**Annual Report 2017: Safeguarding Team**



The Ely Safeguarding Team seeks to contribute to ‘People Fully Alive: Ely 2025’ in its strategic aims of developing healthy churches and serving the community. We aspire to strengthen and integrate concepts of ‘safeguarding’ and ‘protecting the vulnerable’ within the culture and everyday practice of all those working, volunteering or worshipping across the Diocese. This preventative aspect of our work includes raising awareness of the various ways in which abuse may be manifested, the processes by which it should be managed and how it may impact on survivors. The Safeguarding Team provides advice, guidance and leadership whenever concerns arise about the possible abuse of a child or adult at risk.

All aspects of work by the Ely Safeguarding Team are consistent with House of Bishops’ policies and practice guidance. Local strategies and practice guidance are based on these and endorsed by the Diocesan Safeguarding Liaison Group. During 2017 five new policy and guidance documents relevant to safeguarding have been published, these are**:**

* **Promoting a Safer Church; House of Bishops policy statement (2017)**
* **Responding Well to Domestic Abuse (2017)**
* **Safeguarding Training & Development Practice Guidance (2017);**
* **Responding to, assessing and managing concerns or allegations against church officers: Practice guidance (2017)**
* **Key roles and responsibilities of church office holders and bodies: Practice guidance (2017)**

**Safeguarding referrals in** **2017**

There were 129 referrals in 2017 which represents an increase of 16% on 2016 when there were 109. This increase may be attributed to the increased levels of safeguarding training across the Diocese and the publicity surrounding past safeguarding failures across the church and other institutions.

Referrals may result in the provision of consultation and advice, internal casework management and/or referral onwards to statutory agencies. Many cases involve more than one category of harm: (for example a child who has been physically harmed may also be subject to emotional harm) in those cases we have identified a primary category for recording purposes.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Primary Category of Referral** | **Child** | **Adult** |
| Sexual Abuse | 4 |  |
| Non-current sexual abuse | 2 | 5 |
| Physical | 7 | 3 |
| Emotional | 7 | 5 |
| Neglect | 2 | 3 |
| Domestic Abuse |  | 5 |
| Financial |  |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Category of Referral** |  |
| DBS or Confidential Declaration Information | 9 |
| Information about an adult who may pose a risk of harm | 22 |
| General safeguarding issues/advice | 35 |
| Enquiries from Statutory Agencies | 4 |
| Allegations about current or former clergy, parish employees or volunteers | 16 |

**Risk Assessments and Safeguarding Agreements**

Central to all safeguarding work are the holistic assessment of risk and the development of effective strategies to manage any identified risk. These are often complex, involving liaison with partner agencies in the community, such as probation and the police. Many alleged and convicted perpetrators of abuse move from place to place and thus inter-diocesan and inter-agency cooperation is essential in seeking to protect the vulnerable.

During 2017, 10 Safeguarding Agreements were in place. These relate to the reviewing of known, historical cases and newly reported cases. The subject of the Agreement participates in this process, and the Agreements are regularly reviewed and monitored. The purpose of such Agreements is to protect all within the church community, including the subject.

**Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)**

The DSO has responsibility for ensuring that all relevant staff, volunteers and members of congregations have appropriate DBS checks completed. During 2017, 1153 DBS were undertaken across the Diocese, which represents an increase of 17% from 2016, when 989 were undertaken. These checks are an essential part of ensuring the safety of all participating in church community activities.

**Safeguarding Training**

The Safeguarding Team began to deliver the Church of England’s ‘Practice Guidance: Safeguarding Training and Development’ 2016 (hereafter referred to as ‘the Guidance) in January 2017.

The safeguarding team has delivered the full range of currently available National Church of England training modules.

In the main, the modules which apply to employees and volunteers in our parishes are: C0 Basic Awareness (online or face to face) C1 Foundation and C2 Leadership. To reach the majority of volunteers, those modules training have been delivered at evenings and weekends. The C3, S1 and S3 modules have been delivered at the Diocesan Office on a mixture of weekday and weekend dates.

