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Diocese of Rochester independent safeguarding audit (July 2017)



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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTEXT

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

The audit of the Diocese of Rochester was carried out by Hugh Constant (the lead auditor for this diocese) and Lucy Erber from 11 – 13 July 2017. The audit process involved an examination of case files and other documents, along with conversations with key individuals and focus groups of parish representatives in the diocese. Details of the process are provided in the appendix.

This report was written by Hugh Constant with support from Lucy Erber. Quality assurance was provided by Edi Carmi, the senior auditing lead.

1.2 THE DIOCESE

The Diocese of Rochester is, after Canterbury, the oldest in the Church of England, having been established in 604. It now covers west Kent, and the London boroughs of Bromley and Bexley. As such, it is predominantly urban, and around 500,000 of its 1.3 million population live in greater London, leading the Bishop to suggest that culturally, Rochester increasingly feels like a London diocese. The diocese is relatively small, with 216 parishes, in which there are 260 places of worship, and 280 clergy, not including those with Permission to Officiate. There are c.22,000 regular worshippers.

The Bishop of Rochester is supported by the Suffragan Bishop of Tonbridge, but the post is currently vacant. There are three archdeacons: of Bromley & Bexley, of Rochester, and of Tonbridge (also currently vacant).

Until recently, the Diocese was one of two in which parishes paid their own clergy, rather than paying money to the Diocese to employ clergy. This model changed in 2014, but the shift in approach highlighted a significant financial challenge for the Diocese. That situation is now being addressed, but has hampered developments locally, and the Diocese remains very conscious of financial pressures. The history of parishes 'employing' their own clergy appears to have contributed to a culture of parochialism in which the Diocese is perceived as peripheral, and even intrusive at times, to parochial life.

A number of people spoke to the auditors about how the Diocese has exacerbated this in the past with a lack of engagement with the parishes, and very poor communication with them.

The Diocese is increasingly engaged in social welfare work, such as food bank

provision and care home visits, and will need to consider what the safeguarding implications of this might be. Fresh Expressions, however, is not a movement that has had significant impact within the Diocese to date.

In 2016, the dioceses of Rochester and Canterbury published a report (referred to here as the Kendall House Report) into abuse that had taken place between the 1960s and 1980s at Kendall House, a children's home for girls run jointly by the two dioceses. The Review Panel, led by Professor Susan Proctor, concluded 'that girls who were placed at the house were subject to a harsh, sometimes cruel regime, where many were routinely given high doses of sedating medication and were vulnerable to emotional, physical and sexual abuse'. While the events themselves fall well outside the timescale of this audit, the report and its recommendations, and the subsequent commissioning of Professor Proctor to review safeguarding arrangements in the Diocese of Rochester (referred to here as the Proctor Review), are an important backdrop to it.

1.3 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

1.3.1 This report is divided into:

- Introduction
- The findings of the audit [links have been made with the s.11 (Children Act 2004) Church of England national audit form]
- Considerations for the diocese are listed, where relevant, at the end of each finding
- 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

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

2 FINDINGS

2.1 SAFEGUARDING MANAGEMENT

2.1.1 Leadership

Overall leadership for safeguarding in the Diocese of Rochester sits with the Bishop. He described to the auditors an ecclesiastical career in which he has always been aware of safeguarding. As a curate, both the local vicar and the director of music were involved in serious safeguarding/criminal investigations, and his Catholic counterpart during his time as a parish priest – ostensibly a plausible and engaging man – was jailed for child abuse. This, the Bishop said, has taught him to take nothing at face value, and it has led him to reflect on questions of vulnerability.

The current Bishop came into post after an 18-month episcopal vacancy, and told the auditors he found that limited attention had been paid to the organisational structures of the Diocese. This also meant that each archdeaconry operated largely independently, and it increased what the Bishop called ‘a sense of diocesan hands-offness’ in relation to the parishes. This slight sense of detachment, still affected also by historical funding issues (see 1.2), the Bishop believes, has an impact in some parishes when the Diocese needs them to address their safeguarding responsibilities.

