

ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL

**ANNUAL REPORT TO THE BISHOP OF ROCHESTER
REGARDING SAFEGUARDING**

**REPORT FOR THE PERIOD:
1st April 2020 – 31st March 2021**

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Introduction

This is the third Annual Report submitted by Chapter on safeguarding in and across the Cathedral community. The past year has been a unique one, with the nation in the grip of the Coronavirus pandemic, which brought not only lockdowns and Cathedral closures but distinctive challenges, such as those related to domestic abuse, home schooling and mental health. Much of this did not impinge directly on Cathedral life but was a reality for those for whom we would hope to care, under normal circumstances. Many Cathedral activities were suspended for extended periods.

The Cathedral was closed to visitors between March and July 2020, and from November 2020-March 2021. During the summer months of 2020 the Cathedral was open to the public for private prayer, with masks being worn and hand sanitising arrangements in place. During the same period, in-person worship was offered, with restricted and socially distanced numbers. Most of our worshipping activities went online, being live-streamed or shared on the website and social media. The majority of volunteers were stood down and some staff furloughed.

Despite being 'closed', the administrative work of safeguarding policy and practice continued, and while the Cathedral Safeguarding Group did not meet between March and July, it was reconvened monthly on Zoom from September, and chaired by Andrew Gray. The Canon Chancellor, who arrived in July, took over chairmanship in October. It has continued to build on good work and practice set in motion consequent to the SCIE report of 2019. Canon Andrew Gray's membership of Chapter came to an end and his excellent chairing of the CSG and contribution to Cathedral life was acknowledged with gratitude and praise.

The solid progress made in 2018 and in 2019 has been built on and in the paragraphs that follow, we review the key safeguarding areas of the last year and look forward to continued consolidation of and progress in safeguarding governance and leadership in 2021.

Music Department (including links with the King's School Rochester)

The clear benefits of the appointments of a new Director of Music and Headmaster of the King's School in 2019 have been evident, despite the exigencies of Covid Lockdowns, with the particular pressures these have put on both the choristers and School as a whole. Until December 2020 the Cathedral and School shared the advice and support of Anne Rouse who served on the Cathedral Safeguarding Group as Children's and Young People's Representative and as Safeguarding Governor at the King's School. She has moved to Scotland, and we are very grateful to her for many years of service and support in this respect. Consequently, the Canon Chancellor, already a governor of the School, has assumed the role of Safeguarding Governor, thus cementing a close and supportive connection where matters of safeguarding are concerned. The role of Children's and Young People's Representative on the Cathedral Safeguarding Group also needed to be filled, and

having advertised for applicants in March, an interview process will take place in April 2021 with the hope of appointing a volunteer to be an advocate and contact person for all children, with particular focus on the choristers and Sunday Club children.

The radical change to the structure of the Choir, involving girls and boys on equal terms in a mixed treble line has suffered from Covid restrictions, but continues apace, nevertheless. Having one choir has already enabled a tightening of safeguarding practice both in the Cathedral and school environs. The Canon Chancellor (Safeguarding Lead) and Music Department meet regularly to review any concerns. The Chorister Tutor and Chaperones continue to fulfil a diligent and vital role, with a close eye being kept on their DBS and safeguarding training status. Written protocols and policies are kept under annual review, as is the annual choristers' handbook. The choristers receive an induction including information about safeguarding, reporting etc and seeking their views on communication.

Education

All schools are sent and asked to complete safeguarding documentation at the point of booking a visit to the Cathedral. Any groups arriving without prior booking are also asked to complete the same form. There have been no school visits in the past year due to the Coronavirus. Helen Bradshaw, the Cathedral Education Officer has been instrumental in drawing up guidelines covering online safety which the Cathedral will implement. Guidelines for dealing with un-booked groups and missing persons have also been produced and shared with volunteers. Safeguarding is discussed at all Learning Team volunteer meetings.

Volunteers

Sandy Struben, the Volunteer Manager has overhauled all aspects of volunteers' understanding and reporting of safeguarding. As training and refresher courses have invariably gone online – and will likely remain so – care and attention has been taken to ensure that all volunteers remain up to date in their learning and knowledge, and with the gradual return of some volunteers to duty in the summer, pains were taken to ensure not only that the volunteers were safe and comfortable to return, but that their vulnerabilities were taken into account. All were required to undertake some refresher training before returning to any duty. This is an ongoing situation; no volunteer will be able to return to work in the Cathedral without up-to-date safeguarding training and DBS checks.

For some, online training is a challenge and plans are being made to address the needs of those who cannot access it, in tandem with the completely revised national training modules devised by the National Safeguarding Team (NST) of the Church of England.

Volunteer Information folders held at the Welcome Desks and the Crypt are updated regularly with current safeguarding information, incident forms and a flowchart of how to report an incident. During the Coronavirus pandemic this has included some specific

material relating to the new situation. Refresher leaflets have been distributed to all volunteers as they return.

