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Birmingham diocese independent safeguarding audit (April 2016)



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Independent auditing of diocesan safeguarding arrangements for the Church of England

Diocese of Birmingham

Audit undertaken 12, 13 and 14 April 2016

Lucy Erber, Hugh Constant and Edi Carmi

[This report provides a snap shot of safeguarding arrangements in The Church of England – Birmingham in April 2016. Many of the considerations included in the report have since been addressed. A summary of our progress and action plan in response to the report's findings is available [here](#)]

First published in Great Britain in September 2016
by the Social Care Institute for Excellence and the Church of England

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTEXT

The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) has been commissioned to undertake an audit of the safeguarding arrangements of each diocese of the Church of England. The aim of these audits is to work together to understand the safeguarding journey of each diocese to date and to support the continuing improvements being made. Following pilot audits of four dioceses in 2015, an agreed audit model is being applied nationally during 2016 and 2017.

The audit of the Diocese of Birmingham was carried out by Lucy Erber (the lead auditor for this Diocese) and Hugh Constant on 12, 13 and 14 April 2016. This report was written by Lucy Erber with support from Hugh Constant and quality assurance provided by Edi Carmi, the overall lead auditor for the project.

1.2 THE DIOCESE

Birmingham is the UK's second city with the youngest urban population in one of the liveliest and diverse regions. The Birmingham Diocese, founded in 1905, is one of 42 dioceses in the Church of England. It covers an area of nearly 300 square miles, and includes parishes in the West Midlands including Birmingham and parts of Solihull, Sandwell, Warwickshire and Worcestershire. It co-locates with four different local authorities.

There are 188 Church of England churches and worship centres with an average Sunday attendance of 14,000 from a population of 1.5 million.

The ninth Bishop of Birmingham has been Bishop since November 2006. The Bishop shares his Episcopal oversight with the Suffragan Bishop of Aston.

In the heart of the city, Birmingham Cathedral, dedicated to St Philip, is led by the Dean. The Cathedral is also a parish church, and Cathedral staff share the same office space as diocesan staff.

The Diocese is divided into two pastoral administrative areas led by the Archdeacon of Aston and the Archdeacon of Birmingham. Each of these areas contains a number of deaneries, or groups of parishes.

The Diocesan Secretary advised the auditors that Birmingham is financially the poorest diocese within the Church of England.

In 2015 the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (known as the BSA – Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser in Birmingham) dealt with 30 new referrals (with 22 ongoing cases), with the Bishop's Adults Safeguarding Adviser dealing with three new referrals and one ongoing case

1.3 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

This report is divided into:

- Introduction
- An overview of what is working well, what needs to work better and a summary of considerations for the Diocese.
- The findings of the auditors: these are linked to the safeguarding requirements for faith groups set out in section 11 of the Children Act.
- Considerations for the Diocese are listed, where relevant, under each finding section.
- An appendix sets out the review process

2 OVERVIEW

This section provides the headline findings from the review in terms of what is working well and the areas for improvement. The detail behind these appraisals are in the detail of the Findings in section 3.

2.1 WHAT IS WORKING WELL?

- The Diocese of Birmingham has in place a safeguarding team consisting of a part-time consultant Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser (BSA), a part-time Bishop's Adults Safeguarding Adviser (BASA), full-time Safeguarding Training & Development Officer, and a full-time dedicated Safeguarding Support Officer. This structure has been created in the last year in order to form an identifiable safeguarding team and to increase capacity to deliver safeguarding training. Training is now offered both in parishes and centrally within the diocesan offices, and the range and quality of training now available was positively commented on by the Focus Group.
- From his own account and supported by casework evidence, the BSA has good links with both regional and national DSA networks.
- On a casework basis, the BSA has very good links with the relevant teams of the police and probation service. Core group members (who oversee Safeguarding Children Agreements and are drawn from the parish) are appointed promptly with clarity about their role.
- DBS checks are undertaken in a timely manner and are contracted out to CCPAS (The Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service), which was viewed as a positive and efficient move by everyone interviewed.
- The Senior Clerical Team demonstrated it is highly committed to children's and adults' safeguarding during the course of the audit and from documentation supplied to the auditors.
- There is a Quarterly Case Panel, run by the BSA and attended by the Bishop's Chaplain and both Archdeacons that reviews active cases. This is a good example of how members of the Senior Clerical Team are kept up to date in regard to active casework.
- There is a clear training plan in place, and there was positive feedback about the delivery of that training. Of particular note was the availability of specific training for Chaplains (run by Churches and Industry Group Birmingham) and training on the use of social media.
- The HR function appeared to be compliant with safeguarding requirements and undertaken in a highly efficient manner. Job descriptions and person specifications were clear and relevant.
- There are strong safeguarding links with the Cathedral. The BSA and

BASA services and training are available to them. The Cathedral has also undertaken a self-audit of its safeguarding activity.

2.2 WHAT NEEDS TO WORK BETTER?

- There is currently no social work expertise in the children's or vulnerable adults' safeguarding process within the Diocese, despite the professional lead role of social workers in statutory guidance.
- The auditors were given assurances by the BSA that local authority designated officers (LADOs) are regularly consulted for advice. However, this advice was not seen on any case files, except in one case where the BSA had attended relevant meetings.
- Adult safeguarding is identified by some of those interviewed as not being as well developed as children's safeguarding, although improvements in the training available were identified by the focus group.
- The details of the cases were provided to the BSA and the Director of HR, and whilst the overall standard of the casework was reasonable, the following areas for improvement were identified:
 - A focus on the 'here and now' with insufficient account taken of any known history/previous concerns that could also impact and inform the current situation
 - There were times when specific action was required to be taken, but this could often take several months to be done
 - Some reviews of SCAs (Safeguarding Children Agreements) were undertaken via email, rather than in person.
- There was some lack of clarity about whether the BSA or the BASA should undertake Type A Risk Assessments (those undertaken by a DSA taking into account assessments undertaken by other agencies) for vulnerable adults.
- There has been a recent significant improvement in the standard of the filing. But until the end of last year, files were very large and in little order, with the result that it would have been very difficult to quickly extract key information (and also made the auditing process difficult).
- Both adults' and children's safeguarding files are kept securely in the homes of the respective advisers, who are home-based, although we were advised that they are accessible at all times to the Director of HR. It is important that all files are held as diocesan records and are available now and in the future to relevant others in a central location.