The Bishop told the auditors that there was limited organisational information available to him upon taking up his post, and he explained that this meant it took him some time to become aware of the abuse that had taken place at Kendall House (see 1.2). One of the recommendations of the Kendall House report is that steps should be taken to ensure this ‘risk of unintentional loss of diocesan memory’¹ cannot occur again. The events at Kendall House, and the decision to commission a report into what happened, are outside the scope of this audit, but while the auditors note the criticism of the length of time it took the dioceses of Rochester and Canterbury to commission a review, the auditors believe that decision has been the catalyst for starting to make some necessary improvements to how safeguarding is managed in the Diocese.

While a number of the recommendations of the Kendall House Report are yet to be fully implemented, the decision of the Diocese, led by the Diocesan Secretary, to recommission Professor Proctor to review safeguarding arrangements more generally, has helped give a further impetus to safeguarding locally. The decision feels like an important recognition on the part of leaders in the Diocese that it needed to improve.

One recommendation of the Proctor Review was that there be a delegated lead for safeguarding within the senior diocesan staff, and this role now rests with the

¹ Report of a Review of Kendall House, Gravesend, 1967-1986; S Proctor, S Cohen & R Galloway; June 2016

Archdeacon of Bromley & Bexley. Prior to the review, the Bishop was engaged in practical matters such as having scheduled meetings with the Bishop's Adviser for Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults (BASCVA). In addition, the previous iteration of the safeguarding management board was at times unwilling to give a steer to the BASCVA on case decisions, and so the Bishop was involved in casework as a support to the BASCVA.

With a delegated lead now in place, the Bishop sees his role as 'shaping the culture' around safeguarding. There is evidence of this in the forewords he has written for the local safeguarding policies, and it was noted positively that he attends the opening of some clergy training sessions to stress the importance he attributes to safeguarding. The Bishop is assiduous in his stand that no one without a DBS check can hold his licence, and the auditors heard from one incumbent who was a week away from being forced to step down temporarily because a renewal of his DBS check had not yet come through. Although he was anxious about this at the time, he acknowledged it was a positive sign of a robust attitude from the Bishop. Similarly, anyone with the Bishop's Permission to Officiate (PtO) must have up-to-date training and DBS checks, and the auditors were told of people who have lost their PtO if they were unwilling to go along with this.

The Bishop, in an effort to develop stronger links with the parishes, was, at the time of the audit, in the middle of a cycle of eight-day visits to each deanery, and on these he always underlines the importance of safeguarding. His message, he says, is that this is not about ticking boxes, but that it is fundamental to the work of the Church of England.

The auditors questioned why the lead safeguarding professional, and the safeguarding advisory panel, are called the 'Bishop's Adviser', and the 'Bishop's Panel', rather than the more usual Diocesan Adviser and Panel. The Bishop, and others, stressed that this was simply an historical issue, and the auditors saw no evidence that there was a lack of wider diocesan ownership of safeguarding. The Bishop pointed out that he does, especially in relation to clergy, retain ultimate responsibility for what happens in relation to safeguarding as an inherent part of his role.

Nationally, the Bishop is the Church of England's Bishop for prisons, and he discussed how this has led him to reflect on issues of vulnerability and rehabilitation, and how these influence his thinking on safeguarding. The Bishop wants there to be more safeguarding focus on vulnerable adults, and a clearer understanding of what that term means.

The Archdeacon of Bromley & Bexley believes he was chosen as the delegated lead for safeguarding because he is a 'fixer', who will manage the challenges such as rolling out training. He acknowledges that he did not have any formal engagement with safeguarding prior to his appointment, but that he has shared in the gradual growing understanding of safeguarding in the church and in society over recent years.

