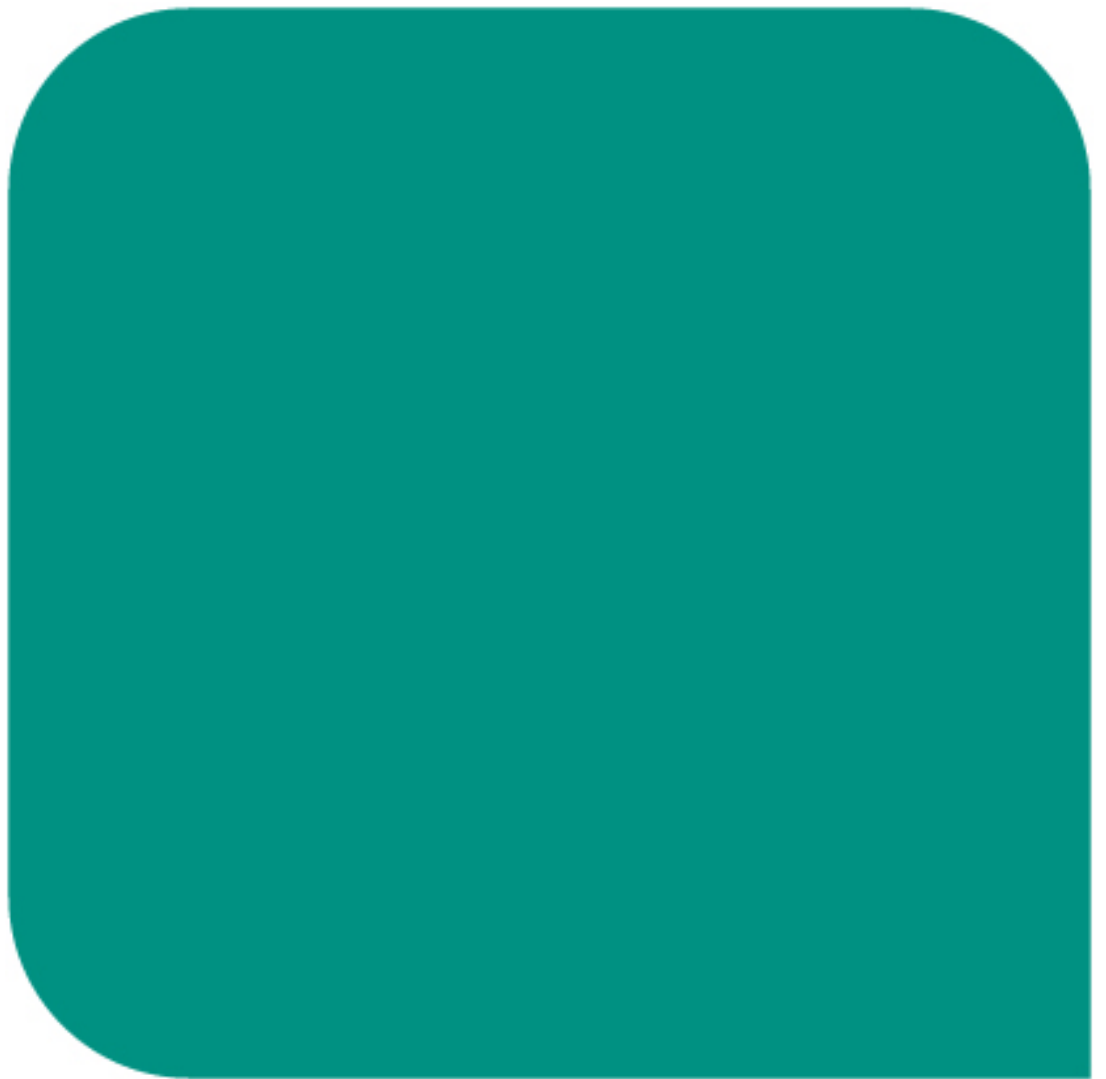




social care
institute for excellence

Blackburn Cathedral independent safeguarding audit (October 2019)



The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) improves the lives of people who use care services by sharing knowledge about what works.

We are a leading improvement support agency and an independent charity working with adults', families' and children's care and support services across the UK. We also work closely with related services such as health care and housing.

We improve the quality of care and support services for adults and children by:

- identifying and sharing knowledge about what works and what's new
- supporting people who plan, commission, deliver and use services to put that knowledge into practice
- informing, influencing and inspiring the direction of future practice and policy.

First published in Great Britain in March 2020
by the Social Care Institute for Excellence and the Church of England

© Church of England

All rights reserved

Written by Susan Ellery and Simon Bayliss

Social Care Institute for Excellence

Watson House
54 Baker Street
London W1U 7EX
tel 020 7766 7400
www.scie.org.uk



Contents

1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	The audit programme	1
1.2	About SCIE	1
1.3	The audit process.....	1
1.4	Structure of the report	3
2	CONTEXT	4
2.1	Context of the Cathedral and diocese	4
2.2	Contextual features relevant to safeguarding.....	4
2.3	Description of the safeguarding structure (Including links with the diocese)	5
2.4	Who was seen in this audit	5
3	FINDINGS – PRACTICE	7
3.1	Safe activities and working practices	7
3.2	Case work (including information sharing)	20
3.3	Clergy Disciplinary Measures	22
3.4	Training	22
3.5	Safer recruitment	23
4	FINDINGS – ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORTS	26
4.1	Policy, procedures and guidance	26
4.2	Cathedral safeguarding advisor and their supervision & management	28
4.3	Recording systems and IT solutions	29
5	FINDINGS – LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY	31
5.1	Quality Assurance	31
5.2	Complaints about the safeguarding service	33
5.3	Whistleblowing	34
5.4	Safeguarding Advisory Panel	35
5.5	Leadership and management	37
5.6	National systemic safeguarding issues	42
6	CONCLUSIONS	43
	APPENDIX: REVIEW PROCESS	45

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE AUDIT PROGRAMME

- 1.1.1 The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) is delighted to have been asked to provide an independent audit of the safeguarding arrangements of the cathedrals of the Church of England.
- 1.1.2 This programme of work will see four cathedral audits in 2018, 19 in 2019, 18 in 2020 and a final two early in 2021. It represents a significant investment in cathedrals and an important opportunity to support improvement in safeguarding.
- 1.1.3 All cathedrals are unique, and differ in significant ways from a diocese. SCIE has drawn on its experience of auditing all 42 Church of England dioceses, and adapted it, using discussions and preliminary meetings with different cathedral chapters, to design an audit methodology fit for cathedrals. We have sought to balance cathedrals' diversity with the need for adequate consistency across the audits, to make the audits comparable, but sufficiently bespoke to support progress in effective and timely safeguarding practice in each separate cathedral. Cathedral representatives will play a key role in adapting the audit framework to their particular cathedral context. Only in this way will we achieve bespoke audits that are right for each place respectively. Bespoke audits will in turn optimise the usefulness of the audit process and outputs to supporting progress in effective and timely safeguarding practice. We look forward to working with you to this end.

1.2 ABOUT SCIE

- 1.2.1 The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) improves the lives of people who use care services by sharing knowledge about what works.
- 1.2.2 We are a leading improvement support agency and an independent charity working with adults', families' and children's care and support services across the UK. We also work closely with related services such as health care and housing.
- 1.2.3 Safeguarding is one of our areas of expertise, for both adults and children. We have completed an independent safeguarding audit of diocesan arrangements across the Church of England as well as supporting safeguarding in other faith contexts. We are also committed to co-producing our work with people with lived experience of receiving a service/response in the setting at hand.
- 1.2.4 You can find out more about us on our website www.scie.org.uk

1.3 THE AUDIT PROCESS

SCIE Learning Together and our approach to audit

- 1.3.1 SCIE has pioneered a particular approach to conducting case reviews and audits in child and adult safeguarding that is collaborative in nature. It is called

Learning Together and has proved valuable in the adults' and children's safeguarding fields. It is built on work in the engineering and health sectors that has shown that improvement is more likely if remedies target the underlying causes of difficulties, and so use audits and reviews to generate that kind of understanding. So Learning Together involves exploring and sharing understanding of both the causes of problems and the reasons why things go well.

Key principles informing the audit

1.3.2 Drawing on SCIE's Learning Together model, the following principles underpin the approach we take to the audits:

- Working collaboratively: the audits done 'with you, not to you'
- Highlighting areas of good practice as well as problematic issues
- Focusing on understanding the reasons behind inevitable problems in safeguarding
- No surprises: being open and transparent about our focus, methods and findings so nothing comes out of the blue
- Distinguishing between unique local challenges and underlying issues that impact on all or many cathedrals

Supporting improvements

1.3.3 The overarching aim of each audit is to support safeguarding improvements. To this end our goal is to understand the safeguarding progress of each cathedral to date. We set out to move from understanding how things work in each cathedral, to evaluating how *well* they are working. This includes exploring the reasons behind identified strengths and weaknesses. Our conclusions will pose questions for the cathedral leadership to consider in attempting to tackle the underlying causes of deficiencies.

1.3.4 SCIE methodology does not conclude findings with recommendations. We instead give the cathedral questions to consider in relation to the findings, as they decide how best to tackle the issue at hand. This approach is part of the SCIE Learning Together audit methodology. The approach requires those with local knowledge and responsibility for progressing improvement work to have a key role in deciding what exactly to do to address the findings and to be accountable for their decisions. It has the additional benefit of helping to foster ownership locally of the work to be done to improve safeguarding.

The process

1.3.5 The process will involve reviewing documentation as well as talking to key people, including focus groups. Further details are provided in the **Appendix**.

- 1.3.6 The site visit will be either 3 days or 2.5 days. Cathedrals have been selected for the three-day audit to provide a broad base, or on the scale of an operation and/or where concerns may have been raised in the past for cathedral or diocese.

1.4 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

1.4.1 This report is divided into:

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

2 CONTEXT

2.1 CONTEXT OF THE CATHEDRAL AND DIOCESE

- 2.1.1 Blackburn Cathedral is England's newest cathedral, completed in 1977. It has a parish, and serves a diocese which essentially maps onto the county of Lancashire. Both Blackburn itself, and the neighbouring towns, have significant challenges with social deprivation, and it was revealed in 2019 that Blackburn includes the local authority ward with the highest level of child poverty in Britain. The town is a distribution centre for those seeking asylum, and also has a very visible homeless population. Rural areas nearby are generally much more affluent.
- 2.1.2 The Cathedral is not an obvious tourist destination. However, we have a very active education department, and have many visits from schools and other community groups. We also run an extensive music outreach programme through schools across Lancashire. There is no choir school, so our choristers are drawn from local primary and secondary schools.
- 2.1.3 Blackburn Cathedral has a small but active staff team. There are volunteer staff for the welcome desk and shop. In September 2019 we acquired a new director of music. Both the Dean and the Canon Missioner, the two Commissioners' posts currently filled, are also relatively new.
- 2.1.4 In recent years, significant energy has been invested in the development of the Cathedral buildings. September 2019 saw the Cathedral Chapter launch their five-year strategic plan, which has seven focus areas:
- mission and engagement
 - welcome and hospitality
 - buildings and heritage
 - worship and prayer
 - finance and stewardship
 - our Bishop and diocese
 - growth in faith.
- 2.1.5 Ensuring that Blackburn Cathedral is a safe place is a key part of our focus on welcome and hospitality.