2.3 SUMMARY OF CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE DIOCESE

The term 'considerations' instead of recommendations is used in the SCIE Learning Together methodology. The reason for this is that it is important that each diocese decides exactly how to implement the improvements indicated; this is likely to be different from place to place. Some considerations will be around taking specific types of action, whilst others will be alerting the Diocese to develop its safeguarding planning in the future.

These considerations are to be found at the end of each of the sections in The Findings, where applicable. They are listed below for ease of reference, but the detail behind each of these is in the findings section and consequently not repeated here.

Whilst both adviser posts are in receipt of professional supervision and consultation, it would be preferable to have supervisors from an experienced safeguarding social worker manager.

How to meet the requirements of Protecting All God's Children (A49) within the diocesan safeguarding adviser service i.e. the need for safeguarding expertise and professional qualification.

Consider how to enable wider knowledge of the identities and function of BSA and the BASA including making them the first point of contact for enquiries and possible/actual referrals (rather than via the Bishop's Chaplain) and developing a communications plan with parishes to involve naming the respective advisers on the diocesan website and other promotional material.

The BSMG to consider meeting more regularly than half yearly, for example, quarterly.

The BSMG, whilst recognising the problems in recent years within Birmingham Children's Services, to persevere in its attempts to include professional expertise from both children's and adults social work, and for there to be further efforts to obtain representation from the statutory agencies/professions involved in safeguarding.

A Cathedral representative to be recruited.

Update the diocesan website to take into account the Care Act 2014.

For the long-term development of the safeguarding service, consideration to be given to any need for the advisers to be office-based and whether there needs to be a professional (such as a social work qualified) team lead responsibility for the safeguarding service.

To prioritise the development of a shared database on safeguarding cases along with the development of comprehensive recording systems for safeguarding, which:

- provide for the secure storage and maintenance of records within the diocesan office
- is compliant with data protection requirements for those working from home and
- provide consistent cross-referencing systems for safeguarding concerns between different records.

To implement a reliable process so that centrally held records of safeguarding training undertaken by members of the clergy are also included in their blue files.

To continue to improve file organisation, and compile case summaries or a chronology for the identified complex and historical cases.

To explore the use of an electronic recording process for casework: other dioceses which have already implemented such systems may be able to provide advice.

Clarify responsibility for undertaking the risk assessments of vulnerable adults (i.e. BSA or BASA).

Clarify language used in regard to the group that oversees SCAs as distinct from the core group that should be formed in every serious safeguarding situation which relates to a church officer.

The BSA to routinely evidence on case files any discussions with LADOs.

Establish the obstacles to timely follow-up actions and take action to minimise delay.

How to facilitate closer working between the BSA and BASA where a vulnerable adult is involved in a children's case.

How to be confident that the full history of previous concerns/offences is taken into account when assessing and considering current risk.

The safeguarding advisers to continue to develop close working relationships with all local authority LADOs/safeguarding advisers in both children's and adults' services, and ensure that any contact/advice that is forthcoming is noted in case files.

For reviews of Safeguarding Children Agreements to be undertaken in a face-to-face meeting, except in exceptional and justifiable circumstances.

In situations where it is not possible to convene a timely initial SCA meeting, and a letter is used in lieu of an SCA, a properly convened initial SCA meeting is held as soon as possible after the sending out of the letter with all members of the core group present.

Compile and publish a procedure for complaints about safeguarding that includes how to make a complaint and what to expect in terms of timeliness of response as well as the details of who will respond.

Initiate annual reporting of complaints in regard to the handling of safeguarding

issues, and their outcomes, into the BSMG. Write and publish the whistleblowing policy and procedure. Ensure it differentiates between whistleblowing in regard to safeguarding matters and other areas, such as bullying/harassment, finances.

How to use data/information on safeguarding provided in the Articles of Enquiry to inform future planning of safeguarding services and resources.

Consider developing an information-sharing protocol with other major faith groups represented within the Diocese.

Improve the process to facilitate the BSA and BASA sharing information and working together as and when required.

Establish a quality assurance process.

3 FINDINGS

3.1 SAFEGUARDING MANAGEMENT

Safeguarding is the ultimate responsibility of the Bishop of Birmingham. The Bishop's Management Team (the Suffragan Bishop of Aston, Archdeacons of Birmingham and Aston, Diocesan Secretary, Bishop's Chaplain) are collectively responsible for safeguarding within the Diocese, with the Bishop's Chaplain having specific delegated responsibility as being the first point of contact for any possible safeguarding referrals.

The management team meets four weekly and safeguarding is always an agenda item. In addition, the Director of Human Resources (HR) and the BSA report to quarterly meetings.

(Reference to part 1 of S.11 audit: Provide a structure to manage safeguarding in the Diocese. Also to part 2: The Bishop appoints a member of his senior staff to be the lead person for safeguarding.)

3.2 SAFEGUARDING ADVISER ROLES

The responsibilities of the Safeguarding Adviser is split across three separate roles in the Diocese of Birmingham providing approximately 55 hours per week input:

- the Children's Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser (BSA)
- the Bishop's Adults Safeguarding Adviser (BASA)
- the Training and Development Officer (TDO).

Job descriptions and person specification are in place for all roles.

The Children's Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser (BSA)

The Children's BSA is a consultant undertaking casework, managing the Safeguarding Children Agreements and on the Bishop's safeguarding management group. He works around 11 hours per week, which can vary according to the needs/demands of the service. He is entirely based at home with all the relevant files. This could be perceived as an advantage in terms of the independence of the role, but may also mean that he is removed from the rest of the safeguarding team and the Diocese. The BSA is line managed by the Director of HR and receives supervision from his peer in the Methodist Church, who is a former Police Officer.

The BSA's professional background is that of a solicitor specialising in Children and Families law and he currently chairs the legal group of the Advisory Committee of Coram (Adoption & Fostering Academy). The BSA left the solicitors' practice he was working for and set up his own consultancy.

The Bishop's Adults Safeguarding Adviser (BASA)

The BASA undertakes her role on a voluntary basis, for just over one day per week. She undertakes some casework but the main focus of her role is to work with parishes in a more inclusive approach to vulnerable adults within the church community, alongside sitting on the Bishop's safeguarding management group. She also assists with some adults' safeguarding training. She is a self-supporting

member of the clergy and was employed by the NHS as a nurse before retiring.