The Archdeacon reports to Bishop's Staff each month on the work of the Safeguarding Executive Committee (SEC), which he chairs (see 2.3), in implementing the recommendations of the Proctor Review. He feels working

relationships within Bishop's Staff are very positive, which helps in getting things done. He meets the BASCVA at SEC meetings, but not individually, and he was involved in the recruitment of her new colleague (see 2.2). It may be that there is scope for a development of the safeguarding lead role to provide greater support to the BASCVA. All the archdeacons should be more involved in casework via core groups (see 2.5), and the Diocese should strive to ensure there is not again a situation in which any one archdeacon is not fully engaged with safeguarding. It is encouraging that archdeacons also take a role in introducing safeguarding training sessions with the clergy.

Another leader in the safeguarding structure is the Diocesan Secretary, as the line manager of the BASCVA. He has case discussions, but no regular formalised meetings with the BASCVA. The auditors feel that, when professional supervision for the BASCVA is arranged (see 2.2), the Diocesan Secretary, as line manager, will need to liaise with the supervisor around matters such as performance/annual reviews, so formal meetings will become necessary.

The Diocesan Secretary has been an important part of arranging the recent reviews into safeguarding, and clearly reflects a good deal on how safeguarding can be improved. As such, it may be that he could helpfully be in attendance at the new Bishop's Safeguarding Advisory Panel (BSAP) (see 2.3) on a regular, rather than as-and-when basis, as currently proposed. As well as what he would bring to the group, it seems to make organisational sense that he sits on it, as the BASCVA's manager.

The Diocesan Secretary was confident that the diocesan office generally works well in support of safeguarding, but acknowledges the open plan office in which the BASVA sits is not ideal for confidential conversations. Two key roles that would support safeguarding, such as the Head of Communications and the Bishop of Tonbridge, are currently vacant, but the Diocesan Secretary has arranged for interim communication support from the Diocese of Canterbury.

The leadership culture of the Diocese, in terms of safeguarding seems, to the auditors, to be one where, having realised that they have fallen behind with what is needed, people are now beginning to address shortcomings, and it appears to be a culture in which people are serious about now getting things right.

2.1.2 Links with Cathedral

This development is replicated to some degree in safeguarding in Rochester Cathedral, and the safeguarding links between the Cathedral and the Diocese. The Bishop spoke of having to institute a formal Visitation of the Cathedral, in response to the mishandling of a serious safeguarding issue, reflecting again a willingness to get to the bottom of where and why things are going wrong. The Visitation has been the start of a gradual shift of attitude and personnel, and the Bishop expressed that he is now significantly more confident about safeguarding in the Cathedral.

For casework, the Cathedral use the BASCVA, currently on an informal basis. There are discussions about clarifying the arrangement via a service level agreement, which would see the Cathedral pay for some of the new safeguarding professional's time as their recognised link. There are Cathedral representatives on the SEC.

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

Considerations for the Diocese

Consider how to develop protocols around the role of safeguarding lead, and the involvement of archdeacons more generally in safeguarding and core groups.

Consider more structured support between the Diocesan Secretary and the BASCVA.

Consider how best the Diocesan Secretary can contribute to the BSAP.

2.2 BISHOP'S ADVISER FOR SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

In the Diocese of Rochester, the lead safeguarding professional is called the Bishop's Adviser for Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults (BASCVA), so this term is used throughout the report.

2.2.1 Resources

The current BASCVA, the first in the Diocese, began in the role in 2010. A nurse who also has management qualifications, she had prior experience of child safeguarding through many years' work as a health visitor, and of adult safeguarding, from having owned and run a nursing home.

The BASCVA is directly employed by the Diocese, and is paid. She is employed for 20 hours per week, typically working from Tuesday to Thursday. She will, however, take calls on other days of the week, and so will often work more than her scheduled hours. In addition, the BASCVA delivers training as and when necessary, including at weekends, but takes that time back from her normal working week. The Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS) provides cover for when the BASCVA is on annual leave.