Staff

The SCIE report recommended that an HR professional be appointed as a member of staff to help embed Safer Recruitment practices in all parts of the Cathedral. An attempt to do this before Christmas attracted a dozen applicants and even though a shortlist of four was drawn up, it was not possible to appoint. The process was run again in February and we are pleased to say that Suzy Bull has been appointed and will start in April 2021.

All staff, where appropriate, are subject to DBS checks. Staff are required to undertake safeguarding training to the appropriate level. In February 2021, the Staff Forum meeting was devoted to a presentation by Bose Johnson, one of the Cathedral's Vulnerable Adult Representatives, on Domestic Abuse and Violence. Other related topics are planned throughout 2021.

Post-SCIE Audit and Safeguarding Action Plan

The SCIE audit of September 2019 has continued to inform and drive our policy and practice in developing a thorough and rigorous approach to safeguarding across the board. Last year's Annual Report detailed some of their observations, comments, and recommendations. One of the most tangible consequences of the SCIE report was the creation and implementation of a Safeguarding Action Plan (SAP) by which specific and general recommendations and advice was distilled into task-focussed, achievable, and sustainable elements, to be implemented and recorded using a red-amber-green (RAG) approach.

In 2019 a Learning Lessons Review was commissioned by the NST to consider the circumstances surrounding the Cathedral's former Director of Music's employment at the Cathedral and the Cathedral's response to his arrest and subsequent conviction for sexual offences committed whilst he was Assistant Director of Music and Director of Music at Ely and Rochester Cathedrals, respectively. As part of the process, the Cathedral commissioned a review specific to the time that Scott Farrell was employed at Rochester Cathedral. The Rochester Review focussed on the lessons learned and made twelve recommendations for the Cathedral to consider, and four for the wider church.

Throughout 2020 the SAP, endorsed by Chapter, was the staple reference point and driver for change, being shared with the Diocese and published on the website. Reviewed and

examined regularly by the CSG it became clear in the autumn that many of the recommendations from SCIE had been implemented. The recommendations from the review of the William Scott Farrell case were incorporated into a revised SAP. This second SAP incorporates some new tasks and targets, and maintains a RAG scheme for monitoring progress. It was formally adopted by Chapter in February 2021 and now forms the core of our self-monitoring and assessment going forward.

Past Cases Review (PCR) 2

All the cases identified as requiring additional work in the PCR2 process have now been revised and action taken where appropriate. Reviewers have now re-examined those files and are content that all the necessary action has been taken.

Diocesan Committees

The Canon Chancellor represents the Cathedral at the Diocesan Safeguarding Executive Committee (SEC) while the Dean sits on the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel (DSAP). This interconnectedness with the Diocese provides opportunity for mutual support, advice and accountability. The significant benefit of having the Lead Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, Greg Barry, as Cathedral Safeguarding Officer is also to be acknowledged and affirmed.

Training

All staff and volunteers are required to have completed Basic Awareness training as part of their induction within one week of commencing their role. All staff training is up to date and Senior Leadership Training for the Dean, Residentiary Canons, Director of Music, HR Manager, and other senior staff is booked for November-January 2021-22. Chaplains and Priest Vicars are similarly up to date with the required level of training.

Below is a schedule of total numbers of staff and volunteers who have undertaken Basic Awareness, Foundation, and Leadership training.

	Staff	Volunteers
Basic Awareness	71	314
Foundation	31	236
Leadership	24	33

Domestic Abuse and Vulnerable Adults

Victims, survivors, and perpetrators of domestic abuse are part of our community. Domestic abuse has been aggravated by the coronavirus pandemic as so many people have found themselves at home so much more, where being so could be dangerous or damaging. The CSG has two representatives who keep us alert to these issues. Staff received awareness raising in domestic abuse and violence in February 2021. Volunteers will receive similar training in due course. We continue to maintain focus on issues

surrounding vulnerable adults in training programmes and by raising awareness among staff and volunteers. Some of our volunteers are themselves vulnerable adults of whom we take special care.

Victims and Survivors

Further to the SCIE audit highlighting the need for the Cathedral to consult and engage with survivors and victims of abuse on various levels. The Canon Chancellor has begun to make contact with groups and individuals who have been abused or represent them, and a process of listening and careful relationship-building has begun. It is hoped that some kind of event, or installation, or even a location in the Cathedral may be purposed for the empathetic welcome, care and awareness-raising of all those who have been abused in any context or manner. Rochester Cathedral has an opportunity to lead the way in this fragile and important field of ministry, not simply because of recent history but due to the networks of experience, wisdom, friendship, and trust that are being gently and quietly built.