She is line managed by the Director of HR and, although based at home, does spend some time in the Diocesan Office. All her files are also kept securely within her home. She does not receive professional supervision

The Training and Development Officer (TDO)

The third member of the team is a full-time (37 hours per week) Training and Development Officer (TDO), based in the diocesan offices. This role, newly created in the recent re-structuring that took place, is responsible for the development and delivery of most of the safeguarding training and keeps data on who has been trained/requires training. The TDO sits on the BSMG.

The TDO is very well known within the parishes, having previously undertaken the role of the Bishop's Adviser on Children (a role which covered children's advocacy, the promotion of children's voice and experience within the church etc.). Many in the Focus Group saw her, rather than the BSA, as the 'face' of safeguarding and would ring her in the first instance before making contact with the Bishop's Chaplain, who acts as the first point of contact for the BSA.

The TDO has no specific qualifications in regard to safeguarding work, but has considerable experience from her role as Children's Adviser to the Bishop, and being the point of contact for DBS support for almost ten years within the Diocese. She is line managed by the Director for HR.

The TDO delivers virtually all of the training, except for some input by the BASA for adults' safeguarding training. She also has a role in ensuring when new national policies and procedures are adopted, that they are passed on and implemented by the Parish Safeguarding Officers.

Safeguarding adviser role in the Diocese

The BSA feels that the Bishop of Birmingham and his team are all approachable and engaged in safeguarding. He said he has never had trouble accessing them and they fully respect, and accept, his professional expertise. Overall, he feels he has access to any individual or file that he requires in the course of his work. He feels that virtually all parishes understand safeguarding and refer in when appropriate. This view was also stated by the Bishop and the two Archdeacons.

Another commendable process is the BSA-run quarterly Case Review Panel which reviews current children's cases with the Bishop's Chaplain and both Archdeacons. This ensures they are kept updated on current casework activity and issues, and is a good example of a 'need to know' process whereby key senior members of the clerical team can be appraised of safeguarding activity.

Of some concern to the auditors was the lack of awareness of the BSA and BASA within parts of the Diocese. The name of the BSA was not known to some parishes (as stated by several members in the Parish Focus Group). Whilst participants knew the referral process in to the service was via the Bishop's Chaplain, the auditors were concerned that the profile of the BSA (who has been in post for 12 years) was not sufficiently well known to be identified by name.

The BASA feels that her work is developing over time and she is becoming busier as

awareness grows around adult safeguarding. The main concentration of her role has been working around the inclusion of vulnerable people in key aspects of the church, and in raising awareness about what to do if people are worried about vulnerable adults who are members of their church. She also feels that she has access to any individuals or resources that she requires, and feels more supported now that the new team is in place.

Lack of professional social work input into service

Given the lead role of social work within safeguarding in the UK, both children and vulnerable adults, it is of note that this expertise is lacking within the professional experience of the safeguarding advisers.

Currently only the BSA has supervision. Whilst the fact of supervision is positive, the fact this comes from an ex police officer means another opportunity to enable social work expertise in the safeguarding process has been missed.

The particular areas in casework, identified as needing improvement, in particular the focus on the 'here and now' may be linked to the lack of such professional social work experience.

Considerations for the Diocese

Both adviser posts to be in receipt of professional supervision and consultation, preferably from an experienced safeguarding social worker manager.

How to meet the requirements of Protecting All God's Children (A49) within the diocesan safeguarding adviser service i.e. the need for safeguarding expertise and professional qualification.

Consider how to enable wider knowledge of the identities and function of BSA and the BASA including making them the first point of contact for enquiries and possible/actual referrals (rather than via the Bishop's Chaplain) and developing a communications plan with parishes to involve naming the respective advisers on the diocesan website and other promotional material.

(Relevant Section 11 requirements

Part 1: Appoint a suitably qualified diocesan safeguarding adviser, and provide appropriate financial, organisational and management support. The adviser must have full access to clergy files and other confidential material (PACG A4.5).

Part 1: Ensure that the diocesan safeguarding adviser is informed of any serious safeguarding situation, including any allegation made against a member of the clergy, or anyone else holding the bishop's licence, concerning misconduct.

Part 6: The DSA's role is clear in the JD and person specification.

Part 6: The DSA has sufficient time, funding, supervision and support to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities effectively; including local policy development, casework – including time for complex cases, advice, liaison with statutory authorities, training (coordination and direct delivery), personal and professional development and professional registration. Communication with parishes – (newsletters, website etc.). Also administrative and managerial support arrangements, out of hours / leave cover and access arrangements (planned and unplanned) to the senior staff team (PACG A4.5). Part 8: The DSA should be given access to professional supervision to ensure their practice is reviewed and improves over time.)

3.3 BISHOP'S SAFEGUARDING MANAGEMENT GROUP (BSMG)

There has been an independent Chair of the BSMG since July 2014, when the current post-holder took over the role. She is well qualified and experienced for the role. Until her recent retirement she was a circuit Judge with experience in Family Court work. She chaired the Birmingham district Family Mediation Service and also chairs the Catholic Safeguarding Commission. The Chair holds a Masters in Canon Law from Cardiff University with a dissertation in child protection within the Church of England.

The BSMG's other members are:

- members of the clergy: Bishop of Birmingham, Archdeacon of Aston, Archdeacon of Birmingham, Bishop's Chaplain
 - Director of HR (Designated Safeguarding Lead and manager of the safeguarding advisers and the TDO))
 - BSA, BSA and TDO
 - Bishop's Director of Communications
 - Bishop's Director of Community Regeneration
 - Bishop's Director of Education
 - Diocesan Secretary
 - Warden of Readers
 - Bishop's Adviser for Lay Adult Education & Training
- The Safeguarding Support Officer provides administration for the Chair and the Group

The group is very well provided in terms of legal (the Chair and the BSA) and ecclesiastical expertise. What is however lacking, as in the safeguarding adviser roles, is social work expertise, along with multi-agency involvement of statutory agencies. It is of note that despite asking, and chasing, no feedback was given to the auditors from any external agencies, including any LADO. The auditors have been told that efforts have been made to recruit representatives from social work, but with the well recognised problems in recent years within Birmingham Children's Services, this has not proved possible.

