

NEWCASTLE DIOCESE

# SAFEGUARDING STRATEGY

2023–2026

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This strategy is part of the wider Diocesan strategic vision and mission.

The strategy encompasses work on [Survivor Engagement](#) and [Safeguarding Training Needs](#).

The strategy outlines five headline areas of work which are aligned with the five [National Safeguarding Standards](#).



**Hospitality to the vulnerable is at the heart of the good news of Jesus Christ, and of our purpose as his Church. We all share in the responsibility of making our churches safe places for everyone – for those who attend them, and for those outside the church who look to us as people of Christ’s love, hope, and healing. I am committed to this as your Bishop, and I am very grateful to all of those within our parishes, and our Diocesan Safeguarding Team, who work hard to help make this achievable. I am especially grateful to the victims and survivors of church abuse and to the independent members of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel who have brought valuable insights to our learning as we have developed our safeguarding strategy for the next few years, and I commend it to you. Every blessing,**

*+ Helen-Ann, Bishop of Newcastle*

**This strategy continues the journey towards embedding a strong and positive culture of safeguarding children and vulnerable adults in the Diocese of Newcastle. We want to build on the progress so far and are passionate about ensuring that all who worship or are engaged with the Church feel safe and listened to when they have concerns. We all have a role to play in achieving this ambition and the voices of victims and survivors are central to our success.**

*Jackie McHanwell, Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel Chair*

## Our Aims

- To ensure that safeguarding is everyday business and everyone’s responsibility across the parishes and Diocese, evidenced in all areas of our activity.
- To ensure that all colleagues (paid & unpaid) are empowered to speak up and act when they see or suspect safeguarding issues.
- To ensure that guidance is available, accessible and understood in order that those who serve can do the “right thing” and promote the welfare of all.
- To develop a dataset of information to monitor safeguarding activity and to ensure that the Diocese has sufficient capacity, a dataset which will enable the monitoring of patterns and trends across the parishes and Diocese.
- To make safeguarding personal: to learn from children, families and adults at risk and from survivors who have used parish/Diocesan services; to ensure that the response to safeguarding incidents and concerns is proportionate and as nonintrusive as possible, is appropriate to the risk presented and ensures people remain at the centre of any processes.



- To work in partnership with colleagues (in the statutory and voluntary sector) to facilitate co-operation and collaboration in a transparent and productive way.
- To ensure that there is clear accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding, by building an effective governance and quality assurance framework, and establishing regular auditing of performance.

## Culture, Leadership & Capacity

*Safeguarding Standard 1: Church bodies have the safe and healthy culture, effective leadership, resourcing and scrutiny arrangements necessary to deliver high quality safeguarding practices and outcomes.*

We know from other sectors that simply knowing and following procedures is not enough to do safeguarding well. To keep people safe and respond well when abuse happens, organisations need to have healthy cultures and effective leadership. Organisations with unhealthy cultures will be more susceptible to bad behaviour becoming abusive behaviour, and they will be unsafe spaces for people to disclose abuse or to get the response they need. Leaders have a key role to play in shaping culture.

Church bodies will not be able to provide effective safeguarding practice if they do not invest adequate resources in proportion to known needs. Lack of investment can also result in a failure of duty of care to those in safeguarding roles which is not only bad for safeguarding but is also inconsistent with both Christian values and good employment principles.

To get safeguarding right, organisations need critical friends to challenge them in ways which add value and have a positive impact on people's lives.

## Prevention

*Safeguarding Standard 2: Church bodies have in place a planned range of measures which together are effective in preventing abuse in their context.*

We know from the testimonies of victims and survivors and from research that abuse damages an individual's life on many levels. It also causes damage to Christian communities and the Church as a whole, undermining its mission in the world.

Levels of Church-related abuse can be reduced by individuals and Christian communities taking conscious preventative steps. Those who abuse will avoid Church communities where prevention is strong and target those where it is weak.

A passion for prevention should flow naturally from our values of love and compassion for people.



# Recognising, Assessing & Managing Risk

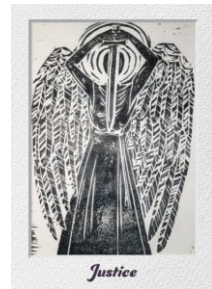
Safeguarding Standard 3: *Risk assessments, safeguarding agreements and associated processes are of a high quality and result in positive outcomes. The assessment and management of risk is underpinned by effective partnership working.*

Effective risk assessment and management keep people safe and can save lives. They are not tick-box exercises: they require skilled analysis and judgment from experienced professionals. Achieving 'safe uncertainty' is the realistic aim.