The BASCVA's work covers all aspects of safeguarding, including casework with children and adults; training; policies and procedures; and sundry supporting tasks such as liaison with national and regional safeguarding networks.

As such, the 20 hour per week provision is clearly inadequate to the safeguarding role within the Church today, with all of the new expectations, policies and pressures that the position brings. The BASCVA acknowledges this, and expressed particular frustration that she has only ever been able to be reactive to situations, and has not had the time to develop proactive, preventative work. The insufficiency of the provision has now been recognised, and the Diocese has recently appointed another safeguarding worker, also for three days per week.

The new worker, who is yet to begin, is a former police officer with extensive experience. His primary roles will be to deliver training, and work on policy and procedures. The BASCVA will thus continue to take the lead on casework, although

the Diocesan Secretary suggested that, if the new worker's skills support it, it may be that he will also assist with casework. The Proctor Review recommended that the Diocese expand its safeguarding service by appointing a Head of Safeguarding, more senior than the BASCVA. The decision to appoint an assistant to her instead was in part, the auditors were told, a financial one, but was primarily motivated by a desire to maintain flexibility about the shape of the team for the future.

The Diocese has also recently commissioned a freelance trainer, used extensively in the Diocese of Canterbury, to bolster its training provision, especially to clergy (see 2.6). It may thus be that, with 1.2 full-time equivalents, supplemented by a freelance trainer and an administrator (see below), the safeguarding provision will be adequate. It is also possible, however, that the extra training will generate more referrals, and that this – alongside the Diocese's determination to address the recommendations of the Kendall House Report and the Proctor Review – will mean that further safeguarding capacity will be needed in the future. The Bishop has signaled his awareness of this possibility, and it is something which the Diocese and the Bishop's Safeguarding Advisory Panel should monitor.

At present, the BASCVA is supported by an HR administrator, who dedicates about half her time to the safeguarding service. However, with the recent roll-out of a significant amount of clergy training, that level of administrative support has been insufficient, and has had to be reinforced using the administrators for the Bishop and the archdeacons. As the training challenge will be ongoing (see 2.6), and with a new member of staff to support, it seems clear that a half-time administrator, with ad hoc support from elsewhere, will not be enough. The Diocese is mindful of the risks of having the BASCVA and her new colleague spending their time on administrative tasks, when it could more usefully be spent on other issues.

2.2.2 Management and supervision

The BASCVA is managed by the Diocesan Secretary. He reported that they do not have regular, formal meetings, but that he is available to the BASCVA for case discussions. Similarly, the Archdeacon of Bromley & Bexley, as the safeguarding lead for the Diocese, meets with the BASCVA at Safeguarding Executive Committee meetings, but they do not have scheduled 1:1 meetings. The BASCVA used to have these with the Bishop but, since a significant period away from work for the BASCVA, these have fallen into abeyance.

The BASCVA is, therefore, the auditors feel, significantly under-supported, and potentially isolated, although she acknowledges she has not recently been seeking additional support. However, she does a difficult job, and has been doing so with insufficient provision, and – in the recent past – without a safeguarding panel to steer and support her. Compounding this, there is no professional supervision around casework for the BASCVA (although she is planning contact with a fellow nurse to make sure her work is validated, so she can remain on the nursing register). As core groups are not routinely used (see 2.5), this means there is limited support or opportunity for sounding board conversations for the BASCVA in making complex safeguarding decisions.

The provision of professional supervision is a clear expectation of the National Safeguarding Team, and the BASCVA and the Diocese ought to prioritise arranging

this. While people from a number of backgrounds may have the skills and experience to fulfil the role, it is more likely that a social work professional will have the required systemic casework background and understanding of how safeguarding fits into complex organisational systems. Thought should be given to how a professional supervisor could link in with the Diocesan Secretary to provide well-rounded support to the BASCVA, with each contributing to annual appraisals, for example, and to how supervision discussions are recorded on case files. It might be helpful to plan in advance for the supervision arrangements of the new safeguarding worker.