A clear Terms of Reference for the BSMG is in place, and there is an annual work plan that is monitored at its half-yearly meetings. The Chair feels that the role of the BSMG is mainly strategic, ensuring that the correct policies and procedures are both adopted and in place and that everyone works together to ensure the safety of children and vulnerable adults. The auditors did question whether two meetings a year are sufficient for the task of the group, especially in the light of the many changes and improvements to safeguarding that have been implemented nationally during recent times and the likely increasing need for strategic oversight of such expectations.

The Chair says there is a clear commitment to safeguarding by the Bishop and his team, both financially and also in terms of accessibility and an ongoing willingness to prioritise safeguarding matters. As an example, she gave the recent investment in increased training capacity, which had been welcomed and agreed without any concern.

It is clear from BSMG minutes that the membership prioritises the meetings as few apologies are noted. The Chair feels that the weaknesses lie in the need to further develop awareness of adult safeguarding issues (reflected in the current work plan, which contains many actions in regards to adult safeguarding) and a need to recruit more independent members of the BSMG from key professional groups (e.g. Local Authority Children's Services) outside of the Church.

There are several positive safeguarding links between the Diocese and the Cathedral e.g. the BSA provides consultation and undertakes casework for the Cathedral and Cathedral staff attend the diocesan training programme. The auditors feel a Cathedral representative on the BSMG would strengthen these links.

A regional network of DSMG chairs is in the process of being established, and the Birmingham Chair looks forward to being part of that group.

Considerations for the Diocese

The BSMG to consider meeting more regularly than half yearly, for example, quarterly.

The BSMG whilst recognising the problems in recent years within Birmingham Children's Services to persevere in their attempts to include professional expertise from both children's and adults social work, and for there to be further efforts to obtain representation from the statutory agencies/professions involved in safeguarding.

A Cathedral representative to be recruited.

(Relevant Section 11 requirements)

Part 1: Provide a structure to manage safeguarding in the Diocese; (PAGC A.4))

3.4 POLICIES, PRACTICE GUIDANCE AND PROCEDURES

The Diocese and the Diocesan Synod has adopted the national set of policies (2015) and published them on their website.

The website has links to the main Church of England safeguarding policies and procedures, and some key documents have been clearly 'broken down' into an easy-to-understand format for parishes. This has been done to a very good standard. In fact, these were positively commented on by the Parish Focus Group, which expressed the view that much of the national guidance was not presented in an easily understandable way for the parish context. Some concerns were also expressed by this group and the BSA about the volume of new procedures being distributed by the national team.

However, information on adults' safeguarding on the Diocese website needs to be updated to take into account the Care Act 2014.

Considerations for the Diocese

Update the Diocesan website to take into account the Care Act 2014.

(Reference to part 1 of the S. 11 audit: Ensure the Diocesan Synod adopts the House of Bishops' safeguarding policies, together with any additional diocesan procedures and good practice guidelines.)

3.5 RESOURCES OF SAFEGUARDING SERVICE

Last year, capacity was increased for safeguarding that saw the introduction of a full-time Training and Development post and a full-time Administrator post. This was undertaken with the view of raising the profile of safeguarding within the Diocese, and parishes, and forming an identifiable safeguarding team.

This expansion has clearly been positive with members of staff within the team all remarking that they highly valued being part of a team 'identity', and the Parish Focus Group commented that it experienced a clear improvement in both the training and the work undertaken to break down new policies and procedures into an easy-to-interpret format.

Everyone we spoke to was very clear that there was a culture of 'if it is needed' in regard to safeguarding, then resources will be identified and provided. Both the Bishop and the Diocesan Secretary were also clear that the resourcing of safeguarding was absolutely central and a priority.

Applications for DBS is now undertaken via CCPAS, which was seen as a good service, that was efficient, provided value for money and understood the needs of the Diocese and parishes.

However, the auditors were of the view that whilst the recent additions and changes to the safeguarding services were a very clear step in the right direction, further consideration needs to be given to improve the efficiency and capacity of the service. This could be achieved via different use, rather than through an increase, of resources

The fact that the two advisers are home-based is, in the view of the auditors, likely to have some impact on their profile within the Diocese and the development of strong and coordinated team working, particularly without a clear professional 'team leader' to coordinate, clarify any overlapping responsibilities (such as risk assessments) and be responsible for the team's development. The Diocese is though confident that the current arrangements work well.

There are some areas to consider in the long-term development of a professional safeguarding service:

- The two adviser posts to be office-based, as is the TDO (with files maintained securely within the Diocese - see 3.6).
- The adviser roles to be more widely communicated (see 3.2).
- The involvement of social work expertise within the service (see 3.2).

The BSA received remuneration for his role, whilst the BASA is a volunteer. Auditors reflected whether it suggests to others that greater value is placed on the paid function and if so if such a discrepancy will be sustainable in the long term.

Considerations for the Diocese

For the long-term development of the safeguarding service, consideration to be given to any need for the advisers to be office-based and whether there needs to be a professional (such as a qualified social work) team lead responsibility for the safeguarding service.

(Reference to part 6 of the S.11 audit: The DSA has sufficient time, funding, supervision and support to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities effectively, including local policy development, casework, advice, liaison with statutory authorities, training, personal and professional development and professional registration.)

3.6 RECORDING SYSTEMS AND IT SOLUTIONS

The location of case files within the homes of the BSA and the BASA suggested a lack of ownership by the Diocese of these records. It is important that they are identified as the responsibility of the Diocese by locating them centrally to ensure access to relevant others and secure storage over time. Effective safeguarding often relies on being able to construct reliable histories and piece together information, so it is vital that the Diocese retains files over time and that they do not remain at homes of individual advisers.

The auditors initially had very significant concerns about the size and lack of structure to paper case files. The files are currently kept off-site in the homes of the respective safeguarding advisers. When the auditing process commenced at the start of the on-site audit it was time-consuming to get to grips with basic case information, which meant we were concerned that any others needing to access information quickly from the files would also struggle to do so.

In June 2014, one of the recommendations of the Review of Deceased Clergy was that the files be reviewed in their structure, and consolidated. However, this has only taken place very recently (towards the end of 2015). The auditors were pleased to note that very recent files are sub-divided with more structure. On all (old and new) files, basic information about core group members (where there was a core group) were listed on the inside front cover, meaning this was easy to identify.

