inside the Cathedral, and the Tower Captain has

keys as they are the last to leave after evening practice. Most of the ringers have completed safeguarding training.

- 3.2.33** The Tower Secretary and Tower Captain have recently written a safeguarding policy for the bellringers, which is clear and comprehensive. Going forward, the policy requires all visiting ringers to sign a declaration form that includes a safeguarding clause.
- 3.2.34** If a child learns to ring, physical contact between the teacher and the child may be necessary and the policy's consent form sets out the circumstances in which this would happen. The policy also states that a child will never be left in the company of a single adult and sets out the requirement for the parent/carer to bring and collect the child, with a handover.
- 3.2.35** The auditors were told that despite many of the ringers not being members of the congregation, they feel part of the Cathedral community. There is regular communication with the tower and the Dean chairs their Annual General Meeting which is appreciated.

Analysis

- 3.2.36** Auditors judged that safeguarding practice in the bell tower has been well thought out and is robust. The Tower Captain showed a sense of determination that safeguarding would remain a high priority and is keen to keep the sense of a ringing team. He contacted ringers throughout the pandemic to ensure all was well.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- This section raised no questions for consideration.

3.3 CASE WORK (INCLUDING INFORMATION SHARING)

Description

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

Effectiveness of responses

- 3.3.2** The auditors were unable to make a proper assessment of case work because no case work was shared with them. Neither were they able to establish how much they might have seen, had it been made available, as Cathedral staff did not know how many cases existed before 2019 when the senior staff team arrived. It was not clear whether there are records at the Diocesan Office or whether the DSA did not know about safeguarding cases prior to the arrival of the current senior Cathedral team.
- 3.3.3** The auditors were given a minor incident log, a recent innovation that takes recording about chorister welfare out of the Organist's personal recording and onto a shared drive with limited access. The incidents logged were described briefly and centred around concerns regarding welfare and bullying.

Effectiveness of risk assessments, safeguarding agreements and the risk management plan

- 3.3.4** Safeguarding agreements are a key mechanism to support offenders who wish 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 to safeguarding agreements. Clarity about the risks that a safeguarding agreement is intended to address also allows for a robust reviewing process, which allows safeguarding agreements to be strengthened where needed, or indeed terminated if appropriate.
- 3.3.5** The auditors were given a safeguarding agreement that went back two years. Although they were told that the case dates back about 15 years, this seems to be the first agreement and was instigated by the Dean on their arrival. There was no risk assessment on which to base an agreement and no recording of any meetings with the subject. It was signed by the Dean and subject. There was also no explanation of the subject's offence, which was described only as 'past'.
- 3.3.6** In addition, only the Dean, the Canon Precentor (who was Chapter Safeguarding Lead when the agreement was first signed), the Chief Operating Officer and Canon Chancellor and the DSA knew of the agreement. The Head Verger, who has primary responsibility for safety within the building, did not know of the agreement and would not know the subject if they came into the Cathedral.
- 3.3.7** The auditors learnt, in a conversation, of another safeguarding agreement with a person who had a recent conviction. The Cathedral learned of him via the DSA when he wanted to attend specific events in the Cathedral and an agreement was drawn up. However, the Cathedral had no copy of any relevant paperwork and it was not possible, at that point, to obtain it from the Diocesan Office. The only record the Cathedral could find was a line from the minutes of a Diocesan Safeguarding Panel Casework Subgroup. Only one person on the Cathedral staff knew of this person and it subsequently emerged that they had joined another unrelated activity. This could have led to a significant level of risk, not least because the right people did not hold the right information.

Quality of recording

- 3.3.8** 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 to enable others to pick up work as and when necessary, and readily understand what they are dealing with. In a Cathedral context, good quality recording is essential to support good working together between the Cathedral Safeguarding Lead and/or the Lay Safeguarding representative and DSA.
- 3.3.9** As noted above, no recording was seen. Presumably there is case recording at the Diocesan Office. The Cathedral has not had an agreed format for making and storing recording about safeguarding, and this is addressed in section 4.3.