**Numbers trained in each safeguarding module in Ely Diocese during 2017:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Module** | **Candidates** |
| **C0 Basic Awareness (online)** | 816 |
| **C0 Basic (face to face)** | 19 |
| **C1 Foundation** | 645 |
| **C2 Leadership** | 344 |
| **C3 Clergy and Lay Ministers** | 171 |
| **S1 Safer Recruitment** | 173 |
| **S3 Domestic Abuse** | 93 |

The Guidance widened the requirements for safeguarding training considerably and, to support the delivery of the programme, a part time Assistant Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, Sharon Gage was appointed in October 2017. We are fortunate in also having appointed a part-time administrative assistant, Jane Moore, who now has responsibility for arranging all aspects of training sessions and keeping our training database. Our small group of volunteer trainers continues to contribute by co-delivering some courses.

In December 2017 the C1 Foundation Online training module was released, which will reduce the resource required from the Safeguarding Team. While far more convenient for many people to access, there are also those in our churches who are unable to access the internet, or who would prefer to attend face to face training. We propose a mixed training offer of online and face to face to training for C1 during 2018.

We recognise the commitment required by those attending this training, the majority of whom are volunteers and therefore want to make the training as convenient and local as possible, while making the best use of available resources.

**Diocesan Safeguarding Liaison Group (DSLG)**

The Independent Safeguarding Audit undertaken by the Social Care Institute for Excellence in 2016 made several recommendations in relation to the DSLG. Foremost amongst these were the frequency of meetings, to ensure a better sense of continuity, a shift of emphasis from looking at casework to setting and monitoring strategic plans, and a strengthening of the Group’s quality assurance role in relation to safeguarding work.

In January 2017 the Ely Safeguarding Team, together with our Independent Chair of the DSLG, devised our first formal Strategic Plan for 2017 – 2018. Priority is given to three specific strategic areas. These are: to learn from the past and to implement that learning; to ensure that office holders, lay staff and volunteers are supported in effective and consistent safeguarding practices; and to develop a quality assurance framework for safeguarding activity.

Ely DSLG has strong multi-agency and inter-departmental representation which allows robust discussion on safeguarding issues, drawing on a wide range of professional experience and expertise. It is also a supportive group, offering advice and guidance on policy and practice matters. Ely Safeguarding Team is very grateful for all the contributions to its work made by diocesan and partner-agency members of the DSMG.

The Independent Chair of the DSLG, Katharine Jeary who was appointed in July 2016 resigned the role in December 2017. Katharine drove the changes described above and the Safeguarding Team wish to express their gratitude for her professional expertise and support. The vacancy was advertised nationally and at the time of writing, a new Independent Chair, Jon Chapman has been appointed in March 2018.

**Past Cases Review**

During 2016 a review was started by the National Safeguarding Team of all dioceses in relation to the Past Cases Review (PCR) of 2009 and its continuing legacy. The Ely DSA completed a screening questionnaire and interview in 2016 and answered further information requests towards the end of 2017. On the basis of the information reviewed by the DSA at the end of 2017 it appears likely that the PCR will need to be re-done, in whole or in part in Ely Diocese.

**Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA)**

The Church of England is a Core Participant in the Independent Inquiry. The Inquiry confirmed that the first public hearings relating to the Church of England will be held in March 2018 specifically in relation to the Diocese of Chichester. The Diocese of Ely, along with all other dioceses, responded to one formal information request from the Inquiry during 2017.

**Looking beyond the diocese**

The essence of the Safeguarding Team’s work is promoting the safety of vulnerable people within the church community. Everyone is also subject to society’s legislative framework and the Ely Safeguarding Team seeks to strengthen community liaison, whilst also putting forward the perspectives of Church safeguarding policies and practice. The DSA represents the Voluntary Sector on the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). The DSO is the diocesan representative on the Local Adult Safeguarding Board Training Group and is also a member of the LSCB’s Local Practice Group Planning Committee.

The DSAs, the DSO and the DSLG’s Independent Chair are all active in their respective regional and National Church safeguarding fora.

Ely Safeguarding Team also expresses its appreciation for the contribution to safeguarding work of all Parish Safeguarding Officers, who provide a helpful ‘front-line’ link in their parishes and keep safeguarding issues on local agendas.

*RB March 2018*