Safeguarding professionals need to focus on safeguarding risks. Non-safeguarding matters should be triaged to others as appropriate. It is unsafe practice for organisations to treat non-safeguarding situations as safeguarding matters.

## Victims & Survivors

Safeguarding Standard 4: *Victims and survivors experience the timeliness and quality of Church bodies' responses to disclosures, and their subsequent support, as positively meeting their needs, including their search for justice and helping their healing process.*



Church bodies need to respond well when abuse happens. Poor responses can compound the trauma victims and survivors have already experienced, and delay or prevent them from healing and moving forward.



Responding well requires a healthy culture marked by love and compassion, where understanding of trauma informs how people respond, and where various forms of concrete support are provided in a timely manner. It also means engaging with and learning from victims and survivors.

Above all, this standard is about the manifestation of Christian love, hope and healing.



# Learning, Supervision & Support

*Safeguarding Standard 5: All those engaged in safeguarding related activity in Church bodies receive the type and level of learning, professional development, support and supervision necessary to respond effectively to safeguarding situations, victims and survivors, and respondents.*

Getting safeguarding right is not easy. The nature of safeguarding changes over time, and as research advances, so does our understanding of what works. All those involved in safeguarding need to participate in continuous learning. What matters in safeguarding is not the tick-box completion of training, but a learning journey that results in changes of behaviours, by connecting with people at the level of their beliefs and values.

For learning to result in behavioural change, it needs to be embedded, nurtured and developed through reflective supervision. Because of the complexities of safeguarding situations and the impact that dealing with them has on individuals, reflective supervision is an essential component of safe and effective practice.

Priests are at the forefront of dealing not just with safeguarding concerns, but a range of other traumatising human experiences. These will all have an impact on them. Priests may experience significant secondary trauma, which could affect their safeguarding responses as well as personal and family lives. Whilst it will be some time before the Church is able to address this, their need for reflective supervision and support must remain as an aspiration and so is included here.

*You will find tools and resources related to each of the National Safeguarding Standards towards the bottom of [this page](#).*



# Focus & Measuring Impact

2023 Focus <span style="float: right;">▶ = initiated/ongoing * = completed</span>			
Item	Actioned by	Target date	Status
Establish Social Work Placements in the Diocese. Review experience of placement.		Jan 2023 June 2023	* *
<a href="#">PSO forums &amp; induction</a> , and social events to be run over the year.			*
PSO Thanksgiving Service led by Bishop Mark.		March 2023	*
Create/deliver a workshop for Bishop's Staff on Managing Allegation Guidance and roles/responsibilities. Information/workshop to be disseminated to Area Deans, further cascade to all priests with responsibility.		April 2023	*
Conduct development/co-creation sessions to explore Peer Group Support models. Establish a Peer Support Group for Survivors; disseminate co-produced information, promotion of the group across the Diocese.	DSA + Support Person	April 2023 Spring/Autumn 2023	* *
Train Area Dean cohort to be Link Person(s); ensure there is on-going group supervision established.		May 2023	*
Comprehensive <a href="#">safeguarding survey</a> in partnership with Sunderland University to be sent to all parishes; collation and final report expected Autumn 2023. Discuss and implement any identified improvements.	Working groups	May 2023 Winter 2023/ Spring 2024	* ▶
SWOT analysis to be undertaken with all safeguarding stakeholders and reported back to Bishop's Staff.		June 2023	*
Introduce and embed refreshed Safeguarding Leadership Learning Pathway.		August 2023	*
Familiarise key stakeholders with fully automated systems for delivering Safeguarding Leadership Learning.		Autumn 2023	*
Diocesan bishops to be satisfied that there are appropriate, robust arrangements in place for the management and control of all blue clergy files, conducted in line with existing policy and guidelines	Bishop's House	Autumn 2023	*