2.2 CONTEXTUAL FEATURES RELEVANT TO SAFEGUARDING

- 2.2.1 The new senior clerical team at Blackburn Cathedral has made great efforts to turn around a previous organisational culture. The auditors heard verbal evidence that the previous culture was experienced by some as making the Cathedral an unsafe place and caused some people to feel bullied. It was described by one person as '[an atmosphere of] ... cover up, fear, manipulation, power and control'. The auditors saw case material from that time, which raised concerns and made such feelings understandable.

- 2.2.2 The Dean came to Blackburn about 2.5 years ago and was joined by the Canon Missioner in May 2018. The Canon Missioner has a mandate to improve safeguarding and, in the auditors' assessment, huge strides have been made in a short space of time. This is despite the fact that the second residentiary Canon is not currently at work, leaving a small team very depleted.
- 2.2.3 Blackburn is not a wealthy cathedral and has a history of using volunteers to fill roles that one might expect to be salaried. Until two years ago, the functions of the Executive Director were carried out on an ad hoc basis by volunteers. The auditors were concerned to find that the funding would cease for the current staff post-holder at the end of October 2019, especially as the Cathedral is part-way through a programme of change. In addition, two voluntary safeguarding coordinators have acted as Cathedral safeguarding coordinators. In practice the coordinator posts work well enough but in the longer term, reliance on volunteers raises issues such as sustainability and accountability.

2.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE SAFEGUARDING STRUCTURE (INCLUDING LINKS WITH THE DIOCESE)

- 2.3.1 The Dean remains safeguarding lead with overall responsibility, but day to day leadership of the safeguarding coordinators is delegated to the Canon Missioner, as is strategic leadership to the whole Cathedral.
- 2.3.2 Casework referrals are most often taken by the two safeguarding coordinators, one for under 18s and one for adults. These are voluntary posts; the coordinator for children is a (now) retired headteacher and primary advisor, and the coordinator for adults is an auditor of prisons and probation services.
- 2.3.3 Most referrals have been triaged by the coordinators and referred on to the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor (DSA) if they involve a member of clergy or senior lay person. Less serious cases are dealt with by the coordinators. Since July 2019, there has been a service level agreement with the Diocese.
- 2.3.4 This structure is about to change as a Cathedral Safeguarding Advisor (CSA) is due to start work after this audit. The person appointed will work on a freelance basis, for the equivalent of one day a week, but is a DSA elsewhere. In future, the voluntary coordinators will liaise primarily with the CSA.

2.4 WHO WAS SEEN IN THIS AUDIT

- 2.4.1 The audit involved reading key documentation and talking with people either individually or in focus groups. Conversations were held with the Dean, the Canon Missioner (Chapter safeguarding lead), the Canon Pastor and the Director of Music. The auditors talked with both the Executive Director, who is the lay lead on safeguarding and the DSA. The auditors also talked with the Head Virger [sic], the Education Officer and a number of people in voluntary positions.

2.4.2 Focus groups included volunteers, girl choristers and parents of choristers (both boy and girls). The auditors observed Evensong and the arrangements for chaperoning choristers to and from the Song School.

2.4.3 A full list of people seen can be found in the appendix.

Any limitations to audit

2.4.4 It would have been useful if the CSA post had been able to bed in before the audit as the contract is still in draft and needs some finalising in terms of the relationship with the Diocese and supervisory responsibility for the coordinators.

3 FINDINGS – PRACTICE

3.1 SAFE ACTIVITIES AND WORKING PRACTICES

Precincts and buildings

- 3.1.1 Managing the wellbeing of worshippers and visitors across the Cathedral is a complex task. The auditors judged that the staff and volunteers at Blackburn Cathedral do this well.

Description

- 3.1.2 Blackburn Cathedral is located in the centre of Blackburn, and therefore easily accessible to workers, shoppers and others as they make use of the city.
- 3.1.3 The management of the site is principally the work of the virger [sic] team, comprising the Head Virger, three other staff virgers; and two volunteer virgers. The Head Virger has been in post for over 10 years. All four staff virgers live on site in Cathedral accommodation.
- 3.1.4 The virgers wear ties, fleeces or sweatshirts that identify their role. They are currently waiting for new kit that will include a larger Cathedral logo and role badges.
- 3.1.5 The virgers have all completed C1 and C2 safeguarding training in addition to training on conflict resolution, although the latter was some time ago.
- 3.1.6 The virgers open the Cathedral at 8am each day and are responsible for closing each evening at 6pm. Opening and closing of the Cathedral is conducted by a lone virger, although other people are in the building for Morning Prayer or Evensong. Between the hours of 10am and 4pm a second virger is also on duty, with rare occurrences of lone working during this period.
- 3.1.7 An internal Cathedral radio system is in use, with radios held by the virger team, welcome desk, shop, exhibition and office staff but not held by the wardens, who currently use their own mobile phones.
- 3.1.8 A code phrase is in use to seek support in an emergency from those on duty in the Cathedral.
- 3.1.9 The virger team is also in regular contact with the local police team and access the town centre radio channel for information-sharing about risks or to seek support when needed. Due to changes to local policing, response times to incidents at the Cathedral have deteriorated recently. Public CCTV around the Cathedral site can be monitored by the local police for tracking individuals who are of shared concern.
- 3.1.10 Following the development of the Cathedral quarter, there has been a marked decline in the amount of local crime, antisocial behaviour and conflict experienced within the Cathedral and surrounding area. Where the virger

team do discover discarded hazards such as drug paraphernalia around the Cathedral grounds, they are well-equipped to be able to deal with it, having sharps kits and protective equipment available.

- 3.1.11 CCTV is widely established around the Cathedral, both internally and externally. The virger team are able to remotely monitor this feed live through hand-held devices.
- 3.1.12 The main Cathedral floor is an open space with relatively few enclosed or hidden areas. The crypt is sometimes used as an exhibition or function area and the auditors saw, during the audit, an exhibition running here. When this space is in use and open to the public, a volunteer or member of the virger team supervises the area. Access to restricted areas is controlled by keycode entry or an electronic fob system.
- 3.1.13 One staircase, the 'Canon's Stairs' leads from the main Cathedral floor to the crypt space and is secured with a rope barrier. The auditors heard that the stairs are occasionally used by the public to gain unauthorised access to the crypt space and so far either a virger or a warden has seen and dealt with this.
- 3.1.14 Volunteers, wardens and virgers are identifiable by name badges or clothing that bears Cathedral insignia. Lanyards and sashes are not currently in use for volunteers.
- 3.1.15 At weekly diary and logistics meetings, the virgers meet with other departments who use the Cathedral floor to coordinate the usage of the building. Wardens and virgers also have their own regular patterns of meetings, and particular events have special meetings attached to them.

Analysis

- 3.1.16 The auditors judged that the Cathedral premises are generally safely managed and, relative to its size, advanced in the provision of security measures such as CCTV coverage.
- 3.1.17 The unsecured Canon's Stairs does represent a potential risk given the use of the crypt space and adjoining corridors by choristers and the Sunday School (see 3.1.63).
- 3.1.18 The virger team have lone working procedures in place to mitigate against instances, such as opening and closing, where they are not in pairs.
- 3.1.19 While an internal radio system is in use, it is not held by the wardens or Sunday School team. The auditors felt that this is an unmanaged risk, where wardens use of their mobile phones leaves open the possibility that individuals may not respond quickly to phone calls in an emergency, leaving them vulnerable.

- 3.1.20 The auditors heard evidence of the virger team, wardens, volunteers and other departments working cohesively together; regular contact and communication both informally and through established diary management meetings enables a flow of information such that all spoken to during the audit felt assured that the Cathedral is a safe space to be.
- 3.1.21 The lack of lanyards, sashes or formal identification for some volunteers has presented an issue when maintaining security and managing more challenging visitors, being approachable to those with concerns and being identifiable to school and other groups that may use the Cathedral space. This is particularly true when needing to access the restricted areas of the Cathedral and working with those who may not be familiar with them.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How can staff and volunteers within the Cathedral be more identifiable to those who use or visit the space?
- How can the current internal communication and radio systems be standardised and broadened to accommodate the different groups who use the Cathedral?

Vulnerable adults

Description

- 3.1.22 The Cathedral's mission of welcome and the fact that it is a warm and open indoor space mean that sometimes vulnerable adults visit the Cathedral. In addition, some members of the congregation are vulnerable and, potentially, some volunteers.
- 3.1.23 Given the local context of Blackburn, it is unsurprising that the Cathedral is a space that is visited by vulnerable adults, both within and beyond the worshipping congregation. There is no admission fee for entry to the Cathedral, and so no immediate deterrent to those seeking support or a safe place. The auditors heard of a number of vulnerable adults who are regular visitors and are well known to the virgers, volunteers and wardens.
- 3.1.24 In years past, there was apparently a less accepting attitude towards people whose behaviour may have marked them out and there was a small, but steady, series of incidents that included one serious incident of violence. Since the Cathedral has adopted a more welcoming, problem-solving approach, the number of incidents has reduced significantly while the number of vulnerable visitors has not increased.
- 3.1.25 The Head Virger has made links with the wider city, with the support of the Canon Missioner, by building a list of the support services available for the homeless. The virger team and wardens are able to signpost individuals to these local services. A 'food-drive' initiative has been established with the congregations on Sunday morning for the donation of food items which are then distributed out to those in need.