Information sharing practice

- 3.3.10** The auditors heard verbally about one occasion when information was shared well; when the DSA contacted the Canon Precentor as described above in paragraph 3.3.7. Overall, the auditors were concerned by the low level of information sharing; the Lay Safeguarding Representative seemed to get little, if any, the Head Verger was not

part of any safeguarding agreements and the Chapter Safeguarding Lead had no information about safeguarding cases.

Analysis

- 3.3.11** There is much to be done to establish a robust system for managing and recording cases, and this has clear implications for the safeguarding service level agreement (SLA) that is currently being developed with the Diocese.
- 3.3.12** Auditors judged that the Diocese should share urgently with the Cathedral information about safeguarding cases where people are still living (those who made allegations and those against whom allegations were made) and/or have the potential to re-surface. The Cathedral cannot meet its declared intention to be a safe place if it does not have the relevant knowledge and information.
- 3.3.13** Practice in relation to risk assessments and safeguarding agreements has not kept up with practice guidance published by the National Safeguarding Team, inasmuch as the auditors saw enough to form a view.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How can the Cathedral satisfy itself that information held at a diocesan level is appropriately shared with them in order to keep people safe?
- How can the Cathedral ensure that their needs are met regarding the holding of records and appropriate information sharing between the Cathedral and the Diocese and how might this be formally agreed as part of the SLA currently being developed?

3.4 CLERGY DISCIPLINARY MEASURE

Description

- 3.4.1** There have been no recent Clergy Disciplinary Measures relating to safeguarding at the Cathedral.

3.5 TRAINING

Description

- 3.5.1** 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 of 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.
- 3.5.2** Until recently, a volunteer took charge of tracking all training (and DBS) and has done this very efficiently. All the staff with whom the auditors spoke had done safeguarding to the appropriate level and within timescales. The senior team as well as the Chapter Diocesan Canons and The Organist and Master of the Choristers were doing leadership training the week of the audit.
- 3.5.3** Recently, it was realised that volunteers who did not require a DBS were not receiving safeguarding training. This has been put right and all volunteers are required to do

Awareness and Foundation training or step back from their roles. This has led to a handful of volunteers deciding to stop but the Cathedral is clear that this is a necessary move.

- 3.5.4** People across the Cathedral are beginning to consider what other training they need to support safeguarding in the wider sense; mental health, domestic abuse, de-escalation and anti-terrorism were all mentioned. In some areas this is already a requirement, for example in the Lay Pastoral team those who have not yet completed domestic abuse training cannot undertake home visits.

Analysis

- 3.5.5** The Cathedral has made full use of online training provided by the NST since face-to-face training has been made impossible by the pandemic.
- 3.5.6** Auditors felt that whilst the Cathedral has clear aims to be inclusive and welcoming to all, its intentions should be underpinned by a broader diversity of training especially for those in public-facing roles.

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?

3.6 SAFER RECRUITMENT

Description

- 3.6.1** The organisation of the safe recruitment of staff has been, until recently, within the remit of a volunteer administrator for both staff and volunteers. Currently, due to staff absence, this is being undertaken by the Office Manager. Both the Office Manager and the COO are safer recruitment trained
- 3.6.2** Applicants for staff and positions are required to submit an application form (including confidential declaration), attend an interview and have two references completed. A Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check is undertaken should the role require this. DBS checks are administered through the Diocese. Where a 'blemish' is noted on a DBS, there follows a discussion between the Cathedral and the Diocese who take a professional view on whether the blemish is acceptable for the role. A letter of appointment is provided along with a formal contract of employment.
- 3.6.3** The auditors reviewed four recruitment files for staff as part of the audit. These files reflected some positive steps and good practice. Not all aspects of safe recruitment are contained on the personal files, for example DBS checks are within a broader 'DBS' folder for all staff in alphabetical order. The Cathedral has a safer recruitment checklist but these were not always contained in the file.
- 3.6.4** None of the files seen contained evidence of interview notes or responses, evidence of safeguarding, attitudinal or competence questions or of gaps in the application form being challenged or checked. Similarly, there was limited evidence that an applicant's right to work in the UK was recorded.
- 3.6.5** Recruitment for volunteers has only been formally recorded in the last few years but this is beginning to embed, and the Cathedral is aware that this is an area to be tightened.