Website and Social Media

Subsequent to the publication of the ICCSA report in October 2020, a Safeguarding Sunday was observed on October 11, and this will be observed annually, on October 10 in 2021. Social media posts and website material has been published and a body of material built on specifically relevant sermons, newsletters and articles has been launched. The safeguarding page of the website has been recently redrafted, and as before, it contains documents, policies, advice, signposting and sermons and articles relating to safeguarding. The spire is sometimes lit for safeguarding-related themes or observances, coupled with informative social media posts, some of which have attracted the notice of over 10,000 people. During lockdowns, the Cathedral spire has been a focus for care and prayer and going forward it will be developed as a vehicle for awareness-raising of many issues, safeguarding-related ones among them. A calendar of safeguarding dates and events is also being developed to be brought into observance once the Covid crisis has abated.

Cathedral Sunday Club

All Sunday Club volunteers keep up to date with Basic Awareness (formally C0) and Foundation (formally C1) training and at Sunday Club staff meetings safeguarding is discussed. The Canon Chancellor is also the Safeguarding Lead and has oversight of the Sunday Club. The appointment of a Children's and Young People's Representative is imminent, who will have special regard for both the choristers and Sunday Club. During 2020/21 the Sunday Club met rarely in person, but has thrived on Zoom since Palm Sunday 2020, with children online always under the supervision of parents or guardians.

The Year Ahead

With so much having been progressed the previous year, one of the many disadvantages and disappointments of the Coronavirus pandemic has been the inability to take forward

some initiatives in safeguarding good practice which are dependent on gathering people together, or which have been obviated by closures of the Cathedral. So much is 'on hold' and may well be for a while yet. Nevertheless, there has been much progress behind the scenes and much to carry forward, develop and anticipate in the coming months and years. The Canon Chancellor is now firmly in post and holds a distinctive and defined brief as Safeguarding Lead. Changes in understanding, attitude and culture among staff and volunteers over the last few years have cemented a spirit of teamwork and collaboration which stand the Cathedral in good stead. While there is no room for complacency in matters of safeguarding, we have reason to be cautiously confident as we enter another year, which will likely be marked by numerous challenges and changes in our local, national and global life.

Over the past twelve months there have been developments with the NST, not least in terms of personnel and focus, and various guidance documents have been forthcoming (concerning training and safer recruitment, for example), and all have been scrutinised by the Canon Chancellor, CSO and other staff for feedback to them. New national policies, and a new database for sharing and recording are anticipated, and we expect to receive, respond to and adapt to these initiatives accordingly. Subsequent to the promulgation of the new Cathedrals Measure, Rochester Cathedral is one of four pilot cathedrals to become charities in their own right, and this has already involved liaison with and scrutiny from the Charity Commission, particularly in respect of safeguarding, in which they take a particular interest. While we are confident our procedures and policies are robust, there may be alterations and adaptations to make to meet their requirements.

As we resume our former activities inside and beyond our building, we will be looking to evaluate how our staff and volunteers have implemented the learning from the training as well as how they feel about returning to roles they have hitherto undertaken. New visitor welcoming staff (VSAs) will be employed, and they will be trained and monitored accordingly, being a new frontline of welcome and assistance to visitors, tourists and pilgrims.

Cathedral Safeguarding Officer Overview

Greg Barry, the Cathedral Safeguarding Officer (CSO) has been in post for three years, yet the role continues to require more and more time. It is hoped that another safeguarding officer may be appointed in the Diocese to alleviate this. The CSO's role includes advising on the initial response to incidents, training, policy and attendance at meetings. His help and advice has been particularly appreciated by the Canon Chancellor settling into his new role.

In producing many draft proposals for new national policies, templates, and guidelines the National Safeguarding Team (NST) has continued to make further demands on the CSO who participates in the national Cathedral safeguarding network to ensure that Rochester maintains its engagement with the development of national safeguarding approaches and

policies. Discussions and aspirations for the future provision of professional safeguarding advice in the Cathedral are ongoing, notwithstanding the restrictions and delays brought about by the coronavirus pandemic.


Dean's Perspective

Despite the unprecedented circumstances of last year, the Cathedral has had a full year in terms of safeguarding provision and due diligence. There have been considerations around online services and events/activities and there have been a number of 'reviews' which has taken a great deal of time and consideration. All this has informed our decision making and enabled us to amend and update the Cathedral's Safeguarding Plan. The most recent version has been presented to the DSAP and adopted by Chapter as represents the amalgamation of a number recommendations. This, of course, is work in progress and we expect this plan to change, especially in light of any new recommendations emerging from the Learned Lessons Review ensuing from the case of William Scott Farrell, former Director of Music at Rochester, and his connection with two other cathedrals, Newcastle, and Ely.

I would like to thank members of the Cathedral's Safeguarding Group, some of whom are volunteers and those members of staff who have worked at home and whose special remit is keeping abreast of new guidelines and training needs.

'Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent and praiseworthy - think on these things.'

Philippians 4:8



The Very Revd. Dr Philip Hesketh
Dean of Rochester



Mr Simon Lace
Chapter Clerk – Executive Director

Giles

The Revd. Canon Dr Gordon Giles
Canon Chancellor and Safeguarding Lead

+ James Roffey

Received by The Rt. Revd. James Langstaff, Bishop of Rochester

Date: 11th May, 2021