- 3.1.26 There are a number of staff and volunteers whose roles bring them into contact with vulnerable adults in addition to the virger team. There are about a hundred volunteers who work as welcomers, wardens, and staff the shop and exhibition area.
- 3.1.27 The team of wardens, led by the volunteer Head Warden, have regular contact with vulnerable adults through their work at Cathedral services, ensuring safety and managing those who may present challenging behaviour. There is a protocol in place to support their duties and ensure no lone-working when dealing with conflict or challenging individuals. All wardens have completed C0, C1 and C2 training.
- 3.1.28 Where concerns are held about a vulnerable adult a concern form is completed, a template of which can be found in the Cathedral's safeguarding policy. This is sent to the Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Coordinator (VASC) and shared with the Canon Missioner, Canon Pastor or police where appropriate.
- 3.1.29 The Cathedral does not have a team of chaplains on the Cathedral floor to support those who visit and need pastoral guidance or prayer. The auditors heard how the team of volunteers who staff the welcome desk feel torn by a duty to support those in need and do, on occasion, provide this support to vulnerable adults although they know that it is not within their role to do so. One volunteer talked about taking someone to a side chapel for privacy, when a trained person would have sat in the nave, knowing that the safety of both people comes before privacy.
- 3.1.30 The auditors were told that the standard procedure is for virgers to call one of the Cathedral clergy for pastoral conversations with visitors. Day chaplaincy is not really viable, as the Cathedral is not a 'destination venue'. Chaplaincy/pastoral care to visitors is the responsibility of the Canon in Residence. The gap between what should happen and what sometimes happens is a training issue for the Cathedral.
- 3.1.31 In addition to his two days per week role within the Cathedral, the Canon Pastor works as a manager for the hospital chaplaincy service and for a bereavement care service. He is building a team of volunteer pastoral support workers, travelling to people too frail or unwell to come to services themselves. The team conduct home visits in pairs and use a diary system to record their activities, sign-in and out and submit summary notes which are discussed at the pastoral team meeting, which is also attended by a representative of the virger team and two members of Cathedral clergy. Those conducting home visits have now completed both C1 and C2 training. There is work underway to put up a board in the Cathedral with information and photographs of the pastoral team, clergy and safeguarding coordinators, to identify them to those visiting the Cathedral or seeking support from it.

3.1.32 The volunteer home visiting team has received training on working with the elderly, from Age UK, and the Canon Pastor is planning further training on domestic violence awareness.

3.1.33 Specific safeguarding topics are promoted through posters and information leaflets around the Cathedral. The Canon Missioner shared that she had instigated the placing of posters about domestic abuse in all toilets on Cathedral premises.

Analysis

3.1.34 All of the groups that the auditors spoke with recognised the presence of vulnerable adults who come in contact with the Cathedral and saw support of them as a core part of the Cathedral's stated purpose of welcome and hospitality.

3.1.35 The support offered to vulnerable adults within the Cathedral is good, however largely by virtue of the practical experience that the team have built up. There has been limited additional training provided to those who work on the Cathedral floor to raise additional or contextual topics. This can leave those particularly on the welcome desk feeling vulnerable and uncertain about how to respond to some vulnerable adults who may visit the Cathedral.

3.1.36 The volunteer role of the VASC represents a recognition of the high level of need that those who visit the Cathedral may have. However, there was a lack of consistency in practice of passing concerns routinely on to the VASC.

3.1.37 The channels and connections that have been established with other charitable organisations in the city for those who are homeless or otherwise vulnerable allows for effective information-sharing and there were instances where new concerns with familiar visitors to the Cathedral were discussed or shared with others known to support them, and vice versa.

3.1.38 Evidently, the virger team, wardens and many volunteers are experienced in managing situations involving vulnerable adults and supporting and ensuring the safety of those who are providing support to them. However, this good practice was at times inconsistent. The lack of specialist chaplaincy coverage in the Cathedral meant that volunteers feel that they have to provide this support – sometimes involving a level of isolation and lone-working which only increases risk and vulnerability.

3.1.39 The Canon Pastor's team of home visitors, which is soon to be commissioned, already has an agreed system in place for lone-working and the completion of summary notes and discussion through pastoral meetings. This represents a shift towards a more accountable and formalised provision, which is good practice.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- Can further provision be established for chaplaincy and pastoral support within the Cathedral, to benefit those in need of support and more clearly safeguard volunteers?

Children (other than choristers)

Description

3.1.40 Children are involved regularly in the life of the Cathedral through the choirs, school visits and outreach, Sunday School and as servers.

School visits

3.1.41 School visits are run by the part-time Education Officer. The Officer is supported by a team of volunteers, most of whom are retired teachers. All volunteers comply with the safer recruitment requirements of the Cathedral and undertake Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks.

3.1.42 Since 2018, and the arrival of the new Education Officer, the offer of the Education Team has broadened to include visits, activities, workshops and large-scale day events, such as the 'spirituality day', which brings in hundreds of children. As well as engaging children in the Cathedral, this brings an additional benefit of financial income, which has increased in recent years.

3.1.43 When booking school visits, there is a procedure of enquiry forms being completed, liaison with the Events Team to agree a date and logistics, completion of risk assessment and provision of guidance for schools ahead of the visit. The team has established good links with schools and maintains regular contact throughout the planning stages of a visit. Post-visit evaluations are overwhelmingly positive.

3.1.44 There is no classroom facility at the Cathedral and school visits are largely held in the main nave of the Cathedral floor, with lunch in the crypt. Schoolteachers hold responsibility for the children while on the visit, with support from a member of the Education Team.

3.1.45 Beyond school visits, the Education Officer has sought links with other faith groups in the local area, and recently won 'Head to Head' funding from the local authority to bring children together from schools with different faith demographics. Positive relationships have also been established with local Imams. The Team also participates in other outreach with local primary and secondary schools – recently with the Education Officer and Canon Missioner being invited to meetings with secondary school heads of RE on future relationships with the Cathedral.

Child servers

- 3.1.46 The Cathedral currently has 10 servers who are under 18. All the child servers have parents or carers who stay for the service. The adult servers are all safely recruited; the Cathedral has had to conduct a catch-up exercise with those serving for a while, but new adult servers are not allowed to start until the safe recruitment process has been completed.
- 3.1.47 The servers' vestry is open to the main clergy vestry, and also has glass doors and windows on the other side, so is not secret or hidden. If a child arrives early, he/she cannot gain access until a virger unlocks the vestry. The vestry area is always manned by virgers and wardens when unlocked so children are never alone with one adult. All servers are properly trained in carrying candles, using thuribles and so on, to mitigate the risk of fires or burns.
- 3.1.48 The serving team is overseen by one of the virgers. The children know that she is their go-to person and she reports that, while no safeguarding concerns have come up, the children do share personal issues which suggests they feel safe to talk.

Sunday School

- 3.1.49 The Cathedral has a Sunday School which runs during the first part of the 10.30am service, with children joining the rest of the congregation for the Eucharist, supervised by the Sunday School volunteers. Children range in age from 4 years to 11 years, with a weekly attendance that can vary between 2 and 12 children. At the prompting of the Canon Missioner, the Sunday School's meeting space was moved to a bright and well-decorated room which has been positively received by the team.
- 3.1.50 The Sunday School is staffed by eight volunteers, with two co-leaders, both of whom have teaching experience and one of whom takes on the specific safeguarding responsibility. Due to their background in education, both are experienced in safeguarding children and told the auditors of their confidence to report concerns to the U-18SC and Canon Missioner. Both lead on administration, organisation of lessons and support of the wider team. The Sunday School is always staffed by two, serving a duty once per month (term-time only). The team meet together every six to eight weeks and the meeting is attended by the Canon Missioner who uses the opportunity to feed back wider Cathedral matters.
- 3.1.51 Both leaders of the Sunday School have completed C1 and C2 training, with the remaining six assistants completing C1 as a minimum (with some also undertaking C2). Volunteers are recruited safely to work in the Sunday School, in line with the Cathedral's requirements. Prior to a child starting in the Sunday School, consents for outdoor activities and photographs are gained from parents.
- 3.1.52 In addition to activities that take place at the Cathedral, there is a vibrant programme of outreach ('Sing Together'), whereby some 4,000 children from

136 primary schools are trained to sing each year. A team of five 'animateurs' work with schools on a weekly basis and train the teachers. The annual seven-month outreach programme runs from mid-September and culminates in March with 10 days of concerts at King George's Hall, Blackburn. This is a secular programme and many of the children who sing are from other faiths and none. It does, however, enable the Sing Together team to spot children who might be able to sing in the Cathedral choirs.

3.1.53 The auditors did not discuss the safeguarding implications of Sing Together as children remain the responsibility of their schools and the Cathedral building is not used.

3.1.54 There are currently two child bell-ringers who are under the age of 18. This is addressed further at 3.1.89.

Analysis

3.1.55 Blackburn Cathedral takes the safeguarding of children seriously and this is reflected through the procedures and individual responsibilities that are made clear through the Cathedral's detailed safeguarding policy.

3.1.56 The Education Team's work beyond school visits does, the auditors consider, demonstrate a wider sense of responsibility for achieving cohesion, welcome and hospitality.

3.1.57 The Education Officer is the wife of the Dean. The auditors could not see a conflict of interest in terms of safeguarding, as they could not envisage a situation where the Dean and Education Officer would be in conflict over a safeguarding issue. The Education Officer has a strong working relationship with the Canon Missioner, as clergy lead for safeguarding.

3.1.58 The auditors judged that the mechanism and arrangements for welcoming school visits to the Cathedral are effective and work well and, while it has not yet needed to be tested, there is an appropriate reporting line for safeguarding concerns.

3.1.59 There is a recognition and awareness of when risks may be heightened within the Cathedral and the procedures for supervision and logistics are well tested. There is confidence in the effectiveness of the virger team and volunteers working within the Cathedral to support the safety of child visitors.

3.1.60 While the Education Officer has a good working relationship with the Canon Missioner, they do not, as is also true for other departmental leads, sit on the monthly Cathedral Safeguarding Management Group (CSMG). This is perhaps a missed opportunity for more coordinated and formalised involvement of the different groups that operate within the Cathedral to think strategically about safeguarding and access the expertise that exists among staff.

- 3.1.61 Safeguarding arrangements for the child servers work well and ensure adequate supervision, raising no immediate concerns for the auditors. It would make sense to risk assess the child servers if this has not yet been done.
- 3.1.62 The auditors judged the Sunday School arrangements to be similarly robust and effective. It is useful that the leaders have education and safeguarding experience as they bring an extra level of awareness and consideration of risk and risk management.
- 3.1.63 The auditors were concerned that there is an ongoing risk from the relative isolation of the Sunday School room. Of most concern is the ability of the team to quickly summon support from others in an emergency (medical or otherwise) and this is hampered by them not being to access the internal radio system held by virgers and wardens.
- 3.1.64 There is no clear procedure for responding to a situation in which a child gets separated from his/her school party. This ought to be rectified, and any procedure could usefully cover children separated from their families and other groups, and similarly apply to vulnerable adults separated from carers, for example.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How can the potential vulnerability of the Sunday School as an isolated space be addressed to ensure that support can be accessed quickly, without compromising safety?
- How can the Cathedral most effectively draw up a missing child/vulnerable adult procedure?

Choir

Description

- 3.1.65 Children sing either as part of the boys', girls' or 'Young People's Choir'. Boys sing from the age of 7 years up to the point that their voices change, at which point they may move to join the Young People's Choir. The girls' choir similarly is comprised of children from 7 years up to 16 years, although in practice the majority of older girls also move to participate in the Young People's Choir. There is no choir school and so choristers come from local schools, often being recruited via the outreach programme.
- 3.1.66 The choirs are led by a Director of Music and Assistant Director of Music. The Director was new to post in September 2019 but had lengthy experience of directing children's choirs in the UK and the US. Both directors live on-site in Cathedral accommodation. The Assistant Director has completed safeguarding training up to C2 level; the Director of Music has completed safeguarding training up to C4.