The auditors saw an action plan that that BASCVA had drawn up for herself, but which was not on the agenda of any of her seniors, or any safeguarding group. The BASCVA's determination to develop herself and the service is undoubtedly a positive, and the conditions are gradually being put in place that should enable her to ask for more support with this, and for such requests to be responded to constructively.

There are no conflicts of interest for the BASCVA as she performs her role.

With the arrival of the new worker, and given the confidential nature of so much of what the BASCVA does, a more suitable private space for the safeguarding professionals than the current open plan office would be helpful.

(References: part 1 of S11 audit. Appoint a suitably qualified DSA, and provide financial, organisational and management support. The adviser must have full access to clergy files and other confidential material.

Part 6: The DSA's role is clear in the job description and person specification. And The DSA has sufficient time, funding, supervision and support to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities, including local policy development, casework, advice, liaison with statutory authorities, training, personal and professional development and professional registration.

Part 8: The DSA should be given access to professional supervision to ensure their practice is reviewed and improves over time.)

Considerations for the Diocese

The Diocese to keep under consideration whether the further expansion of the safeguarding service might be necessary.

The Diocese to consider how to provide adequate administrative support to the expanding safeguarding service.

A support structure for the BASCVA, which includes professional supervision, and possibly also regular meetings with senior figures in the Diocese, should be put in place as soon as is practical.

The support needs of the new safeguarding worker should be considered at the same time.

Thought should be given to the need for a private work space for the safeguarding professionals.

2.3 BISHOP'S SAFEGUARDING ADVISORY PANEL

The Diocese had a Safeguarding Advisory Group, chaired by a retired head teacher, until 2016. It was described to the auditors as not being fit for purpose, and as lacking the necessary clout to make changes. The Proctor Review reported that 'the meetings were not focused on actions, reporting arrangements were not well understood and apart from being a place for members to discuss matters of interest, it served little useful purpose'². The group fell into abeyance in June 2016, on the retirement of the chair.

Following recommendations from the Proctor Review, the Diocese is in the process of setting up a revised, two-tier governance structure. Already in place, since January 2017, is the Safeguarding Executive Committee (SEC), chaired by the Archdeacon of Bromley & Bexley, as the Bishop's delegated safeguarding lead. The committee meets monthly, and as well as the archdeacon, includes the BASCVA, representation from Rochester Cathedral, the Diocesan Children and Young People Adviser (CYPA), the Bishop's Executive Administrator, and the safeguarding administrator. From its minutes, the SEC appears to be action-orientated, with a particular focus on training (see 2.6). It was described to the auditors as active and engaged, and as the 'workhorse' for getting safeguarding tasks done.

The SEC will shortly be answerable to a Bishop's Safeguarding Advisory Panel, or Strategic Safeguarding Committee. Both terms were used during the audit, and are used in paperwork about the group. For this report, the term Bishop's Safeguarding Advisory Panel (BSAP) is used. The purpose of the BSAP, according to its terms of reference, will be to provide:

- advice and challenge to the Bishop and the Diocese
- support with, and monitoring of, policies and procedures
- liaison with statutory partners
- a forum for learning from cases, and to provide advice 'relating to specific cases as appropriate'.

The Bishop is keen that the BSAP provides 'palpably independent' oversight and challenge to the Diocese, and in appointing the head of helplines at the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) as its chair, the Diocese appears to have selected someone with the experience to offer that. The auditors did not have the opportunity to meet the new chair.

It is the expressed purpose of the new group to make links with statutory partners such as local authorities, the police and probation, and this would provide helpful input and perspective.

The BSAP will report annually to Bishop's Council, which feels like a proportionate exercise in accountability. Regular meetings between the Bishop and the BSAP chair

² A Review of Safeguarding Arrangements in the Diocese of Rochester, Professor Sue Proctor, November 2016.

may also foster a sense of accountability from the group's inception, and the auditors feel this needs to be considered.