To increase the accessibility of records the auditors suggest that certain complex and/or historic cases have a case summary or chronology completed and attached at the start of the file in order that the history and background can easily be ascertained. In the medium term some exploration of an electronic system should assist in modernising recording systems.

Eight clergy blue files were audited, and, on the whole, were satisfactory, but in four cases had no record of any safeguarding training that had been undertaken.

All did have a front sheet for the recording of basic information, which was of some assistance when they had been fully completed – but most had not.

Two files of recruitment to non-clerical posts were also audited and were excellent – well ordered, with all requirements in place in an easily accessible manner.

The files for lay appointments were all fully compliant with safer recruitment, neatly sub-divided, and readily identifiable information which meant they were easy to audit.

The auditors were particularly impressed with the job descriptions and person specifications for the posts.

A record of who has had safeguarding training, who has not, and when updating training is required is recorded in a series of spreadsheets. It is acknowledged by the Diocese that it is reliant on the parishes informing the Diocese of any changes or additions to parish workers/volunteers as there is no requirement for them to inform the Diocese, but they are confident they are advised when required in the vast majority of cases. For clergy, church wardens and commissioned roles, records are maintained centrally and all changes are received and recorded.

Feedback was given by one member of the BSMG that development of web-based templates and documentation by the National Safeguarding Team would be of significant assistance at diocesan level.

Considerations for the Diocese

To prioritise the development of a shared database on safeguarding cases along with the development of comprehensive recording systems for safeguarding, which:

- provide for the secure storage and maintenance of records within the diocesan office*
- are compliant with data protection requirements for those working from home*
- provide consistent cross referencing systems for safeguarding concerns between different records.*

To implement a reliable process so that centrally held records of safeguarding training undertaken by members of the clergy are also included in their blue files.

To continue to improve file organisation, and compile case summaries or a chronology for the identified complex and historical cases.

To explore the use of an electronic recording process for casework: other dioceses which have already implemented such systems may be able to provide advice.

(Reference to part 1 of the S.11 audit: Provide access to the DBS checks for parishes, the Cathedral, the Bishop's Office and the Diocesan Office for those beneficed and licensed clergy, paid workers and volunteers who need to obtain disclosures.)

3.7 RISK ASSESSMENTS AND SAFEGUARDING CONTRACTS / AGREEMENTS

A commendable innovation is the BSA's role in the establishment of groups appointed within the parish to monitor the SCAs, with appropriate membership and clarity about what was expected of the members. Rather confusingly these groups are referred to as 'Core Groups' within the Diocese. This report has not called them Core Groups as this terminology relates to the group that oversees the coordination of the multi-agency oversight of investigations into serious safeguarding concerns that relate to a church officer (7.7 – 7.28 Practice Guidance: Responding to Serious Safeguarding Situations Relating to Church Officers 2015).

The BSA, when permitted, and available, will always ensure any risk assessments from other agencies are on file. This is not always possible, due to data protection issues, but some assessments were viewed on the files audited. In other cases, the BSA will undertake a Type A Risk Assessment, albeit it is not clear what professional training or experience the BSA has to undertake such assessments.

We were advised that there were not strong enough links with other DSAs to ask them to undertake a Type B (undertaken by an independent assessor following a statutory investigation on any church officer) assessment, and would contract a suitably qualified professional to do such an assessment.

It appeared that the BSA would undertake risk assessments on both children's and adult's cases. There needs to be greater clarity established in regard to the expectation for the BSA to undertake such assessments on vulnerable adults' cases and if the BSA has the right training and experience.

There is a robust process in place for putting in place Safeguarding Children Agreements, with the BSA actively being involved in the meetings of the group that monitor the agreement. Agreements are reviewed annually and signed off by all members of these groups. Indeed, these groups were noted as being established efficiently with relevant membership.

The auditors had some concerns that older SCAs were not sufficiently tight. However, recent ones show a significant change, and are more robust and clear about expectations (e.g. the need to sit with an adult during a service, attending specific services only).

For some long-standing agreements an email review is undertaken, rather than a face-to-face review. The auditors had some concerns about this (see 3.10 and 11), as the people subject to these agreements may be manipulative and a series of email exchanges cannot reflect the potential complexity of the situation. However, when new members of the agreement monitoring group were recruited there was a face-to-face meeting with the BSA, which the auditors felt was good practice.

Considerations for the Diocese

Do those responsible for undertaking risk assessments have the right training and experience for this responsibility?

Clarify responsibility for undertaking the risk assessments of vulnerable adults (i.e. BSA or BASA).

Clarify language used in regard to the group that oversees SCAs as distinct from the Core Group that should be formed in every serious safeguarding situation that relates to a church officer.

(Reference to part 1 of S. 11 audit: Provide access to a risk assessment service so the Bishop and others can evaluate and manage any risk posed by individuals or activities within the Church.)

3.8 TRAINING

Training capacity was increased last year to form a full-time Training and Development post.

The training provided was praised by members of the Focus Group, who said it was delivered in an open and easy-to-understand manner. It is delivered both directly in parishes, and well as centrally in the Diocesan Office in the centre of the city – a combination that was also welcomed by members of the Focus Group.

The safeguarding training developed by the national team is the format used for the delivery of training, with the addition of some other more specialist courses, such as a course specifically on e-safety. There is no online training.

There is a Safeguarding Training Support Group, that supports training through welcoming participants, hospitality, observing training (and participants), offering feedback to the trainer, and providing pastoral support to participants where required. There is also a Safeguarding Training Reference Group that oversees the development of a training programme and content of training modules that complies with and implements the national Church of England Learning and Development framework. The auditors felt that this is a good approach to a training process.

A robust training strategy is in place identifying who needs to be trained in what, how regularly, and how this will be delivered. This was noted as also being reported into the BSMG.

Numbers trained, and those requiring training, are kept on spreadsheets overseen by the TDO. There is a programme in place to ensure those who need to attend training do so, with an aim that this will be 100 per cent by the end of the year. To date, over 75 per cent (268) of the clergy and 778 lay church officers have completed/updated safeguarding training.

(Reference to part 1 of S.11 audit: Select and train those who are to hold the Bishop's Licence in safeguarding matters. Provide training on safeguarding matters to parishes, the Cathedral, other clergy, diocesan organisations, including religious communities and those who hold the Bishop's Licence. And to part 8: Those working closely with children, young people and adults experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect ...have safeguarding in their induction and are trained and have their training refreshed every three years.)