- 3.1.67 Parents drop-off and collect choristers directly to the song school, unless prior consent has been given for children to travel alone. There is a clear signing-in process and choristers have their own codes to access the song school.
- 3.1.68 To support the welfare of the girl and boy choristers, a voluntary Choir Matron is in post and has worked with the choirs at Blackburn Cathedral for about 10 years. This role was initially in a tuition capacity but has developed to incorporate pastoral support. The Choir Matron is also a Director of Music at a local secondary school and has over 20 years of experience. She has been working in the capacity of parish safeguarding officer for the past seven years.
- 3.1.69 Girls rehearse on Thursdays and Saturdays, also rehearsing and singing Evensong on Tuesday evenings in addition to special services and events. Boys rehearse on Wednesdays and Saturdays and rehearse and sing Evensong on Friday and Sunday in addition to the Cathedral Eucharist on Sunday mornings. Choristers are paid a small fee for each service at which they sing, commensurate with their experience within the choir.
- 3.1.70 The auditors observed an Evensong as part of the audit programme and judged the movement of the choristers around the cathedral to be well managed, with choristers chaperoned in public areas by music department staff at all times and with added supervision from virgers during services.
- 3.1.71 Choristers progress in ranks through the choir, ranging up to Head Chorister and dependent on performance, attendance, behaviour and overall contribution to the choir.
- 3.1.72 The boys' choir sing together with a line of adult choir men. The men are not DBS checked but are not alone or unsupervised with children at any point.
- 3.1.73 The Cathedral also has two choral scholars who live on site in Cathedral accommodation, shared with the organ scholar. All the current scholars are currently pre-university and so aged 18 or 19. As part of their role, the Choral Scholars sing in the back row of the choir and undertake some supervision and rehearsal responsibilities with the children's and young person's choirs. They also act as choir chaperones alongside the Choir Matron or parent chaperones. The choral scholars are DBS checked and have completed C0, C1 and C2 training.
- 3.1.74 Some choir parents also participate as voluntary chaperones and this was deemed to work well, having the dual benefit of involving parents in the life of the choir and Cathedral. At present the parents are not DBS checked in a Cathedral capacity for the same reason as the choir men; they are never alone with the children. They have not undertaken safeguarding training and the Canon Missioner has undertaken to see that this is rectified.
- 3.1.75 The choirs take part in international tours on alternate years, with some domestic tours and trips being held for special services or events. The choral scholars join the tours. Tours and trips were both appreciated by choristers and reflected to the auditors as safely run and managed. The Choir Matron provides support as a lead chaperone with additional supervision from the

Director and Assistant Director of Music and choral scholars. International trips are organised through a tour guide company, which provides a risk assessment.

- 3.1.76 The song school, in the basement and thus away from public view, was refurbished quite recently. The practice room itself has a glass wall which affords visibility of all activity within it and, outside it, an area where the chaperones can observe unobtrusively. Electronic access control is in place and there are choir-only toilets in the same area. There is a lift between the basement and the Cathedral floor so it would be possible for a physically-disabled child to join the choir.
- 3.1.77 The auditors met with a focus group of girl choristers and a focus group of choir parents. The girl choristers felt that equal importance and value was not placed upon them and they wanted to do more. They referred to a view among the boys that they are better and felt the boys sometimes dominated. It was noticeable that the term 'Cathedral Choir' still refers to the choir 'of men and boys'. None of this gives an inclusive message to the girls. It was evident that the new Director of Music and Music Department staff are working to rebalance this over the coming year.
- 3.1.78 Notwithstanding the comments above, the girls all enjoy choir and cited making new friends, going on tour and meeting up with other cathedral choirs as attractions. They feel safe in the Cathedral as it is very open and gives good 360-degree visibility in most places. They gave a list of people they would talk to if they felt unsafe.
- 3.1.79 The parents spoke very highly of the benefits they see their children gain from being in the choir: independence, confidence, organisational skills and discipline. They felt that any bullying behaviour is tackled immediately. They were very satisfied with communication with and from the Director of Music and felt confident that any concerns would be listened to.
- 3.1.80 Choristers and parents are provided with a handbook on admission to the choir, which outlines expectations, rehearsal details and contact information. However, this had not been updated for some time and did not outline expectations and procedures for managing bullying and other contextual issues such as social media. The auditors understand that this has since been done.

Analysis

- 3.1.81 All cathedral choirs raise a number of potential safeguarding issues. Young children need to be protected from any harm from the general public. Children working towards a highly prized goal in a competitive environment creates the potential for any choristers to be groomed by people in positions of trust within the choir context. Additionally, the demands of elite performance can be in tension with child welfare requirements and expectations. We deal with each in turn below.

- 3.1.82 In a relatively short space of time since appointment, the Director of Music has enacted much positive change within the choir, and was described by one person as 'a breath of fresh air'. This has included rapidly establishing relationships and communication with choristers and parents alike, improving the behaviour of choristers and revamping safe-dismissal procedures (such as allowing parents access to the secure car park after late Friday rehearsals).
- 3.1.83 The photographing of choristers, as is commonly found in all cathedrals, takes place even though it is made clear to the public that it is not allowed. The children acknowledged feeling disquieted by it, but felt that virggers respond quickly to tackle any instances of this.
- 3.1.84 The welfare of choristers is prioritised by the Cathedral and the demands placed on choristers by the rehearsal schedule were not felt to be overly onerous.
- 3.1.85 In accordance with Church of England guidelines, the choir men are required to complete a confidential disclosure but not a DBS check. The auditors understand that the House of Bishops advise that adult choir members are not usually eligible for DBS checks. Given the potential for a grooming process to begin while a child is in the choir and continue outside the choir, the SCIE team would nonetheless prefer to see DBS checks done.
- 3.1.86 The girls and the parents in the focus groups were all happy with safeguarding arrangements. However, where children do not feel equally valued there is a likelihood that they feel less empowered to raise concerns where they arise and, while the imbalance in status between the boys' and girls' choirs continues, this does still remain a risk for the Cathedral.
- 3.1.87 While trips and tours are currently externally risk assessed, it is the view of the auditors that the Cathedral should ensure that a robust review of these risk assessments takes place and that the Cathedral is assured of the safe provisions in place.
- 3.1.88 The auditors were concerned that, while safely recruited, the relative inexperience of the choral and organ scholars and their proximity in age to the older members of the children's choirs and young person's choir, is potentially unsafe practice, especially where the scholars also undertake (albeit limited) supervisory and teaching roles. The scholars are young people living away from home in a situation where they may find it difficult to have social relationships beyond the Cathedral so the pull to find friends within the choirs might be strong. The Director of Music told the auditors that the scholars are informed that relationships would be inappropriate due to the imbalance of power. They also receive safeguarding training. The Cathedral might consider, at a point in the future, a position on these roles in terms of the most appropriate age and experience required for it.

3.1.89 The Music Department does not attend the monthly CSMG meetings. This inevitably sidelines them from important decisions and information about safeguarding within the Cathedral. The safeguarding of choristers is perhaps the central safeguarding task in a cathedral, and consideration should be given to the Music Department's representation, as should other department heads, to feel fully part of a cohesive safeguarding effort and culture.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How can the Cathedral continue to address the existing gender imbalance of the choirs, in terms of both demands and performances and profile?
- How can the Cathedral be more assured of the effectiveness and robustness of third-party risk assessment of choir tours and trips?
- How can the Music Department be more fully engaged in the safeguarding decision-making of the Cathedral?
- Should changes be made to the arrangements for choral and organ scholars to reduce the probability of breaches of the 'Position of Trust'?

Bell-ringing

Description

3.1.90 The bell tower at Blackburn cathedral, while part of the main building, has a separate access outside the main Cathedral door. Ringing takes place at the weekly practices on Thursday evenings and before the 10.30am on Sunday Eucharist, as well as at special services or events.

3.1.91 The Tower Captain has been in post for 10 years and is supported by a deputy, both having completed DBS checking and C2 training. At the time of audit, not all ringers have completed volunteer agreements, as part of safe recruitment practice, and/or completed the minimum C0 training.

3.1.92 There are currently two bell-ringers under the age of 18. One, almost 18, is not a regular attendee, and there is a 14-year-old, who is a regular attendee. They are brought and collected by their parents. Consent forms are signed prior to starting and there is always a minimum of two adults supervising when children are present, one of whom will always be either the Tower Captain or deputy.

3.1.93 The Tower Captain told the auditors that the group felt part of the Cathedral and that relevant safeguarding information was shared with them. An appropriate reporting line to the Under-18s and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Coordinators and Canon Missioner for any safeguarding concerns was cited.

3.1.94 The Cathedral attracts a limited number of visiting bell-ringers, some of whom may be under 18 years of age. Visiting ringers may attend on the main Thursday rehearsal evening or book for their own use of the bells at weekends.

- 3.1.95 It is usual practice to contact visiting groups prior to their attendance to confirm arrangements. However, there are cases where visiting bell-ringers may turn up at the Cathedral without prior notice.
- 3.1.96 No checks are made of visiting parties of bell-ringers – whether any of them are subject to any safeguarding agreements, or have similar restrictions. This is a potential vulnerability, although not a high risk.

Analysis

- 3.1.97 Safeguarding arrangements in the bell tower are satisfactory, although in order to become better it is worth considering checking on whether visiting ringers have a safeguarding agreement.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How can the Cathedral best ensure a timely assurance of safe-recruitment and training for bell-ringers?
- Are current practices robust enough in the seeking of information from visiting ringers, particularly in regard to any safeguarding agreements?

3.2 CASE WORK (INCLUDING INFORMATION SHARING)

Description

- 3.2.1 Generally, recording practice was good enough for the auditors to understand why a concern had been raised and what was done. In some cases, there was a lack of follow-up so that it was not clear how issues had been resolved.
- 3.2.2 The auditors did not see any recording by the DSA in cases that have transferred to her. Conversations suggested that the DSA may sometimes have more or less information on a case than the Cathedral, depending on the source of the information.
- 3.2.3 Some case work, from before the arrival of the current Dean, showed historically very poor levels of understanding of what constitutes abuse by clergy and people in Church-related roles and the impact on those abused. It was evident that prior to the arrival of the current Dean, the concept of a 'Position of Trust (Sexual Offences Act 2003)' had not been recognised in situations where it was relevant. Responses seem to have been negatively affected by the once prevailing culture referred to at 2.2.1 in that past allegations had not been taken seriously and situations of risk had been allowed to go unchecked. The auditors escalated concerns about the response to two cases with the National Safeguarding Team.
- 3.2.4 More recent fieldwork data assured the auditors that the concept of a 'Position of Trust (Sexual Offences Act 2003)' is now understood.
- 3.2.5 The auditors heard that, in the past, the safeguarding coordinator was often overlooked or even excluded from the Cathedral's response to safeguarding

issues. Evidence was seen in one case of attempts by senior clergy and lay officers to try to deal with a safeguarding situation themselves and the safeguarding coordinator and DSA were brought in later than they should have been.