Analysis

- 3.6.6** There is evidence of a formal recruitment process for staff and some aspects of this is also in place for volunteers. The Cathedral plans to use the break imposed by COVID-19 in order to recruit any new volunteers using a more robust system.
- 3.6.7** Safe recruitment files are in place, but do not contain all aspects of the recruitment process in one place. This is compounded by a change of IT system and the fact that some aspects of the process are now electronic and backed up in alphabetical paper files. Currently the Cathedral is contemplating how best to hold the files and information within the system so that they are easy to find.
- 3.6.8** Auditors reflected that a safe recruitment checklist would be useful on the file but also recognised that paper files may not be used when the whole system becomes electronic. Auditors wondered whether an overarching checklist (perhaps similar to a Single Central Record) for recruitment would be useful as an 'at a glance' record with details that sit behind this forming part of the electronic record for each member of staff.
- 3.6.9** The Cathedral has become aware that for volunteers, those whose role required a DBS check were automatically offered safeguarding training whereas the requirement for training was not triggered by those whose role did not require a DBS check. The Cathedral has recognised this gap in training and is taking steps to rectify the situation, recording initial training on recruitment files.
- 3.6.10** Auditors reflected positively that Cathedral staff understand the recruitment system well and are already aware of deficits. There was also a strong recognition that a DBS check does not itself constitute safe recruitment and should not be relied on in the absence of wider scrutiny.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider:

- What would be needed from an 'at a glance' record or dashboard to support the developing standardised practice for recruitment of staff and volunteers?
- How confident is the Cathedral that enough staff have received safer recruitment training?

4 FINDINGS – ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORTS

4.1 POLICY, PROCEDURES AND GUIDANCE

Description

- 4.1.1** All parts of the Church of England must adopt or take account of the House of Bishops' Policy Statement (2017) Promoting a Safer Church 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.
- 4.1.4** Safeguarding is clearly signposted on the Cathedral website. The reader is taken to a policy statement, dated July 2020, and the names and contact details of the Cathedral safeguarding representatives. A further link takes you to the Cathedral safeguarding policy which sets out which roles require a DBS check and which groups are included in diocesan safeguarding procedures.
- 4.1.5** There are currently no links to diocesan policies, procedures or practice guidance or mention of and links to the National Safeguarding Team suite of policies and guidance. The Cathedral relies on both and this does seem to be a missed opportunity. It would seem to be telling that one survey respondent said that, 'I am not aware of a published "process" of how complaints or claims of bad behaviour will be taken forward. This would be useful for both the claimant and the accused and help volunteers know how the Cathedral would act in the case of any accusations'. Another respondent wanted training to 'include the correct course of action to take if ever I encounter someone who I feel is at risk' which suggests a similar view of a lack of information.

Analysis

- 4.1.6** There seems to be some confusion about whether diocesan policies apply to the Cathedral. One person knew of a lone working policy but thought it did not apply to their post.
- 4.1.7** The Cathedral has not written its own suite of policies and it is sensible to avoid duplication if a diocesan or NST policy exists. However, the auditors thought that the Cathedral has too much of an oral tradition, of verbally sharing how things should be done rather than writing them down. Should things go wrong – an incident, perhaps, or a difficult employment situation – this could leave the Cathedral exposed.
- 4.1.8** In terms of the choirs, much has already been said about policy, procedure and practice guidance above. As previously said, the handbooks would benefit from revision and cross-referencing so that the social media policy, for example, is the same in each place. A clear distinction between information (times of services, who's who, etc.) and the requirements of the role (e.g. safe working conduct, the bullying policy) would be useful.

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?
- How can the Cathedral be assured that policies, procedures and practices across departments are consistent and based on best practice?