3.9 SAFE RECRUITMENT OF CHURCH OFFICERS

As noted elsewhere, obtaining DBS is outsourced to CCPAS, which would appear to work very efficiently for the Diocese.

Auditors reviewed eight blue files and spot-checked two for lay appointments.

The Diocese now asks a question about children's and adult's safeguarding routinely for all clerical interviews and for all non-clerical posts that relate in any way to children or vulnerable adults.

Whilst all had up-to-date DBS information noted on them, only a few had a note of safeguarding training. It was difficult to identify any timeline for the recruitment process in many of the files.

One appeared to have no references and one included a date for when it was last

'weeded', with no note of what had been removed.

Two of these files involved individuals where there had been safeguarding issues, and all relevant documentation in regard to these matters was located within the file.

A very helpful leaflet has been produced describing what needs to be undertaken in regard to the recruitment of volunteers, and in what circumstances a DBS is required.

(Reference to part 7 of S.11 audit: The Diocesan Secretary has implemented arrangements in line with the House of Bishops' policy on Safer Recruitment 2015. And to part 1: Keep a record of clergy and church officers that will enable a prompt response to bona fide enquiries...where there have been safeguarding concerns, these should be clearly indicated on file.)

3.10 RESPONSE TO ALLEGATIONS

A total of 15 case records were audited. We would have liked to have audited more, but the size and format of the files (commented on elsewhere) made this process difficult and time-consuming. However, it is clear from more recent cases that the file format has been vastly improved.

The auditors have provided feedback on each case examined to the BSA and his line manager, but the following provides the overall conclusions of this part of the audit.

All the cases reviewed were in respect of concerns, allegations or convictions in respect of children, although in one case the adult could be deemed as vulnerable themselves.

The cases reviewed all fell within the sampling recommendations laid out within the briefing pack to dioceses. The auditors were told that there have been no formal complaints about how a safeguarding matter has been dealt with, so such a case could not be audited.

Initial response to allegations was timely. However, in several ongoing cases, there was considerable delay in taking forward required actions. Some examples are:

- An individual already subject of an SCA spent a further period in prison, on release it took nearly six months to update his SCA.
- Case highlighted during review of Past Child Protection Cases in Dec. 2008, recommended independent risk assessment; this was not completed until June 2010.
- A risk assessment recommended a further specialised assessment on a member of the clergy: this took six months to take forward.
- In a few cases it had proved difficult to quickly convene an SCA after an offender had returned to the church community – to address this, the BSA would write a letter outlining the requirements and expectations in lieu of an SCA. All examples seen had been counter-signed by the offender. Whilst this is a good example of dealing with an unfortunate situation, in all cases a proper SCA review did not take place for a further year.

In at least four cases there was evidence that the full history had not been taken into account and considered. Whilst it is important to take into consideration the

presenting, current issues, it is equally important to consider past and previous risks in order to make an overall assessment and understanding of risk.

There was one case, where, on retirement, the ██████████ refused Permission to Officiate due to the level of concerns and the individual being subject of an SCA, but the ██████████ conferred on him the status of ██████████. We understand this status brings no payment or privileges, and that as the person was already a ██████████, it was difficult to argue that he should not be a ██████████. The auditors were concerned it nonetheless sent some message of approval to the individual, fellow clergy, congregations, possible victims and the wider public.

Good links were evidenced on files from relevant teams in the police and probation service and there was one case where the LADO had significant involvement and the BSA had both communicated and attended relevant meetings.

However, there was no written evidence on the paper files that the BSA had strong relationships with any of the LADOs that cover the Birmingham Diocese. There were also no written records of any contact/telephone calls to either discuss or make possible referrals. The auditors were assured, however, that the BSA both regularly contacted LADOs for advice and had good working relationships with them.

Cases that should have had contact with the LADO (numbering four in total) were highlighted to the BSA at the end of the audit, and the audit forms shared with him and his manager. With regard to the one current case, the recommendation was made that a discussion should be held with the LADO.

One Core Group has been held (as per Practice Guidance: Responding to Serious Safeguarding Situations Relating to Church Officers 2015), since the procedures were introduced last year to the time of this audit.

Considerations for the Diocese (see also 3.11)

The BSA to routinely evidence on case files any discussions with LADOs

3.11 QUALITY OF CASEWORK

There are some areas of very good casework including:

- The groups who monitor the SCAs were made up of the relevant individuals, and those people were promptly replaced if someone left/moved etc.
- SCAs were worded in plain English, so could be easily understood, and were signed by all parties.
- The more recent SCAs are more robust with greater clarity than the more historical examples that we saw.
- The BSA had good working relationships with the police and probation, and, when required, they were both involved with and sent information from MAPPA (Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements).

Recording appears to be up to date, but, the problems with the files made it very difficult to ascertain the story. As noted, recent files show a significant improvement, which will hopefully be continued.

There was one case where the adult concerned was clearly vulnerable, and the input of the BASA would have been useful and added greater context to the casework.

In eight of the 15 cases audited, decision-making appears to be sound and based on all available information. However, there were some examples (in seven cases) where the auditors felt decision-making and required action could have been done differently:

- Relaxation of the SCA via an email review
- Re-offending took place whilst subject of an SCA but no updated risk assessment on release from prison
- Lack of discussion with the LADO, with a view to making a referral, following outcome of risk assessment, and also following subsequent Lucy Faithfull Foundation assessment
- Individuals left the church or moved to other faiths but there was not always referral on, or where there was it was not detailed enough (three cases)
- Conducting SCA Reviews via email

There was verbal feedback to the BSA at the end of the audit, by the auditors, and the audit forms (which highlighted any actions that were required) were shared with the BSA, alongside a list of cases that had caused concern (see also section 3.10 in relation to contact with the LADO).

Considerations for the Diocese

Establish the obstacles to timely follow up actions and take action to minimise delay.

How to facilitate closer working together between the BSA and BASA where a vulnerable adult is involved in a children's case.

How to be confident that the full history of previous concerns/offences is taken into account when assessing and considering current risk.

The safeguarding advisers to continue to develop closer working relationships with all local authority LADOs/safeguarding advisers in both children's and adults' services.