- 3.2.6 By contrast, a more recent concern about a child was appropriately shared with the coordinator who then followed up.
- 3.2.7 In one more recent case, initially children were not taken seriously enough and a somewhat defensive attitude was taken. However, the safeguarding coordinator was able to cut through this and engage the support of senior clergy to change the response.
- 3.2.8 A caring response was seen to an elderly member of the congregation, and a non-judgemental approach was taken in talking with their family.
- 3.2.9 Safeguarding agreements are a key mechanism to support offenders who wish to attend church, to do so safely. They should be underpinned by a risk assessment that details the risks posed by a worshipper, the measures in place to manage those risks, and therefore the reasons for the safeguarding agreement. Having a clear rationale for any restrictions helps people enforce the agreements with the level of diligence appropriate to safeguarding agreements. Clarity about the risks that a safeguarding agreement is intended to address also allows for a robust reviewing process, which allows safeguarding agreements to be strengthened where needed, or indeed terminated if appropriate.
- 3.2.10 The auditors looked at one safeguarding agreement that is no longer current. Referral was appropriate and the terms of the agreement spelled out which services could be attended and that the subject could hold no roles or responsibilities within the Cathedral.
- 3.2.11 Although the auditors did not read the records of core groups in a serious case (due to time constraints) several people confirmed that they take place and are chaired independently from the Cathedral and Diocese as in this case they should be.
- 3.2.12 Information-sharing was seen to work well from a statutory agency (Probation) to the DSA and then to the safeguarding coordinator. This resulted in a safeguarding agreement. Outward sharing of information was mostly the passing on of concerns about choristers to schools and this is done efficiently.

Analysis

- 3.2.13 The view of the safeguarding coordinators – that they are now informed, involved and listened to – was borne out by the casework seen, with the caveat that the culture is still changing.
- 3.2.14 Concerns are shared and recorded, triaged by the coordinators and either followed through or referred on to the DSA (at present). Sometimes it is not clear how a concern has been resolved. The auditors would like to see the

CSA provide supervision to the two coordinators and would expect to see a more complete picture in the future.

3.2.15 Overall, the auditors saw evidence of timely action, some good chronologies, and confidence in knowing what was safeguarding and what was staff conduct and disciplinary. Responses were proportionate and there was evidence of multi-agency working and proactivity in attending meetings etc.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How will the working relationship between the CSA and the coordinators be established so that the CSA is fully informed of all safeguarding concerns?
- How will adequate assurance be sought that past safeguarding allegations and concerns have had an appropriate response?

3.3 CLERGY DISCIPLINARY MEASURES

3.3.1 The auditors saw no concluded CDMs.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- There are no questions in this section.

3.4 TRAINING

3.4.1 Safeguarding training is an important mechanism for establishing safeguarding awareness and confidence throughout the Cathedral. It requires good quality substance, based on up-to-date evidence, with relevant case studies, engaging and relevant to the audience. It also requires strategic planning to identify priority groups for training, detail the training needs/requirements of people in different roles, and outline an implementation plan for training over time that tracks what training has been provided, who attended and who still needs to attend or requires refresher sessions.

Description

3.4.2 Everyone who was asked about training could tell the auditors that they had done it and, in almost all cases, the level of training received. People were generally hazier about when they had trained and when they would need refresher training.

3.4.3 There was little comment about the content of the training, although some said that there had been some questioning of the need to train and that generally those same people said how glad they were to have done the training on completion. The auditors saw no evidence of anyone refusing to train.

- 3.4.4 The Canon Missioner previously taught at a theological college and arrived qualified to deliver safeguarding training at Level 1 and Level 2. Her willingness to complement the Diocesan training programme has probably contributed to the overall acceptance of training.
- 3.4.5 Following a serious incident at the Cathedral several years ago, training was delivered in conflict resolution. A couple of people said that it would be timely to have similar training again. This might be complemented by training in substance misuse and mental health for some of the staff and volunteers who work daily in the Cathedral.
- 3.4.6 The National Church training is tracked via a spreadsheet. Once a month, the Canon Missioner checks the CofE training portal to see who has completed C0 and C1 online, as people sometimes forget to inform the safeguarding administrator. The spreadsheet does not flag up who needs refresher training and the administrator checks manually every month.
- 3.4.7 All new paid staff and volunteers whose roles necessitate training, and most of those existing staff and volunteers whose training had lapsed, have been brought up to date.

Analysis

- 3.4.8 A concerted push to get up to speed on training has clearly been successful. The Cathedral should now consider training needs beyond the National Safeguarding Team programme.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- What are the training needs beyond the basic programme and how might they be met?
- Should the Cathedral aim to adopt an electronic tracking system for training that will flag up monthly which people need to go on it?

3.5 SAFER RECRUITMENT

Description

- 3.5.1 Evidence of safer recruitment was uneven. The auditors saw the HR files for three lay posts and none showed a step-by-step approach to safe recruitment although elements were present on each. Some of the potential evidence – DBS and training – is recorded elsewhere. Interview questions and answers are not kept on the HR file.

- 3.5.2 One person had been recruited from the US and there was no reference to either a DBS or a police check with the American authorities. The auditors were later assured through evidence that the check was completed.
- 3.5.3 Overall, good practice was seen in references (in one case more than the two minimum), an induction checklist, signed by inductor, an interview pack with clear job description and person specification and confidential declarations.
- 3.5.4 Weaker practice was seen in the lack of information about safeguarding training and the DBS check. A minimum of a checklist box for DBS check could be included, ideally with a record of the DBS number. In addition, interview records were inconsistent; notes and questions were included in one role but not for another role where a safeguarding question should have been asked during the interview.
- 3.5.5 Safer recruitment has a section in the safeguarding policy that goes some way to providing a checklist as it lists what good recruitment processes include. It does not set out who is responsible at each stage. A more extensive checklist is provided at Appendix 6 of the policy and this could form the basis of a checklist.
- 3.5.6 All volunteers have now signed a volunteer agreement. Appendix 5 of the safeguarding policy has separate agreements for bell-ringers, adult choir members, roles in the Sunday School, servers, welcomers, etc. Volunteers sign to show their agreement with the statement 'Volunteers are expected to have regard to the essentially Christian basis of their work, and to their role in serving the Church', but do not need to sign anything that indicates that they have been safely recruited or accept their safeguarding responsibilities.
- 3.5.7 There is a sentence in the safeguarding policy that is of concern, namely the recommendation that 'It is recommended that volunteers are not appointed to children's work until they have been regular members of the congregation for a sufficient length of time for them to become known and trusted by the wider church community.' It is well known that people who are motivated to abuse children are usually very skilled at grooming whole communities and gaining trust, and this recommendation is misplaced.
- 3.5.8 Practice would benefit from a safer recruitment checklist that requires a date and signature by each of a sequence of actions.
- 3.5.9 The auditors were told that no one can take up a position until their DBS is through, should the position warrant one. The Executive Director referenced that fact that she had to wait herself despite having DBS checks elsewhere.
- 3.5.10 The auditors did not look at Blue Files to check safer recruitment as there was insufficient time and they are stored some distance from the Cathedral.

3.5.11 The Executive Director has been the lead for safer recruitment for the last two years. On her departure, her HR functions will be taken up by another manager who has not yet received HR training.

Analysis

3.5.12 Going forward, the resilience of safer recruitment seems vulnerable, not because of the ability of the manager who will take it on, but because of capacity. Safer recruitment felt to the auditors to be at a point where it is accepted in principle and mostly used in practice but also where processes could be weakened.

3.5.13 For this reason, it is important that a step-by-step process is used and evidenced on every HR file, and that each step is dated and signed.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How can the Cathedral satisfy itself that safer recruitment is used every time it should be and at all stages of the process?
- Could the volunteer agreements be strengthened so that people specifically agree to attend training and to share any concerns they may have with one of an agreed list of people?

4 FINDINGS – ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORTS

4.1 POLICY, PROCEDURES AND GUIDANCE

Description

- 4.1.1 The Cathedral website has a safeguarding page, easily accessible from the home page. The safeguarding page has a link to the *Parish Safeguarding Handbook* published by the House of Bishops in 2018.
- 4.1.2 The Diocesan website has an equally straightforward link to the safeguarding page where there are further links to national policies and practice guidance. There is not, however, a link between the safeguarding pages of the Cathedral and the Diocese. As a consequence, one might not be aware that there is a suite of national policy.
- 4.1.3 The Cathedral has its own policy and procedures, last reviewed in June 2019. They are very comprehensive and cover the whole of safeguarding, adults and children within the Cathedral.
- 4.1.4 Section One of Part One sets out the Cathedral's commitment to safeguarding, and roles and responsibilities, with full role descriptions as an appendix. There is a policy statement, guiding principles and a code of safer working practice that explicitly applies to everyone who works with children and adults, salaried or voluntary. The roles and responsibilities within the Cathedral and the Diocese are set out, including the Dean and Chapter, the Cathedral Safeguarding Coordinators and the DSA. This section also contains information about safer recruitment and DBS checks.
- 4.1.5 Section Two of Part One is descriptive and lays out definitions of terms, categories of abuse and what to do if you think a child is being abused. Section Three covers the same ground, for adults.
- 4.1.6 Part Two covers all the procedures for working with children and vulnerable adults. This includes the detail such as ratios of adults to children, attendance records, parental consent, etc.
- 4.1.7 The appendices drill down to a more granular level of detail, and as a result anyone who works in any capacity at the Cathedral, paid or voluntary, should know the extent of their responsibility for safeguarding and have information about how to exercise that responsibility.
- 4.1.8 It might be worth considering whether to replace the policy statement with *Promoting a Safer Church*, the policy statement published by the CofE in 2017 in order to reflect national policy and to come alongside the CofE *Parish Safeguarding Handbook* which has a link on the Cathedral website.
- 4.1.9 The auditors found that although everyone they spoke with knew of the Cathedral policy, not everyone knew where they would find it and, perhaps more worryingly, the people asked did not think of looking on the Cathedral

website. Printed copies of policy and practice guidance are always at risk of being out of date. In practice, as all the volunteers in the focus group knew of the safeguarding coordinators, it is likely that they would go to them first rather than consult the policy if they had a concern.