The two-tier structure that will shortly be in place looks to be strong and straightforward, and ought to offer useful support and challenge to the key people involved in safeguarding. Given the relative isolation in which she has worked – particularly during the period where there was no functioning safeguarding group – this role will be particularly important in relation to the BASCVA, and her new colleague.

The auditors note that the draft Key Roles and Responsibilities of Church Office Holders and Bodies: Practice Guidance being drawn up by the National Safeguarding Team (NST) stresses that diocesan advisory panels do not take a role in case management, and so the group should satisfy itself that the term of reference relating to looking at cases 'as appropriate' does not lend itself to the group becoming a decision-making body in relation to case work. A role in quality assurance of cases, however, could be beneficial. The Terms of Reference make mention of the possibility of these functions being delegated to a sub-group.

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

Considerations for the Diocese

Consideration to be given to regular meetings between the Bishop and the Chair of the BSAP.

The BSAP to assure itself that it is compliant with forthcoming guidance on not being involved in case management.

2.4 GUIDANCE, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Diocese of Rochester has a standing policy that it will adopt all House of Bishops' safeguarding publications upon their release, and all current House of Bishops' documents are easily accessible on the diocesan website.

In addition, the Diocese has three major policy and procedure documents of its own: The Protection and Safeguarding of Children (2012, revised 2015); The Protection and Safeguarding of Adults when they are Vulnerable (2012, revised 2015); and Responding Positively to those who have Suffered Sexual Abuse (2012). It is positive, in terms of stressing the importance of these documents, that each opens with a message from the Bishop of Rochester. It is also helpful as a way of winning hearts and minds to the safeguarding agenda that the documents have a statement about the theology of safeguarding, emphasising that it is a Christian, as well as a secular and statutory duty.

All three documents are clearly written, and separate out policy and procedure as appropriate. There is clarity about what the Diocese can offer parishes, and what is expected of parishes themselves, and this is supplemented by some helpful templates and forms for parishes to use. They are consistent with House of Bishops'

policies, but this will need to be kept reviewed as new policies are published.

Responding Positively to those who have Suffered Sexual Abuse makes use of work done in response to safeguarding events in the Diocese of Chichester, and by the Minister and Clergy Sexual Abuse Survivors (MACSAS) group. Subsequent to its publication, the Diocese has published the Kendall House Report, and could usefully incorporate lessons from that into any future iteration of the document.

The Protection and Safeguarding of Adults when they are Vulnerable does not incorporate the Care Act 2014, and should be updated to reflect this.

The diocesan policy documents refer interchangeably to the Bishop's Adviser for Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults (BASCVA) and the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. For the avoidance of any confusion, one term should be adopted consistently.

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

Considerations for the Diocese

To review and update local publications to use consistent job titles, to reflect lessons learned from Kendall House and to ensure that the documents are consistent with the Care Act 2014 and the latest House of Bishops' policies.

2.5 CASEWORK

2.5.1 Quality of response to allegations

Much of the casework seen by the auditors was of a good quality, with allegations responded to appropriately and effectively. There was evidence of a holistic response in cases involving, for example, the family of an alleged perpetrator. Liaison with the police, and various Local Authority Designated Officers (LADOs), was in most cases timely and pertinent, and this was reflected in the feedback the auditors received from local statutory partners. Similarly, the BASCVA liaised well with other Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers and the NST in cases involving multiple dioceses. There were a number of cases in which risks were dealt with robustly.

The auditors noted in particular a number of cases in which the BASCVA offered sensitive and thoughtful support to people disclosing abuse.

There were also some concerns about casework. In one of the cases good quality support was provided to an abuse survivor, but this was after the survivor had prompted the BASCVA to find out what was happening, after a delay in communication. This was an issue on a number of case files. The auditors noted delays in communication both internally – for example alerting an archdeacon to a developing situation – and externally, such as responding to complaints about the speed/ manner in which safeguarding concerns were addressed. On occasion, when pressed over delays in communication, the BASCVA's response tended towards being atypically brusque.