For reviews of Safeguarding Children Agreements to be consistently undertaken in a face-to-face meeting, except in exceptional circumstances.

In situations where it is not possible to convene a timely initial SCA meeting, and a letter is used in lieu of an SCA, a properly convened initial SCA meeting is held as soon as possible after the sending out of the letter with all members of the Core Group present.

(Relevant Section 11 requirements)

Part 1: Provide access to a risk assessment service so that the Bishop or others can evaluate and manage any risk posed by individuals or activities within the Church.

Part 9: The Bishop/Diocesan Secretary should ensure that the Diocese has a written procedure on how to deal with serious safeguarding situations and allegations against church officers. All allegations are dealt with in line with Responding to Serious Safeguarding Situations Relating to

Church Officers and Other Individuals Practice Guidance May 2015.

Part 10: The Bishop/Diocesan Secretary should ensure that all allegations are dealt with in line with Responding to Serious Safeguarding Situations Relating to Church Officers and Other Individuals Practice Guidance May 2015.

Part 11: The Bishop/Diocesan Secretary in line with should ensure that all who fall into this category are dealt with in line with Responding to Serious Safeguarding Situations Relating to Church Officers and Other Individuals Practice Guidance May 2015. The category is: If an organisation removes an individual (paid worker or unpaid volunteer) from work such as looking after children (or would have, had the person not left first) because the person poses a risk of harm to children or adults, the organisation must make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service.)

3.12 COMPLAINTS

The Director of HR advised the auditors that whilst there was a complaints procedure for safeguarding it was not well communicated and accepted it needed updating. There is no mention of a complaints procedure on the diocesan website on the pages that contain safeguarding information.

Considerations for the Diocese

Compile and publish a procedure for complaints about safeguarding that includes how to make a complaint and what to expect in terms of timeliness of response as well as the details of who will respond.

Initiate annual reporting of complaints regarding the handling of safeguarding issues, and their outcomes, into the BSMG.

(Reference to part 1 of S. 11 audit: Provide a complaints procedure which can be used by those who wish to complain about the handling of safeguarding issues. Also part 4: There is an easily accessible complaints procedure including reference to the Clergy Disciplinary Measures and whistleblowing procedures.)

3.13 WHISTLEBLOWING

The position with whistleblowing is exactly the same as outlined for that of Complaints (3.12)

Considerations for the Diocese

Write and publish the whistleblowing policy and procedure. Ensure it differentiates between whistleblowing in regard to safeguarding matters and other areas, such as bullying/harassment, finances.

(Reference to part 4 of S. 11 audit: Whistleblowing arrangements are in place and addressed in training.)

3.14 MONITORING OF SAFEGUARDING IN PARISHES AS PART OF ARCHDEACON'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The auditors interviewed both Archdeacons. Between them they have the responsibility to ensure, on an annual basis, that Articles of Enquiry are completed by each parish in the Diocese.

Both Archdeacons were clear about the high priority that safeguarding is given within the Diocese, led by the Bishop and with equal commitment by other members of the senior clerical team.

The auditors were shown how the updating and increasingly probing nature of the questions in regard to safeguarding has taken place since 2010 on the Articles of Enquiry form.

Documentation provided prior to the field audit showed that responses to the Articles of Enquiry from each parish are assessed by the Archdeacons prior to the Visitation and that safeguarding issues are discussed with the church wardens during their interview as part of the Visitation.

It was acknowledged by one of the Archdeacons that having the Articles of Enquiry completed by the parishes can involve some proactive encouragement. The same Archdeacon also said that one of the weaknesses in the system is that 'you only know what you are told' – particularly as the parishes are separate legal entities. That aside, both Archdeacons said that follow-up on any safeguarding issues arising from the completion by a parish on the Articles of Enquiry was much more robust now that there was increased capacity in the Safeguarding Team.

Both were of the view that, with some exceptions, safeguarding was seen as a high priority by the parishes. The TDO reported that all Parishes have a Safeguarding Officer in place.

Considerations for the Diocese

How to use data/information on safeguarding provided in the Articles of Enquiry to inform future planning of safeguarding services and resources.

(Reference to part 1 of the S. 11 audit: Include the monitoring of safeguarding in parishes as part of the Archdeacons' responsibilities.)

3.15 RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

There is a significant overall commitment within the Diocese of Birmingham to prioritise children and young people in their work and to include their voice at the centre of this. The programme leading this is called Growing Younger.

This initiative is about reaching out to children and young people within the diocesan area and, amongst other priorities, listening to their ambitions and concerns about life. This has been resourced through the employment of Growing Younger facilitators who work directly with parishes.

Alongside this, each parish also has a children's advocate, as well as a parish lead for adults, who hold specific responsibility for ensuring that the specific needs of both

children and adults are being met. Each parish has a parish safeguarding coordinator in place (Annual Safeguarding Return 2015), but it is not known the number of vacancies for children's advocates and leads for adults.

An Authorised Listeners Service is in place and is managed by the BASA. This service is specifically for adults affected by sexual abuse. The leaflet, giving information about the service, what it can and cannot offer and how to make contact is clear, concise and in plain language. Options for contact are either via the parish or the Bishop's Office (Bishop's Chaplain). Information is also given on the leaflet about other organisations which can be contacted if the individual does not want support via the Church. The service has been used by a very small number of people, but not as heavily as the Diocese anticipated. The suggestion was made in the Focus Group that perhaps people preferred to access support outside the Church.

If counselling or therapeutic input is required by an individual who suffered abuse in a religious environment, there is a clear policy and procedure in place about the funding of any such requirements, and the process to obtain such funding.

(Reference to part 3 of S.11 audit: There is a structure to hear the views of young people, there are children's and young people's advocates available, there are Authorised Listeners in place.)

3.16 INFORMATION SHARING

The BSA is an active member of the regional network of DSAs.

We were told by the BSA that he has never had any problem accessing files or information from the Diocese.

There is a good example of a 'need to know' process via the quarterly Case Review Panel, at which the BSA reviews any complex cases with both Archdeacons and the Bishop's Chaplain.

On all cases audited there was clear evidence of close working and appropriate information sharing with relevant parish officers, and externally, with the police and probation service, and MAPPA.