- 4.1.10 The auditors did note that the safeguarding policy, as with the *Chorister's Handbook*, does not specifically refer to social media or online safety expectations of staff and volunteers, or as a consideration for safeguarding adults and children.
- 4.1.11 While covered in some detail for adult safeguarding, the policy does not include a similar message of information-sharing and responsibility for children's safeguarding. This presents a risk where those with concerns about children could potentially be left unclear about the importance of information-sharing and concern regarding any conflict with confidentiality.
- 4.1.12 The DSA, and in future the CSA, are bound by the information-sharing protocols agreed and published by the relevant adults' and children's safeguarding boards or their equivalent.

Analysis

- 4.1.13 The Cathedral policy is well written and very complete; perhaps too complete as the auditors wondered whether information might be broken down more to make it more accessible. If one is a volunteer, for example, there is a lot of extraneous information and a specific handbook that includes safeguarding information alongside health and safety, standards of conduct, whistleblowing, etc. might be more useful.
- 4.1.14 Although a Cathedral-specific policy was the right decision at the time, it would be worth looking at whether the House of Bishops' suite of policies has replaced some or all of it.
- 4.1.15 Some of the information in the policy is quite specialised and the auditors question whether the terms of reference for the Safeguarding Management Group, for example, need to be there.
- 4.1.16 It would make sense for the new CSA to review the Cathedral policy and what is available on the Cathedral website, and to offer advice about the best way to integrate national and local policy and practice guidance.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How can people be encouraged to read the online version of the policy?
- Would volunteers be better informed if they had their own handbook, part of which was about their safeguarding responsibilities?
- Should the Cathedral tackle the issue of the use of social media by adopting a policy?
- How can the Cathedral make sure that its policy is convergent with the House of Bishops' policies?

4.2 CATHEDRAL SAFEGUARDING ADVISOR AND THEIR SUPERVISION & MANAGEMENT

Description

- 4.2.1 Blackburn Cathedral has two volunteer safeguarding coordinators, one for under 18s and one for vulnerable adults. Because most referrals concern children, the bulk of the work falls to the Under 18s Coordinator but the Vulnerable Adults Coordinator (VASC) makes himself equally available.
- 4.2.2 The Under 18s Coordinator is a former primary headteacher and primary advisor. The VASC is an auditor of prisons and probation services. Both are well qualified for their work.
- 4.2.3 The coordinators liaise with and refer on to the DSA on a case by case basis, meaning that the DSA is not involved at all in some low-level cases and takes over completely if an allegation is about a member of clergy or a senior officer.
- 4.2.4 The DSA is employed by the Diocese and supported by an assistant DSA. The DSA is a qualified and experienced social worker and the assistant DSA is a former police officer.
- 4.2.5 The DSA has professional supervision. The voluntary coordinators currently have limited supervision on their work at the Cathedral. This will be rectified by the new CSA.
- 4.2.6 Due to her own capacity, the DSA has had limited time to give the Cathedral and no time outside the immediate demands of casework, but the coordinators are confident about when to consult and refer on.
- 4.2.7 The imminent appointment of the CSA will have an impact, although she too is likely to remain relatively unknown beyond the senior team and the coordinators as she will work on a freelance basis, being called upon when needed rather than working a set number of hours a week.
- 4.2.8 The draft contract with the CSA covers all the tasks one would expect of a safeguarding advisor, including all the casework. It also specifies that the CSA should have professional supervision but does not commit to funding it.

Analysis

- 4.2.9 The safeguarding arrangements have worked fairly well to date but have been stretched by the demands of the current serious case, leaving the DSA with insufficient time to support the Cathedral beyond casework.
- 4.2.10 The CSA will need to build effective relationships with the Diocesan team and will need their support in getting to know the local statutory agencies. The auditors would have been more anxious about the potential for working in isolation had the CSA not already been a DSA and a Cathedral congregation member elsewhere.

- 4.2.11 The Cathedral will get the best from their CSA if they commit to funding sufficient time to take on a wider role than casework, especially in the early stages, and the decision to ask for a further audit of progress is a sensible step.
- 4.2.12 The induction programme for the CSA might consider how to introduce her and her role to staff, volunteers and congregations within the hours available to her.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How can the CSA make links with the Diocese and statutory agencies to enable her to receive and share information on a case by case basis?
- How can the Cathedral use the CSA's induction to introduce her role, and the roles of the coordinators to staff, volunteers and congregations?

4.3 RECORDING SYSTEMS AND IT SOLUTIONS

Description

- 4.3.1 All safeguarding records are on paper, using a form specific to the Cathedral. If the Diocese is involved, the DSA keeps her own record. As referred to at 3.2.2 above, this may lead to the DSA having a different level of information to the Cathedral and this would warrant consideration, especially as there is the potential to have three sets of recording once the CSA starts work. The preferred answer might be to have an electronic recording system with the ability for either a joint secure drive or secure sharing.
- 4.3.2 The Cathedral will need to consider how to transfer records to the CSA and how they will keep their own recording secure. The auditors would not recommend the use of a personal laptop and email.
- 4.3.3 The records are stored in a locked drawer in the Cathedral offices and keys are held by the Dean (or Canon Missioner if he is absent) and the two safeguarding coordinators. This might limit the access of the coordinators as it requires a journey into the Cathedral offices, which could result in delay in responding to a referral or in key people not having access to relevant information. However, as the vicars and senior clergy live on site, they provide 24-hour access to the records if need arises.
- 4.3.4 The current storage is much more secure than the previous practice of using part of a walk-in safe in the Sacristy which was a multi-purpose secure storage and could be accessed by a larger number of people. Nevertheless, looking forward it may be easier if an electronic recording system is adopted with access to a shared drive for the relevant people.
- 4.3.5 As the work of the Pastoral Support Team increases, decisions need to be made about the appropriate level of recording and sharing, the permissions required for recording and the storage of records.

Analysis

- 4.3.6 The system for recording has worked well enough until now but the advent of a CSA who is not based at the Cathedral office means that consideration needs to be given to how to keep and share records in the future.
- 4.3.7 When recording information about people who may be vulnerable but would not meet the thresholds for adult social care and/or who are not in immediate need to protection from harm, thought needs to be given to what information *can* be recorded, and in what circumstances.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How will case recording work when the CSA is appointed?
- How can the Cathedral make sure it is compliant with laws about data-sharing?

5 FINDINGS – LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

5.1 QUALITY ASSURANCE

- 1.4.2 A safe organisation needs constant feedback loops about what is going well and where there are difficulties in relation to safeguarding, and this should drive ongoing cycles of learning and improvement. Robust quality assurance enables an organisation to understand its strengths and weaknesses. Potential sources of data are numerous, including independent scrutiny. Quality assurance needs to be strategic and systematic to support accountability and shed light on how well things are working and where there are gaps or concerns.

Description

- 5.1.1 There is evidence of some proactive attempts to obtain data on safeguarding practice and support quality assurance within Blackburn Cathedral:

- CSMG is a sub-committee of Chapter, with terms of reference and regular meetings
- the DSA is a member of the CSMG
- the CSMG provide an annual report to Chapter (with CSMG representation on the Chapter in form of the Canon Missioner)
- an internal review in 2016 of safeguarding practices requested by the then acting Dean
- an internal audit in 2018 conducted on the arrival of the Canon Missioner, with subsequent action plan
- planned internal audit in 2019/20 on the arrival of the new CSA.

- 5.1.2 The audit in 2016 focused on: the robustness of practices and processes; the effectiveness of the safeguarding management group; training, record-keeping and safer recruitment (including job descriptions and induction). The report highlighted deficiencies in almost every area of safeguarding, including governance, processes and culture. For example, the Cathedral had not formally adopted the House of Bishops' policies, there was no clear structure for safeguarding management and six years into the role, the Safeguarding Coordinator for Children had never been asked to advise or report to Chapter. Despite the Dean having ultimate responsibility for safeguarding, this was not obvious and the culture of safeguarding was absent. Safeguarding processes were not followed and the Coordinator reported that she was sometimes not included in decision-making and sometimes her advice was not followed, without her knowledge. There was no recording system for training and no staff were accessing training. The Cathedral had no policies for whistleblowing, complaints or bullying and harassment. Information-sharing with the DSA and statutory agencies was ad hoc and inconsistent.

- 5.1.3 Overall this was a very negative report at the time but was seen by the Under 18s Coordinator as the turning point in safeguarding.
- 5.1.4 The 2018 audit was done on arrival by the Canon Missioner and is presented as an action plan. It was used until the SCIE briefing pack was received, and this then superseded it as the driver for implementing change. There is a risk that necessary or desirable actions arising from the 2018 audit were lost and it might make sense to review the plan.
- 5.1.5 Annual reports on safeguarding are presented to Chapter each February. In 2019, The Lay Canon Emeritus presented a report that addressed the action points from the report for 2017. The Canon Missioner's report concentrated on the implementation of the safeguarding policy, particularly around the issues of training, safer recruitment and record-keeping.
- 5.1.6 The annual reports to Chapter are shared with the Bishop for information.

Analysis

- 5.1.7 Chapter is required (as specified in the *Church of England Key Roles and Responsibilities of Church Office Holders and Bodies Practice Guidance 2017*) to review safeguarding progress annually, including an annual review of the cathedral safeguarding policy, practices and procedures. To do this thoroughly, it requires evidence of activity and impact.
- 5.1.8 Safeguarding is a standing agenda item on Chapter and the Canon Missioner represents the Chapter lead on safeguarding. Chapter minutes reveal that this item is well used and is a meaningful part of the meeting and discussion.
- 5.1.9 There is a view within Chapter that the CSMG meetings should become less frequent once good procedures have become fully embedded. The auditors are of the opinion that their regularity has served an important function at a time of rapid progress to ensure that change remains timely and accountability can be assured, but perhaps they could become bi-monthly. With the arrival of the new CSA, this will continue to be a valuable aspect of Quality Assurance (QA) at the Cathedral.
- 5.1.10 Following the internal 2018 audit, it is unclear how this learning continues to inform practice and how a regular return to the action plan, through the CSMG, is able to identify achievements and work outstanding.
- 5.1.11 It is clear to the auditors that QA at the Cathedral has progressed significantly in recent years with a willingness to assure standards, learn and drive change. Currently, this agenda is driven by individuals seeking out opportunities. To be an effective function it must also be a part of the standing culture and practice within the Cathedral, formalised through a framework that will future-proof the Cathedral's efforts in the coming years.

5.1.12 The annual report to Chapter is a fair summary of progress but does not address the quality assurance of actions taken, training delivered, policies updated, etc. In the auditors' opinion, it does not enable a Chapter member to say how they know that actions taken to support safeguarding are robust and effective.

5.1.13 It is not the remit of the CSMG to discuss case-specific matters or review case work. Regardless, this is an important function of QA to assure Cathedral leaders that the direct work with individuals at risk is robust. The auditors understand that there is an intention for this role to be fulfilled by the incoming CSA. However, the Cathedral must consider how this learning can be formalised as part of a framework that can underpin and secure the practice that is developing. QA of the work of the CSA must also serve a very useful function for learning, as a lead member of staff for safeguarding in the Cathedral.