4.2 DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING ADVISER/ AND CATHEDRAL SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

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. At Portsmouth, this function is delivered by the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor (DSA). This arrangement is not yet set out in a formal agreement between the Diocese and Cathedral but a service level agreement (SLA) is in the process of being agreed. In effect, the DSA might be expected to work with the Cathedral in its role as a parish church rather than as a separate entity entirely, supplying a range of services including training, managing difficult cases, developing risk assessments and safeguarding agreements, providing advice (including on blemished DBS checks) and handling any allegations against church officers.
- 4.2.2** The auditors looked at the proposed SLA and thought that the requirement for the DSA to provide 'specialist advice for specific cases' might be strengthened so that it includes all the case work and recording on all safeguarding cases relating to the Cathedral, as well as advice about whether situations reach a safeguarding threshold and so case work responsibility transfers or whether they are welfare and stay with the Cathedral.
- 4.2.3** The DSA at Portsmouth has been in post for 10 years and is a former police officer with several years of previous experience in children's safeguarding. Until recently they were employed for two days a week on a freelance basis, with the possibility of more time, but now they are employed by the Diocese for four days a week. This has effectively doubled the DSA capacity, which is helpful.
- 4.2.4** The Cathedral has a Lay Safeguarding Representative (LSR), a volunteer post held by a person with excellent experience as a magistrate and in the charity sector. They also volunteer in several other roles in the Cathedral and are a member of the congregation, so are well known.
- 4.2.5** The LSR found it difficult to describe the role as it would look in non-COVID times, a difficulty shared by other Cathedral safeguarding representatives in the experience of the auditors. They do sit on the Cathedral Safeguarding Group and were confident that they were aware of safeguarding risks. However, at present they have no role in supporting subjects of safeguarding agreements, as their parish-based equivalents would.

Analysis

- 4.2.6** As described in section 3.3 above, the auditors thought that the SLA with the Diocese

needs greater detail and clarity in an area where it is crucial that responsibility is understood. If the SLA is successful in setting out case work responsibility for safeguarding, the role of the LSR in terms of welfare should become clearer. They might keep track of regular visitors who are the cause of concerns, for example, while contacting the DSA should concerns escalate.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How does the Cathedral wish to proceed with case work in agreement with the Diocese and how might they ensure that the SLA ensures this is clear without being overly prescriptive and limiting?

4.3 RECORDING AND IT SYSTEMS

Description

- 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.
- 4.3.2** The Chief Operating Officer is keen to ensure systems are in place which are robust and clear. He includes recording and IT systems within this remit and is working towards records such as safe recruitment, DBS and training moving across to an electronic 'PeopleHR' system. Great progress has been made in the transfer of these records. The Cathedral has secured funding for a new Records Manager post, initially for one year, and recruitment is underway.
- 4.3.3** Portsmouth Cathedral has a minor incident log but it is for use by the Music Department to track concerns about choristers; very necessary but not the whole picture. Beyond the Music Department' there is no format for recording an allegation or disclosure and no one physical or cloud-based place to store records at present.
- 4.3.4** There are currently no case records held by the Cathedral staff and no way of tracking Cathedral cases held by the Diocese.

Analysis

- 4.3.5** Auditors judged that record keeping, whilst improving in some areas, is underdeveloped at the Cathedral. The new Records Manager will need to take on the task of deciding what is recorded, how and where.
- 4.3.6** Auditors also felt that the interface of recording between the Cathedral and the Diocese is not clear, neither is who has access to recording.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- What does the Cathedral need to do to satisfy itself that all potential safeguarding concerns are identified, reported and recorded promptly?

5 FINDINGS – LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

5.1 QUALITY ASSURANCE

Description

- 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. Robust quality assurance enables an organisation to understand its strengths and weaknesses. Potential sources of data are numerous, including independent scrutiny. Quality assurance needs to be strategic and systematic to support accountability and shed light on how well things are working and where there are gaps or concerns.
- 5.1.2** The Cathedral Safeguarding Meeting (see section 5.4) is an operational group whose agenda has been dominated recently by this audit and the national Past Cases Review 2.
- 5.1.3** The Terms of Reference of the Safeguarding Meeting include, ‘Undertaking an annual review of safeguarding in the Cathedral during the first three months of the year, reporting the findings to Chapter’.
- 5.1.4** The Dean has a duty to present an annual report on safeguarding to the Bishop, which would act as a QA mechanism, presumably using the findings of the annual review. At present, the Bishopric is a vacancy and the report will be written by the Canon Chancellor to inform the new Bishop when they are appointed.
- 5.1.5** The Cathedral has a safeguarding policy and has used the Parish Dashboard to create an action plan in line with the Church of England’s safeguarding policy statement, Promoting a Safer Church, which says, ‘All Church bodies should ensure that they have a Promoting a Safer Church action plan in place that sets out, in line with national and local priorities, how the policy is being put into action and is reviewed regularly’.
- 5.1.6** The action plan lists all the activities that come under the umbrella of safeguarding, from the choirs to toddler group to the monthly Tea and Silver Screen. Each area lists what must happen, e.g. for the bellringers the list is: PCC authorisation, risk assessment, insurance cover, safer recruitment, DBS checks, safeguarding training and safer environment. Each area is then rated as Green (completed) or Amber (action still needed).