to ensure that safeguarding issues are correctly identified, recorded and referred onwards. Review systems/processes. (PCR2 recommendation 11)			
Diocesan bishops to be satisfied that all relevant clergy and church officers fully comply with the Clergy Current Status Letter (CCSL) policy ensuring that any safeguarding risks or concerns are highlighted as part of the process. Review systems/processes. (PCR2 recommendation 15)	Bishop's House	Autumn 2023	*
Bullying is not defined as a safeguarding issue but is a significant concern. Request that all church bodies ensure that incidents of bullying within the Church are recognised, recorded and dealt with effectively and in accordance with relevant HR policies or as a safeguarding concern if the relevant threshold is met. Establish systems/processes. (PCR2 recommendation 25).	Bishop's House + Diocesan Safeguarding Team	Autumn 2023	▶
Chaplaincy to Survivors (CtS) established with Lead Officer in post.		Autumn 2023	*
Development of trauma informed and trauma responsive workshops across the Diocese for all stakeholders building on the <a href="#">If I Told You, What Would You Do?</a> resources.	CtS	Winter 2023/Spring 2024	▶
Establish a group supervision model with Support Persons and people who offer Pastoral Support in safeguarding processes.	CtS	Winter 2023/Spring 2024	▶
Explore the role of Moral Injury in supporting Survivors and those who serve.	CtS		▶
Information Sharing Agreement(s) between employers of lay or ordained ministers who hold the Bishop's Licence to be established.	Bishop's House		▶
Information Sharing Agreements with local partners to be explored and established.			▶
Embed NCMS MyConcern.			*
Support all parishes to reach Level 3 on the Safeguarding Parish Dashboard.			*
Host Zoom DBS workshops for stakeholders across the Diocese.			*
Soft Launch of Parish Dashboard Safer Recruitment Hub (pilot of 10 parishes).			*



Establish a quarterly joint Diocesan (Durham and Newcastle) meeting with those responsible for vocations and ministry (DDOs/TEIs) with the aim of ensuring a whole system approach to safeguarding.			*
Be a Pathfinder Diocese as part of IICSA Recommendation 1 and 8 requirements.			▶
Develop materials/resources/workshops for stakeholders in parishes responsible for identifying and managing risk.			
<b>2024 Focus</b> ▶ = initiated/ongoing * = completed			
Item	Actioned by	Target date	Status
Adopt fully automated systems/processes to deliver Safeguarding Leadership Learning.		January 2024	*
Expansion of Parish Dashboard Safeguarding Hub to all parishes in the Diocese.		January 2024	▶
Deliver a Spiritual Abuse Webinar led by <a href="#">Professor Lisa Oakley</a> for all clergy/church officers with follow up Zoom conversations.		February 2024	▶
Be a Pathfinder Diocese as part of IICSA Recommendation 1 and 8 requirements.		Until March 2024	▶
Recruit/ train more Support Persons.	CtS	Spring 2024	▶
PSO/Safeguarding Garden Party.		Summer 2024	▶
Create a role description, induction/training programme and recruit both clergy/lay colleagues to Pastoral Support roles.	CtS	March 2024	▶
All actions/areas for improvement from Sunderland University Survey and Working Groups to be implemented.		Autumn 2024	▶
Consider and act on the recommendations of the report on the <a href="#">Future of Safeguarding</a> in the Church of England			
Quarterly joint Diocesan (Durham and Newcastle) meeting with those responsible for vocations and ministry (DDOs/TEIs) with the aim of ensuring a whole system approach to safeguarding.			▶
To deliver workshops to parish colleagues responsible for identifying and managing risk.			▶
<a href="#">PSO forums &amp; induction</a> , and social events to be run over the year.			▶
Collaboration with Durham University Professor Peter Ward: evaluation of CtS		November 2025	▶



<a href="#">LOUDfence event</a> , including follow-up Strawberry Artwork project		March – December 2024	▶
Presentation at <a href="#">Narrative of Moral Injury in European and International Contexts</a> , an interdisciplinary conference at the International Centre for Moral Injury, Durham University.		April 2024	▶
<i>Jagged Edges</i> : survivor-led creative project, including development of resources on moral injury		April 2025	▶
Parish-facing workshops on the National Standards		January – June 2024	▶
Empowering Children and Young People and Amplifying their voice (Webinar and Parish Workshops)		May – December 2024	▶

Dioceses are to review safeguarding resources to ensure these are sufficient, prioritised and in place to deliver the required standard of safeguarding, including training, prevention and support for survivors and victims, risk assessment and management of safeguarding caseloads. This may also apply to cathedrals who do not have arrangements with their diocese. Task and Finish Group to be established and report back Spring 2024 (PCR2 recommendation 12)

## 2025 FOCUS

- Business as usual activities as in 2023/2024 related to learning and development, survivor engagement and support, collaborative and collegiate working, auditing and reporting on performance.



# Tools to Measure & Describe Progress & Impact

- Frequent themed/targeted auditing by Safeguarding Leads/National Safeguarding Team anticipated.
- Parish Safeguarding Dashboard Data.
- Parish Safeguarding Dashboard: Safeguarding Hub.
- NCMS: My Concern reports.
- Monthly Reports to Bishop's Staff/DSAP.
- DSAP Chair Annual Report.
- Annual data collection National Safeguarding Team.
- Annual Diocesan Independent Audit. (Baseline audit 2023 which will inform development of other tools to measure/assess compliance and quality).
- 5 yearly independent Church of England safeguarding (anticipated Spring 2024).