It is the opinion of the auditors that these delays in communication are likely to be linked to the low level of safeguarding provision in the Diocese. Given the work required, and the time available to do it, some delay seems very likely to occur.

Possibly also linked to the workload pressures for the BASCVA were issues relating to safeguarding agreements. There is not a functional system for tracking them, and making sure they are regularly reviewed. Linked to this, the Diocese is not a signatory to people's safeguarding agreements. There is an argument that the agreement is essentially between a parish and a person who may pose a risk, but in the view of the auditors, adding the signature of the BASCVA would add clout to the agreement, and remind people posing a risk that they will be monitored across the Diocese. It also makes tracking and reviewing agreements easier, and it adds a level of robustness to agreements that might otherwise fall into abeyance during a vacancy in a parish.

It is also important to make sure that people are subject to agreements on the basis of a risk assessment, so that it is clear to everyone safeguarding a situation what the issues are. There was a lack of risk assessments of either Type A³ or Type B⁴, and it should be a priority for the Diocese to ensure it makes proper use of the NST's 'Practice Guidance: Risk Assessment for Individuals who may Pose a Risk to Children or Adults'.

Another key safeguarding mechanism which does not appear to be in use in the Diocese is the core group model for responding to cases involving church officers. The auditors saw three cases in which a core group should have been in place, but was not. The core group model ought to be adhered to, in the absence of any compelling reason otherwise, by virtue of it being national practice guidance. But in the opinion of the auditors, it has merits that are especially pertinent to the Diocese, because it brings together key people to make complex decisions. Without it, the BASCVA – with more expected of her than she has time to do – has to make those decisions alone, which heightens the risk of challengeable decisions being made.

As they are often chaired by archdeacons, core groups would also serve to engage the archdeacons more directly with the safeguarding work of the Diocese. The Diocese needs to make sure the BASCVA is sufficiently well-supported that she can make use of the key safeguarding mechanisms put in place by the NST.

Given that safeguarding decisions can be complex – and hence the need for core groups, and proper support to the BASCVA – it is inevitable that different professionals will have different opinions about the best way to proceed. The auditors felt that a small number of cases would have benefited from a more robust

³ Type A Risk Assessments are used either to manage immediate risks prior to a Type B assessment, or where there are concerns about the risk posed by a non-church officer – typically a member of the congregation.

⁴ Type B Risk Assessments are used where church officers are alleged to have caused harm, or where there are other complexities or conflicts of interest.

or more victim/survivor-focused approach, and there were cases where a referral to a LADO would, in the auditors' view, have been helpful, but did not occur. Two cases were potentially linked, and the need for the BASCVA to explore that situation in more depth has already been addressed with the Diocese.

It was noted that on occasion, the most hands-on support to the BASCVA on casework came from the Bishop. The support the Bishop offered was appropriate, but the BASCVA described approaching the Bishop for support in the absence of alternative support structures (see 2.2).

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

2.5.2 Recording systems

The Diocese uses paper files, but is exploring a move to an electronic case management system. The systems used by neighbouring dioceses have been explored, and a decision is pending. The paper files are securely stored in the diocesan office.

The files are well-organised, and follow a clear chronology. Given the pressures in the time of the BASCVA, too much time appears to be spent on assiduously printing and storing every email, even those giving directions or expressing thanks, for example. Against this, there were instances where important information, such as an SEC discussion about a blemished DBS check, was not stored.

Because the files are predominantly an email record, records of important conversations were often not kept, and the Diocese should, in making a decision about a case management system, ensure it selects one that allows for the making of case notes about all contact regarding a person.

Considerations for the Diocese

The Diocese to sign safeguarding agreements as a matter of course, and to put in place a system for tracking when they are due for review.

The Diocese to link safeguarding agreements to risk assessments, and to ensure they are in place whenever necessary.