Analysis

- 5.1.7** 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.
- 5.1.8** 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.
- 5.1.9** Auditors felt that it is 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.

- 5.1.10** 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 build on its current action plan to develop a framework for quality assurance, incorporating internal and external scrutiny and including feedback from those undertaking activities?
- What feedback loops could be applied to ensure robust challenge discussion as systems develop further?

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 feel that they have a complaint to make. 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 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** No complaints about the safeguarding service were shared with the auditors.
- 5.2.3** The Diocese has a complaints policy that would apply to the Cathedral as a parish church. The Cathedral has no separate policy and it may not need one, but if this is the case the diocesan policy should be easily accessible via the Cathedral website.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- What benefits might there be for the Cathedral in either developing its own complaints procedure or incorporating the diocesan complaints policy alongside its own policies and procedures?

5.3 WHISTLEBLOWING

- 5.3.1** Effective whistleblowing procedures enable workers to raise concern 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** There is a whistleblowing policy in the Staff Handbook but no examples of whistleblowing were available to be shared. The policy was not accessible on the Cathedral website and it was not clear how a volunteer would find it.
- 5.3.3** The tone of the policy is one of encouragement to raise concerns so they may be dealt with properly. It sets out potential areas of concern, and the procedure to be followed (which involves reporting to a line manager or more senior person). The

potential whistleblower is directed to various external organisations for assistance in circumstances where they are not satisfied that suitable remedial action has been taken. It does not, however, provide contact details for the external organisations or for Protect, an independent organisation which provides advice and support.

- 5.3.4** This would seem to be an instance where the Cathedral has a policy but the Diocese does not, as it does not come up when the “Search” function is used on the Diocesan website.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

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

5.4 DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING ADVISORY PANEL, DIOCESAN CASE WORK SCRUTINY GROUP AND CATHEDRAL SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE

Description

- 5.4.1** Based on the national guidance in Roles and Responsibilities for Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panels (DSAPs), the 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.
- 5.4.2** The Dean sits on the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel which is independently chaired, providing a useful Cathedral perspective and a link with the diocesan system. The Dean has demonstrated challenge to diocesan systems where required. In addition, the Canon Chancellor sits on the Diocesan Casework Scrutiny Group.
- 5.4.3** The Cathedral Safeguarding Committee includes: the Chief Operating Officer as Chair, the Canon Chancellor as the Chapter Safeguarding Lead, the Lay Cathedral Safeguarding Representative, the Canon Precentor as Pastoral Lead, the Organist and Master of Choristers, the Head Verger, the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, the DBS and Training Administrator (a voluntary role, currently infilled) and the Dean (Ex-Officio) and the ‘Office Manager/Dean’s Executive Assistant’.
- 5.4.4** The Terms of Reference state that, ‘The Safeguarding Committee will seek to promote safe practice in the care of children, young people and adults who may be at risk by:
1. Ensuring access to and the implementation of the up-to-date Church of England safeguarding policy, the Parish Safeguarding Handbook and practice guidance
 2. Ensuring that arrangements for activities for children, young people, and vulnerable adults, which are the responsibility of the Cathedral are organised and are in line with practice guidance
 3. Ensuring that Chapter has appropriate insurance cover for work with children and young people
 4. Ensuring that Chapter authorises the appointment of leaders and activity programmes for work with children, young people, and vulnerable adults, following appropriate risk assessments