On some of the cases audited, the person concerned had sometimes left the church as they had been unwilling to worship or work under the operation of an SCA. It was accepted by the auditors that unless an individual says they are going to another church, or they are given intelligence about this, it is not possible to know if they continue to worship elsewhere – be it within the Church of England or another faith. Where information was known then information was shared. However, there was one case audited where, whilst information was shared, because the BSA had not read all the background information, some key details were not passed on. This was also a case identified as of some significant concern by the auditors, and it really justified a face-to-face meeting to fully appraise the new faith group of the issues of concern.

This same case had also not been discussed with the LADO. Although the BSA said he had a good relationship with the LADO in Birmingham Children's Services, there was only one case that appeared to have any LADO involvement (and this was well documented). There was no evidence of LADO involvement on any other cases audited, or any of the LADOs covering the diocesan area being used as a resource

to discuss issues or potential referrals (see also 3.10 and 3.11).

There was one case where an offender was also a vulnerable adult and there did not appear to be any involvement or information sharing with the BASA.

As stated in 3.2, several members of the Parish Focus Group did not know the name of the BSA. The auditors were concerned that this could have some implications for good information sharing between parishes and the BSA if the post-holder has no 'face' or relationship to parishes. The Focus Group also said that the first point of contact if they needed to discuss a safeguarding matter was the Bishop's Chaplain, who would then arrange for the relevant safeguarding adviser to make contact. The auditors felt that this was not needed and parish safeguarding officers, should be free to discuss concerns directly with the relevant adviser.

Considerations for the Diocese

Consider developing an information-sharing protocol with other major faith groups represented within the Diocese.

A process to facilitate the BSA and BASA sharing information and working together as and when required.

3.17 QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES

The Diocese makes an annual self-assessment (based on a Sec. 11 report) to the national team. It has just submitted one for 2015 and this was supplied to the auditors prior to their arrival for the on-site audit.

In 2014, the Diocese commissioned an independent review of deceased clergy. This was undertaken by an independent social worker. The auditors understand that an action plan was put in place to address the areas requiring attention.

The Cathedral has recently commissioned an independent safeguarding audit from CCPAS in February 2016. The audit reviewed the Cathedral's policies and processes against CCPAS's ten 'Staying Safe and Secure'¹ standards for churches, other places of worship and faith-based organisations as follows:

- Safeguarding policy
- Developing safeguarding awareness training
- Safer recruitment
- Management of workers
- Working safely
- Communicating effectively
- Responding to concerns
- Pastoral care

¹ Staying Safe & Secure, CCPAS 2015,
<http://files.ccpas.co.uk/documents/StayingSafeAndSecure.pdf>

- Managing those who pose a risk
- Working in partnership standards.

Across all ten standards, each item for review was either met or is in progress – there are no items that were not being met. An action plan is in place to follow through on the ten recommendations that were made.

Aside from the annual self-assessment and the Articles of Enquiry there is no formal and routine quality assurance process within the Diocese, but the Diocese advised the auditors that they understood that this is in development nationally. However, the auditors are unaware of such a development and have subsequently confirmed there is no such plan with the National Safeguarding Team. The Diocese will therefore need to establish its own quality assurance process

Considerations for the Diocese

Establish a quality assurance process.

(Relevant Section 11 requirements

Part 1: Provide a structure to manage safeguarding in the Diocese; (PAGC A.4).)

3.18 LINKS WITH NATIONAL SAFEGUARDING TEAM

The BSA attends any national event for DSAs, and is an active part of the regional network for DSAs. The Director of HR and the BASA have also had a meeting with the heads of the National Safeguarding Team. The Chair of the BSMG has also attended a recent national meeting for Independent Chairs, and looks forward to being part of a regional network that is currently being developed.

At the feedback meeting held at the end of the audit process, the Director of HR expressed the view that, overall, the Church was getting on board with the safeguarding agenda and that she felt things were moving forward.

3.19 WHAT NATIONAL SYSTEMIC SAFEGUARDING ISSUES HAVE ARISEN

The following issues arose in the course of the audit which may have national implications:

- Several individuals said that they felt policies and procedures are not easily translatable/relevant to the parishes. Some work is required at diocesan level to make them relevant at a parish level.
- Several individuals told us that they found the Clergy Disciplinary Measures too unwieldy to implement, and felt that a more straightforward grievance procedure would be useful.
- The Diocese has found it difficult to find professional supervisors with safeguarding skills and church knowledge: it would be helpful to have a nationally compiled database of professional supervisors with appropriate knowledge and skills.

- Type B assessments and when they are applicable to use: clarification of whether the definition of a church officer includes someone who perhaps undertakes a role on an ad hoc, or very part-time basis (such as a couple of hours per month).
- Guidance from the national team on the appropriate counselling offer to survivors of historic abuse would be of assistance at a diocesan level.
- The possibility of a national electronic recording process for casework to assist dioceses in development of good quality recording systems (see 3.6).

APPENDIX: REVIEW PROCESS

DATA COLLECTION

Information provided to auditors

Information provided to the auditors before or during that audit:

- annual self-assessment (based on a Sec. 11 Report), 2014 and 2015
- information about Authorised Listeners
- the job descriptions and person specifications for all members of the Safeguarding Team, including the Director of HR.
- BSMG Terms of Reference
- BSMG work plan
- report on the Past Cases Review in 2009
- report on the Review of Deceased Clergy (2014), undertaken by an independent social worker
- minutes of the three most recent meetings of BSMG (December 2014, May 2015, October 2015)
- Articles of Enquiry form
- Birmingham Cathedral Safeguarding Audit findings
- training plan
- information on training courses
- information on recruitment
- safeguarding policies and guidelines
- safeguarding training support group minutes.

Participation of members of the diocese

The auditors had face-to-face conversations with:

- the BSA
- the BASA (by telephone)
- the Safeguarding Training & Development Officer
- the Archdeacon of Birmingham
- the Archdeacon of Aston
- the Director of HR
- the Diocesan Secretary
- the Bishop of Birmingham
- the Independent Chair of the BSMG.

The Parish Focus Group comprised:

- three parish safeguarding officers (two were also parish identity verifiers)
- two church wardens
- a children's worker
- a youth worker
- a community regeneration worker
- a parish administrator (who is also a parish identity verifier)
- two vicars.

The audit: what records / files were examined

The auditors examined:

- 15 case files. (two of these related to members of the clergy, and the blue files for these people were also read)
- two HR files for lay diocesan officers
- eight blue files.