5.1.14 Quality assurance is further discussed under 5.4 below.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- What would a comprehensive QA framework, incorporating qualitative as well as quantitative measures, look like?
- What sources of information are available for organisational learning (e.g. survivor feedback, lessons learned from other cathedrals, staff and volunteer feedback and case work) and how can this be embedded to become a regular part of safeguarding practice within the Cathedral?
- How can the CSMG best monitor and track progress?

5.2 COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE SAFEGUARDING SERVICE

5.2.1 A complaints process is required so that anyone who has contact with the safeguarding service knows how to complain should they feel that they have a complaint to make. A strong policy is clear about who complaints should be made to, and how they can be escalated if necessary. Positive features include an independent element, and clarity that raising a safeguarding concern, and making a complaint about a safeguarding service, are two distinct things. The outcome of complaints enables an organisation to learn from those who have had to use their service, enabling them to make any necessary changes or improvements.

Description

5.2.2 The Cathedral has a Complaints Policy that was shared with the auditors. The policy distinguishes between complaints and safeguarding concerns, and points employees towards the whistleblowing policy in the staff handbook.

- 5.2.3 The policy outlines a two-stage process; an informal stage and a formal stage, where the complaint is investigated by the Dean or a member of Chapter and any action decided by Chapter. There is no allowance for independent investigation.
- 5.2.4 The policy refers to an annual exercise by the Executive Director to review any complaints made and look at trends. In practice, no complaints were available to see, but as the post of Executive Director has been terminated, this responsibility needs to pass on.
- 5.2.5 The policy does not set out who may make a complaint and this might be worth spelling out in order to avoid third-party complaints made on behalf of someone else (except in the case of children or adults who do not have the capacity to complain on their own behalf).
- 5.2.6 At the time of the audit, the policy was not accessible to the public via the website (which lacks a search engine) so it would have taken some persistence to obtain it and use it. The auditors are told that this has been rectified.

Analysis

- 5.2.7 The policy is fit for purpose but it needs to be accessible to all via the website.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How can the complaints policy be made accessible on the website?

5.3 WHISTLEBLOWING

- 5.3.1 Effective whistleblowing procedures enables workers to raise concern about a range of issues (sexual abuse, bullying, fraud etc.) without the fear that their disclosures will lead to any harassment or negative impact on their personal work role/environment.

Description

- 5.3.2 The auditors were given two versions of a whistleblowing policy, one an extract from the staff handbook dating from 2015 and the other a new, more general policy that applies to volunteers and members of the congregation.
- 5.3.3 The latter policy is intended to support a strong and open culture in that it refers to safeguarding and also to '... situations of unacceptable practice, performance or behaviour in situations unrelated to children or adults who may be vulnerable'. It states that, 'At Blackburn Cathedral we are committed to honesty and integrity in our Christian life and we expect all involved to maintain high standards. Any suspected wrongdoing, including "covering up", should be reported as soon as possible.'

- 5.3.4 This policy also spells out the difference between whistleblowing and reporting a safeguarding concern, and gives details of 'Public Concern at Work'.
- 5.3.5 Unfortunately, as with the Complaints Policy, this policy cannot be found on the Cathedral website at present.
- 5.3.6 The policy in the staff handbook has the basic information about what should be reported but leaves out contact details for Public Concern at Work and refers only to speaking to a 'more senior person' should one not wish to speak to a line manager (who might be the subject of the whistleblowing).
- 5.3.7 The auditors were not made aware of any instances in which either policy has been used.

Analysis

- 5.3.8 It is clear that the new policy is a plank in the open and safe culture that the Dean and his team have been rightly determined to embed. It does, however, need to be accessible to all.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How can the whistleblowing policy be made accessible on the website?

5.4 SAFEGUARDING ADVISORY PANEL

- 5.4.1 Based on the national guidance in *Roles and Responsibilities for Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panels*, the panel should have a key role in bringing independence and safeguarding expertise to an oversight, scrutiny and challenge role, including contributing to a strategic plan. No specifics are provided in relation to cathedrals, with the apparent assumption being that cathedrals are part of diocesan structures.

Description

- 5.4.2 The CSMG was formed several years ago. In the recent past the Chair was a lay member of Chapter who is also a retired judge. Since he stood down, the Canon Missioner has chaired the group with the intention of finding a new lay chair in the future. Since the Canon Missioner is also the delegated lead for safeguarding, this would make sense.
- 5.4.3 Membership of the group is currently the Dean, the Canon Missioner, the two safeguarding coordinators, the DSA, a Lay Canon Emeritus and the safeguarding administrator. Apart from the DSA, all members are internal. Social work input comes from the DSA and the VASC although neither can attend all the meetings.

5.4.4 At the time of audit, the representative from the CSMG on the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel (DSAP) had stood down and not been replaced. The DSA attends the CSMG when she has the capacity to do so.

5.4.5 The Terms of Reference are contained within the Safeguarding Policy. The role and function of the group is 'To be responsible for developing and overseeing policy and strategy and supervising its implementation. The group is fulfilling this role on behalf of the Chapter and will report annually to Chapter. The Group will not deal with practical issues or queries (those should remain with the Cathedral's Under 18s or Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Coordinators)'.

5.4.6 The group responsibilities are:

- developing and reviewing the Cathedral's safeguarding policies, promoting compliance with relevant and most up-to-date legislation
- ensuring the implementation of policies and offering appropriate training for all Cathedral clergy, staff and those volunteers who require safeguarding training as part of their role description
- monitoring and evaluating safeguarding procedures
- the annual review of policies, and recommending the adoption of policies to Chapter.

5.4.7 In summary, the role of the group is to develop and review policy and procedure, to ensure compliance and to offer safeguarding training (although most training is delivered by the Diocese). The three sets of meeting notes made available (March, April and May 2019) showed a very operational group, tracking actions decided at previous meetings. In the Cathedral context, an operational group seems to be what is needed.

5.4.8 The meeting notes would be improved if roles as well as names were spelled out under 'Attendance'.

5.4.9 The group does not yet have a business plan to guide the agenda at meetings, although the audit undertaken in 2018 by the Canon Missioner would form a good basis for such a plan. Having a formal plan would also ensure a methodical approach and would support prioritisation in action planning.

5.4.10 Meetings are currently monthly and members of the group felt that this has been necessary, such has been the pace of change. An advantage is that it means that actions don't wait for weeks or months to be agreed by the whole group. A disadvantage is that the group can become a team meeting rather than a planning and reviewing group that monitors progress on an action plan.

- 5.4.11 The auditors were told that meetings will become bi-monthly after the audit. This may support higher attendance by more than a core group of people while being frequent enough to continue to drive change.

Analysis

- 5.4.12 Given the progress made in a very short space of time, the CSMG has clearly been effective as an operational working group.
- 5.4.13 The links between the CSMG and the DSAP felt quite weak and the potential for the DSAP to support safeguarding in the Cathedral seems unexplored. The auditors had not the time nor the remit to look at how the DSAP functions, but if it has developed an independent scrutiny function that holds the Bishop to account it is worth considering whether scrutiny could extend to the Dean and Chapter.
- 5.4.14 A new lay chair would bring some external scrutiny to the group as well as freeing up the Canon Missioner from chairing a meeting into which she is reporting and from which she takes actions.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- Should the CSMG revisit the Terms of Reference and decide the extent to which it is an operational, progress-checking meeting or whether it holds a scrutiny function, or both?
- If the CSMG works best as an operational group, where should the scrutiny function sit and how should it be carried out (linking with QA, above)?

5.5 LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

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

Theological leadership

Description

- 5.5.3 The remit for theological leadership in relation to safeguarding is clearly always with the clergy and especially with the Dean of the Cathedral. This is extremely valuable in helping congregations and clergy to understand why safeguarding is a priority and intrinsic to the beliefs of the Church of England. This aspect of the leadership role is the foundation for the culture of the

Church and is critical in terms of making it a safer place for children and vulnerable adults.

- 5.5.4 The Dean described his personal journey of awareness about safeguarding, which included seeing the Church deal badly with an offender many years ago by moving him on. Before being ordained, the Dean ran a tour company that took choirs and young musicians abroad, and learnt to assess risk.
- 5.5.5 The Dean described that, on his arrival at the Cathedral in 2017, he saw the need for a fundamental change in the culture within the Cathedral, a culture that did not support safeguarding. He needed to use his theological leadership to show that safeguarding is a message of the Christian faith. This is a mission the auditors saw as shared by the current senior team. The Canon Missioner talked about how safeguarding messages are woven into prayers and sermons when the liturgy lends itself, for example the Feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Cathedral took part in a National Day of Prayer for survivors of Church-based abuse. Sermons have referred to items of news and the proceedings of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA).

Analysis

- 5.5.6 The auditors assessed the theological leadership of safeguarding as strong. It is made tangible, relevant to current national issues, and promoted with an apparent sincerity and enthusiasm that has helped embed it as a priority across the senior team.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- There are no questions in this section.

Strategic leadership

- 5.5.7 The House of Bishops' Roles and Responsibilities practice guidance assigns different and overlapping roles to Dean and Chapter, with the former having a clear leadership role in relation to safeguarding, and Chapter having a strategic and oversight role in relation to the Church of England's Promoting a Safer Church safeguarding policy. This includes the requirement to have a Promoting a Safer Church action plan in place that sets out, in line with national and local priorities, how the policy is being put into action and is reviewed regularly.

Description

- 5.5.8 The Dean, the Canon Missioner and the part-time Canon Pastor share a vision of how they want the Cathedral to operate and this includes the safeguarding practice they want to embed. This vision was shared equally by the two lay members of Chapter that the auditors met.
- 5.5.9 Safeguarding is on the agenda at every Chapter meeting, introduced by the Canon Missioner.

5.5.10 There is an ongoing situation creating safeguarding risks, to which a large amount of the Dean and senior team's capacity and focus has been dedicated.

5.5.11 When the CSA takes up her post, it would be worth considering the usefulness of regular, diarised meetings with the Dean.

Analysis

5.5.12 The ability and commitment of the Dean and his team and Chapter to provide strategic leadership as a whole is strong. However their capacity is compromised at present.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- What will be the strategic priorities for safeguarding once the Dean has more time to give to it?

Operational leadership and management

Description

5.5.13 The operational clergy lead for safeguarding is delegated to the Canon Missioner who arrived with a strong background in the subject and a training qualification. She works closely with the two voluntary coordinators, especially with the coordinator for under 18s because she has retired and has more time to give. The Lay Canon Emeritus also provides support.

Analysis

5.5.14 The operational leadership and management of safeguarding works as a very tight team (partly because it is so small) with a clear shared sense of purpose.