5. Reviewing, at each meeting, current compliance with DBS checks and safeguarding training required
6. Being alert to any safeguarding concerns and ensuring the practice guidance is followed in response.
7. Ensuring that safer recruitment practice guidance is followed for the appointment of all volunteers and paid workers
8. Ensuring that volunteers and paid workers are aware of relevant practice guidance on safeguarding and that necessary safeguarding training and DBS checks are undertaken and kept up to date
9. Meeting regularly, usually termly, with Portsmouth Grammar School to review any operational issues including safeguarding
10. Ensuring that there is an appropriate and well-publicised points of referral for anyone who has a concern over the way work with children, young people, and adults who may be at risk, is being carried out in the Cathedral
11. Ensuring that Chapter appoint a Chapter Lead and that a Lay Cathedral Safeguarding Representative has been appointed by the Annual Church Parochial Meeting (APCM). Ensuring that their contact details are readily available, and that those of the Dean are also readily available should the concern relate to the Chapter Lead or Lay Cathedral Safeguarding Representative
12. Ensuring that posters, notices, and information on the Cathedral website, regarding safeguarding practice, procedures and points of referral are kept up to date
13. Holding one meeting per calendar year to be given over to thinking strategically
14. Informing and advising Chapter of developments around safeguarding, thereby enabling them to fulfil their responsibilities towards safeguarding
15. Reviewing and supporting the memorandum of understanding/service level agreement between the Cathedral, the Diocese, and the Diocesan Safeguarding Team once this has been formally agreed
16. Ensuring that the Chapter Lead has reported on safeguarding issues to each meeting of Chapter
17. Ensuring that the Chapter Lead reports annually to the Bishop on safeguarding issues
18. Undertaking an annual review of safeguarding in the Cathedral during the first three months of the year, reporting the findings to Chapter.'

5.4.5 In practice, the recent meetings have been dominated recently by preparation for this audit and the Past Cases Review 2. However, relevant work has been underway on, for example, volunteers, communications and the SLA with the Diocese.

Analysis

5.4.6 Auditors judged that the agenda for the Cathedral Safeguarding Panel is heavy, in particular for a group that meets a minimum of three times a year and includes tasks which are delegated, such as ensuring appropriate insurance cover and adherence to safer recruitment.

5.4.7 Auditors felt that some of the agenda items might better be covered by a line in the annual report, giving more space to planning and reviewing safeguarding awareness and practice.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How might the Cathedral break down the large remit of the Cathedral Safeguarding Panel into a more manageable and planned approach which is strategic in nature but allows for both planning the future and reviewing what has already been actioned?

5.5 LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- 5.5.1** Safeguarding can only begin to be embedded within the Cathedral if the leadership and management (both spiritual and on a practical level), ensures it is at the centre of everything that they do.
- 5.5.2** The SCIE team finds it useful to reflect on what they have learnt about the actual meaning of 'leadership' and 'responsibility for safeguarding' in the Cathedral; in particular how this breaks down in terms of strategic, operational and theological/spiritual leadership and how well each is defined and understood.

Theological leadership

- 5.5.3** 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.

Description

- 5.5.4** The Dean has always prioritised safeguarding, seeing it as an integral part of their ministry. Since their arrival they have sought to build a culture in which safeguarding is collectively owned. The Dean confirmed that they frequently bring safeguarding into sermons so that the message is constant and not confined to specific events such as Safeguarding Sunday.
- 5.5.5** The Dean takes safeguarding seriously and described their belief that what a leader does has a high potential impact. They make a point of not missing safeguarding meetings and raise the subject in individual conversations where possible. The Dean felt that the message they tried to convey clearly is, 'Safeguarding is vital and this is why'.
- 5.5.6** Communication with the congregation is regular through notices, conversations, posters and communication with volunteers, all of whom now have role profiles which were not previously in place.
- 5.5.7** The survey of adults across the Cathedral showed that, of the 88 per cent of respondents who saw it as relevant to their role, 54 per cent thought the Dean to be extremely active in communicating the importance of safeguarding, with 33 per cent saying moderately active.
- 5.5.8** When asked 'To what extent does safeguarding, and the safety and wellbeing of others, form part of the message of sermons?', of the 77 per cent who thought the question relevant to their role, 22 per cent said extremely, 48 per cent moderately and 7 per cent not 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

- 5.5.9** The House of Bishops' 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. This includes the requirement to have a Promoting a Safer Church action plan in place that sets out, in line with national and local priorities, how the policy is being put into action and is reviewed regularly.

Description

- 5.5.10** Chapter is the Cathedral's governing body. It directs and oversees the administration of the Cathedral's affairs and has responsibility for leadership, policy, strategy and vision. Chapter has primary responsibility for reviewing performance against strategy, the implementation of policies and standards and delivery against plans. It is assisted by a range of sub-committees (including the CSC referred to above in section 5.4) and other bodies, some of which will change following the agreement of the Cathedrals Measure in late 2020.
- 5.5.11** At Portsmouth, the Chapter comprises the Dean, four Residentiary Canons and six lay people; the Chair of the Finance and Investments Committee (appointed by Chapter), three appointed by the Bishop and two elected by the congregation, one of whom is a churchwarden. Two of the canons work in the Cathedral: the Canon Chancellor, who is the Safeguarding Lead on Chapter, and the Canon Precentor.
- 5.5.12** 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.
- 5.5.13** The Canon Chancellor was proactive on arrival in contacting other Chapter Safeguarding Leads, initially to try (unsuccessfully) to find an agreed role description. As a result, there is now a national group of Chapter Safeguarding Leads that is proving useful overall and is making progress towards a role description.
- 5.5.14** The Canon Chancellor, who is a lawyer and feels the importance of a clear structure, sees Chapter as a good team but in need of greater formalisation of roles, especially between their role and the Lay Safeguarding Representative.
- 5.5.15** In 2020, the Cathedral agreed a 10-year vision and strategy after a consultation exercise. There are six areas, each with projects and progress measures:
- Worship and music
 - Growing and learning
 - Diocese and community
 - Building and heritage
 - Partnership and engagement
 - Finance and sustainability

The overall intention is to build 'a beacon and safe haven, anchored in Jesus Christ'. Safeguarding is seen as a thread running through all the elements of the strategy.

Analysis

- 5.5.16** Since their arrival in 2019, 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.

5.5.17 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.

5.5.18 The auditors consider that the under-developed quality-assurance framework 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

5.5.19 The Chief Operating Officer shared that they found, on arrival in 2019, that the Cathedral was operating with a serious annual financial deficit that had to be turned round. Last year there was a small surplus and to have achieved this during a pandemic is a remarkable feat. Inevitably there has been a need to hold vacancies, such as the Education Officer, and/or a lack of budget to appoint to new but much-needed posts, such as the Visitor Experience Manager. This has had an impact on safeguarding operations. For example, there have not been enough people to cover all the work necessary and the Cathedral was unable to use fully the hiatus created by successive lockdowns to review and rewrite safeguarding policies and procedures.

5.5.20 The team at Portsmouth is small and as a result there is not the separation found in larger cathedral establishments between lay and clerical responsibilities. One obvious example is that the Canon Chancellor manages the volunteers. In addition, volunteers do jobs that might usually be filled by paid employees, such as managing the shop and the administration of DBS checks and tracking of safeguarding training.

Analysis

5.5.21 Auditors judged that operational leadership is developing and now requires review and strengthening in the form of quality assurance. Portsmouth has been hampered in this due to being very small and having duplication of tasks in single posts. The intention at Portsmouth is to grow visitor numbers as well as the congregation and it must be hoped that there will be an accompanying growth in income.

5.5.22 The volunteers left to cover what are usually paid posts do a very professional job but there is an inherent potential risk as volunteers are not bound by contractual obligations.

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

- 5.5.23** The most critical aspect of safeguarding relates to the culture within any organisation. In a Church of England context, that can mean, for example, the extent to which priority is placed on safeguarding individuals as opposed to the reputation of the Church, or the ability of all members of the Church to think the unthinkable about friends and colleagues. SCIE's experience in auditing safeguarding in faith contexts 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 and accompanied by a 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.
- 5.5.24** Any cathedral should strive for an open, learning culture where safeguarding is a shared responsibility, albeit supported by experts, and which encourages people to highlight any concerns about how things are working so they can be addressed. 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 about how things are working so they can be addressed.