5.5.15 The capacity of the Canon Missioner (as well as the Dean) is currently restricted by their commitment of time to the safeguarding situation detailed above, compromising the time that can be given to operational leadership and management of safeguarding in the Cathedral more widely.

5.5.16 As referred to above, the operational management of casework needs further thought in the context of a freelance CSA, a DSA and two volunteers doing much of the work on the ground.

Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- There are no questions in this section.

Culture

- 5.5.17 The most critical aspect of safeguarding relates to the culture within a cathedral and the extent to which priority is placed on safeguarding individuals as opposed to protecting the reputation of the Church. Also integral is the ability of all members of the Church to 'think the unthinkable' about their friends and colleagues. SCIE's experience auditing safeguarding in faith contexts more broadly suggests that in areas where there is experience among senior clergy of previous serious abuse cases, a culture of openness and humility in approaching safeguarding issues can be stronger, along with a cultural move away from responses which give too much attention to reputational issues and the welfare of (alleged) perpetrators, as opposed to the welfare of victims and survivors.
- 5.5.18 Any cathedral should strive for an open, learning culture where safeguarding is a shared responsibility, albeit supported by experts, and which encourages people to highlight any concerns about how things are working in order that they can be addressed. An open learning culture starts from the assumption that maintaining adequate vigilance is difficult and proactively seeks feedback on how safeguarding is operating and encourages people to highlight any concerns about how things are working so they can be addressed.
- 5.5.19 A culture where safeguarding is seen as a shared responsibility supported by an expert team means open an learning culture starts from the assumption that maintaining adequate vigilance is difficult and proactively seeks feedback on how safeguarding is operating. It encourages people to highlight any concerns about how things are working in order that they can be addressed.

Description

- 5.5.20 As referred to at 2.2.1 above, the whole culture at Blackburn Cathedral has been, within fairly recent times and prior to the arrival of the current clergy team, one that has militated against a strong and outward-looking safeguarding culture. The auditors heard and saw evidence of this in files. The Dean has been very determined that this must change. While remaining strong about what he aims to achieve, an important element of his leadership style is to be non-hierarchical and to encourage others to be non-deferential as a means of reducing relationships of power in which abuse can thrive. He is also committed to enabling openness about flagging safeguarding concerns regardless of someone's status or position. The auditors saw this in practice and see it as part of a deliberate challenge to a wider Church culture that used to allow abuse to happen and to be hidden.
- 5.5.21 Many people who talked with the auditors cited the Dean and the Canon Missioner as people with whom they might share concerns, including volunteers and choir parents as well as salaried staff and clergy. There was agreement that safeguarding is now high on the Cathedral's agenda and one person talked of a 'sea change' in attitudes across the Cathedral, within the past two years.

- 5.5.22 The ongoing situation mentioned in 5.5.10 is a source of frustration to the Dean and Cathedral leadership team because of the apparent systemic failures they perceive, which have prevented them from being able to resolve the situation in a timely and effective way. Long before the audit, the Cathedral engaged with the National Safeguarding Team (NST) about their concerns. As stated previously the auditors have also shared their related safeguarding concerns with the NST.
- 5.5.23 The Dean of Blackburn joined his Diocesan colleagues in signing what has been called ‘The Blackburn Letter’ in June 2019. The Dean explained that this was a response to the hearings at the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) (and specifically about Peter Ball) and was led by a suffragan Bishop who is in touch with a group of survivors. The letter went to every holder of the Bishop’s Licence, lay and clergy, and all parish safeguarding officers. One paragraph addresses the importance of cultural change:
- 5.5.24 ‘... we need to understand also that safeguarding is not just about ticking boxes and following rules. It is about a much deeper awareness, especially for clergy and Church-leaders, of where power lies in relationships and how easy it is to abuse that power. The report has a great deal to say about “clericalism” and about an inappropriate culture of deference to clergy, especially senior clergy, which has resulted in cover-up and in the voices of the vulnerable being silenced.’

Analysis

- 5.5.25 The paragraph quoted from the Blackburn Letter captures a view from some in the Cathedral about what had gone wrong previously there, a view supported by evidence seen by the auditors. The challenge is to embed a healthier culture to the point where people would refuse to be drawn back into the past. From the evidence of their fieldwork, the auditors see the Cathedral has made a strong start.
- 5.5.26 While the Blackburn Letter was a powerful statement that included a challenge to change a once-prevailing culture, it did not come up in conversations with the auditors and it was not possible to assess the impact.
- 5.5.27 Improvements to the culture have been recent and are possibly still over-dependent on two key figures at the Cathedral (the Dean and the Canon Missioner). The Executive Director has been the lay officer lead for safeguarding over the last two years and is now moving on. These factors raised some anxiety that the stronger safeguarding culture might be vulnerable should key people move on, although there was no suggestion that they might do so, other than the Executive Director.

Questions for the cathedral to consider

- How to make sure that the messages about safeguarding are reinforced in a variety of ways so that the culture grows stronger.

Links with the National Safeguarding Team

5.5.28 Links with the National Safeguarding team are strong and active, due to the ongoing situation at the Cathedral and associated safeguarding risks.

5.6 NATIONAL SYSTEMIC SAFEGUARDING ISSUES

5.6.1 Potential systemic issues have been raised with the auditors as having prevented a timely and effective resolution to the ongoing situation in the Cathedral. SCIE intend to return to these in the final overview report of the Cathedral audit programme.

6 CONCLUSIONS

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

- 6.1.1 The cathedral site is generally safely managed by a team of experienced virgers. Some further consideration is needed to achieve consistency in safe working procedures for all groups working within the cathedral, particularly in the way that they access support, if and when needed.
- 6.1.2 Recognition of, and support provided to, vulnerable adults as regular visitors to the cathedral has developed well in recent years. There is evidence of proactive working with other local organisations to support this. Further consideration needs to be given to how to formalise and standardise this provision.
- 6.1.3 There is a wide range of safely managed, inclusive outreach provisions for children, including that offered through the Education Team and the Sunday School.
- 6.1.4 The safeguarding efforts of the Music Department benefit from a well-developed song school space, effective leadership and supervision arrangements and procedures that help to assure safe movement and management of choristers. Some work, is needed to ensure that the Music Department is fully involved in the safeguarding decision-making of the cathedral going forwards.
- 6.1.5 Some further consideration is needed as to the role remit, requirements and status of choral and organ scholar roles, to assure that arrangements effectively safeguard choristers and scholars alike.
- 6.1.6 The cathedral benefits from an experienced Tower Captain and there are satisfactory arrangements in place to safeguard. However, further work is needed to develop and formalise procedures for checking and assuring the suitability of visiting ringers.
- 6.1.7 Case work is generally of a good standard and shows evidence of a good understanding of safeguarding, proportionate and timely responses and effective multi-agency working. Some further consideration of the effectiveness of mechanisms for supervision of those doing case work, and quality assurance, is needed.
- 6.1.8 There is an understanding of the importance of training and a willingness to engage with it by all within the cathedral and a concerted effort to address training needs has been successful. There is also evidence of additional training topics and opportunities being introduced to ensure that the needs of the cathedral are met.

- 6.1.9 Whilst there is evidence of some good practice in safer-recruitment of staff and volunteers, it is an area where further work is needed within the cathedral to ensure that relevant checks, including disclosure checks, are conducted and recorded consistently.
- 6.1.10 The development of policy and procedure has been an area of focus within the cathedral and includes a comprehensive and cathedral-specific safeguarding policy. Some consideration is needed as to the accessibility of this policy to all within the cathedral.
- 6.1.11 The cathedral benefits from two volunteer safeguarding co-ordinators with the imminent addition of a paid CSA role to support them. The induction of this individual and defining the specifics of their role will be crucial for ongoing working and collaboration with the diocese.
- 6.1.12 There is evidence of much recent development in QA efforts and sources of learning, particularly with the establishment of the CSMG and its reporting to Chapter. There is now potential for this to become more formalised through a QA framework, to better establish the activities and roles involved.
- 6.1.13 Whilst Chapter are playing an important role in strategic governance and quality assurance efforts, there is potential for greater independence to be introduced at the operational CSMG level.
- 6.1.14 There is strong strategic and operational leadership of safeguarding and much change has been driven in recent times. There is a clear sense of accountability at all levels of leadership and open communication that allows for both challenge and support.
- 6.1.15 There is a strong culture of welcome and hospitality across the cathedral and a common sense of ownership of safeguarding by staff and volunteers alike. Further work is needed to ensure that these more recent changes in the culture of safeguarding are embedded fully.

APPENDIX: REVIEW PROCESS

DATA COLLECTION

Information provided to auditors

- Safeguarding policy and procedure.
- Safeguarding complaints policy and procedures.
- Recruitment policy and procedure.
- Whistleblowing policy.
- Ex-offenders agreement.
- Confidential declaration form.
- Organogram (organisation chart).
- Site map.
- Ground floor plan.
- Crypt ground floor plan.
- Crypt floor plan.
- Chapter *Annual Report 2018*.
- Relevant minutes of Chapter meetings.
- Safeguarding group meetings – three sets of notes.
- Memorandum of understanding with the independent safeguarding advisor from Leeds.
- Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Diocese.
- Internal audit (June 2018).
- General U18 Consent form
- Off-site visit consent form U18.
- Blank risk assessment master off-site visits.
- Risk assessment form 'Flowers to Go'.
- Risk assessment off-site YPC Concert
- Risk assessments
 - Adults
 - Choristers
 - YPC
 - Lantern Voices
 - Education
 - Sunday School
 - Bell-ringers
- Safety guidance for schools
- Sunday school child information form
- Training logs for C0–C5
- Emergency response plan
- Security and evacuation instructions at events for general public:
 - Church house assembly points
 - Day-to-day emergency evacuation plan
 - Emergency announcements for concerts
 - Emergency evacuation procedures
- Safeguarding leaflet

- Safeguarding poster – ‘A Safer Church’
- Safeguarding officers’ evidence
- *Safeguarding Audit Blackburn 2016*

Participation of members of the diocese

Conversations were held with the following.

- The Dean.
- The Canon Missioner (Safeguarding Lead).
- The Canon Pastor.
- The Director of Music.
- The Executive Director.
- The Head Virger.
- The DSA.
- The Voluntary Coordinator for Under 18s.
- A Lay Canon Emeritus.
- The Warden and Volunteer Coordinator.
- The Tower Captain (by phone).
- The Sunday School Safeguarding Lead.
- The Education Officer.
- Member of Chapter and Cathedral Representative on the DSAP.
- The Choir Matron.
- The Safeguarding Administrator (by phone).

Focus Groups were held with the following.

- Girl choristers.
- Choir parents.
- Volunteers.

The audit: what records/files were examined?

Case records of nine referrals were reviewed.

The HR files of three employees were checked for safer recruitment.

Limitations of audit

As above, see 2.4.