Description

- 5.5.25** The Dean gives a very high priority to the culture of safeguarding and brings to it learning from their previous roles in a cathedral and diocese that had significant historic safeguarding issues. Both the Canon Chancellor and the Canon Precentor were able to describe their own personal journeys of learning about safeguarding and were aware of the impact it can have when incidents emerge and divide congregations. The creation of a 'safe haven' at the Cathedral felt a very personal mission.
- 5.5.26** This was reflected by the experiences of the Chief Operating Officer, who had seen the impact of historic abuse on the Roman Catholic Church in Canada and during his previous role in the UK.
- 5.5.27** The Cathedral's self-audit picked up this theme: ensuring that safeguarding is 'who we are and not just a series of things we do'. Overall, the Cathedral's senior team presents a very united front on safeguarding.
- 5.5.28** The Dean talked about the 'drip-feeding' of the safeguarding message through the notices at services, agenda items at meetings, conversations, posters around the Cathedral, communications with volunteers and role profiles.
- 5.5.29** Fifty-seven per cent of survey respondents thought that the people leading safeguarding in the Cathedral are extremely visible and a further 35 per cent moderately visible. The picture was more mixed when asked, 'How well does the Cathedral make it known that they are there to help anyone who is being mistreated or abused in any way, or has been in the past?'. Thirty-eight per cent said extremely and 43 per cent moderately, with 17 per cent saying not relevant and 2 per cent not at all.
- 5.5.30** Written comments in the survey convey a mixed and sometimes contradictory picture but the majority view is that safeguarding is taken seriously.

Analysis

- 5.5.31** 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'.

5.5.32 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.

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?

6 CONCLUSIONS

This section provides the headline findings from the audit, drawing out positives and the areas for improvement. The detail behind these appraisals are in the Findings.

- 6.1.1** The building is open and light, lending itself to feeling a safe space.
- 6.1.2** Concerns were raised about lone working as well as a lack of awareness of the policy.
- 6.1.3** A wider range of training would benefit people (clergy, staff and volunteers) who spend much of their time in the Cathedral, e.g. Mental Health First Aid, Domestic Abuse.
- 6.1.4** There is a willingness to do more to help vulnerable people who visit the Cathedral.
- 6.1.5** School visits are in abeyance and when a new Education Officer is appointed it would make sense to review all relevant policies and procedures.
- 6.1.6** Good practice relating to child servers, Sunday School and Toddler Group is shared verbally and would be strengthened by being written into policies and procedures.
- 6.1.7** The absence of a strong policy about the use of social media was a concern across all groups of children.
- 6.1.8** Communication and cooperation with Portsmouth Grammar School, the largest choir feeder school, is very strong.
- 6.1.9** Equality between the boys' and girls' choirs has improved.
- 6.1.10** The potential for breach of Position of Trust by a choral scholar would be reduced with more robust expectations set out in all choir handbooks.
- 6.1.11** Policies and procedures in the bell tower are strong.
- 6.1.12** The auditors were concerned about the lack of case work recording, the lack of risk assessments to inform safeguarding agreements and the quality of safeguarding agreements.
- 6.1.13** Safeguarding training at the appropriate level is now being done by everyone who should have it.
- 6.1.14** Safer recruitment is well recorded.
- 6.1.15** The service level agreement with the Diocese should be clearer in terms of expectations of the DSA.
- 6.1.16** Safeguarding is on every agenda and the will to improve is evident.
- 6.1.17** Quality assurance is at an early stage of development.
- 6.1.18** Theological leadership is strong. The senior team is united in its commitment to make the Cathedral a safe place.

APPENDIX: REVIEW PROCESS

DATA COLLECTION

Information provided to auditors before the site visit

- Plan of the Cathedral
- Plan of Cathedral House
- Draft memorandum of understanding with the Diocese
- Job description for the DSA
- Organisation structure chart
- Overview document
- Self-audit summary
- Induction Book for staff and volunteers
- Cantate Handbook
- Choral and Organ Scholars Handbook
- Portsmouth Cathedral Choir Handbook
- Chapter minutes x 3
- Cathedral Safeguarding Committee minutes x 3
- Terms of reference for Cathedral Safeguarding Committee
- Safeguarding action plan
- Risk assessment and tour plan for choir trip to Belgium 2018
- Risk assessment and tour plan for choir trip to Iceland 2019.

What records / files were examined?

- Recruitment files for staff and volunteers
- One safeguarding agreement



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