Risk assessment guidance from the NST to be adhered to.

Practice guidance involving core groups to be adhered to.

Ensuring the BASCVA is sufficiently well-supported to be able to make full use of the NST's safeguarding mechanisms.

Move to a case management system that allows for all key contacts regarding a case to be recorded.

2.6 TRAINING

2.6.1 Delivery

Until recently, safeguarding training in the Diocese has centred around two courses: an introduction to safeguarding called Facing the Unthinkable, devised and delivered by CCPAS, and an introduction to local policies, procedures and guidance, delivered by the BASCVA. The Diocesan Children and Young People Adviser (CYPA) also runs some sessions aimed at helping parishes put policies into practice.

With the advent of the NST's Learning and Development Framework, the Diocese has had to shift emphasis, and urgently expand its training offer. The auditors were told there was some delay in proactively engaging with the new framework but, as recommended by the Proctor Review, the SEC now has taken on the role of planning for its delivery. The Archdeacon of Bromley & Bexley, as chair, believes he and the group have the necessary skills to manage the considerable training challenge. He visited the Diocese of Canterbury to study how they are implementing the framework; another indication of the Diocese's willingness to learn from others. The Archdeacon believes that in a year's time the structures will be in place to deliver modules C1 – C4 of the framework.

Appropriately enough, the Diocese has started implementing the framework by focusing on clergy, and the C3 course they are required to do. To that end, they commissioned an experienced safeguarding trainer, used also in Canterbury, who delivered a series of sessions through the spring and summer of 2017.

The Diocese has 413 clergy in total (including those with Permission to Officiate), of whom 146 have attended these recent C3 sessions, and eight have attended a C4 session for senior clergy. This leaves 182 who attended the old diocesan training and will be required to undertake C3 in 2018 or 2019, and 77 who still require training.

The Diocese also has 507 Licensed Lay Ministers (LLMs). Here, 142 have done the recent C3 course, with a further 225 having attended the old diocesan training, and needing to do C3 in 2018 or 2019. This leaves 140 still requiring training. Four C3 sessions are still to run in summer 2017, and this will cover a further 100–120 people. Good progress has thus been made here, in a short space of time, and the Diocese is conscious it still has further to go.

Either the Bishop or an archdeacon are on hand to help introduce each of the C3 sessions, which sends a helpful message about their significance. The auditors only spoke to one person who had attended, but he described the session as 'excellent', and the Archdeacon of Bromley & Bexley feels the sessions are firing people up to do safeguarding properly.

In terms of simple numbers, the bigger challenge facing the Diocese is training the many hundreds of people, mainly volunteers, at parish level, using the C0, C1 and C2 modules. From conversations, and from SEC minutes, it is clear that planning for this challenge is underway, albeit at an early stage. There is concern that the online version of the C0 module is too easily fooled, in that a person does not need to get questions right to be deemed to have passed the course. The Diocese is therefore

considering a Train the Trainer approach, using the consultant who has done the C3 sessions to develop a pool of volunteer trainers.

Provided appropriate mechanisms are in place to quality assure the work of volunteers – such as rigorous recruitment, shadowing, support to stay up to date, and evaluation, this would appear to be a proportionate and reasonable approach.

The new safeguarding worker, who has a training qualification, is due to play a large part in the delivery of training, and this additional asset will clearly make things easier. To maximise the impact he can have, and to map out the ongoing training roles of the BASCVA and the freelance trainer, the Diocese might want to consider developing a detailed training plan, looking at who needs what training, in what size sessions, where and when. It may be appropriate for the new BSAP to oversee this plan, and for the SEC to be charged with implementing it. The plan could include decisions about the ongoing use of the CCPAS training.

Further thought needs to be given to communicating what changes are coming in terms of training, as the Parish Focus Group was largely unaware of the new learning and development framework. There is an obvious opportunity to link this to the development of a safeguarding newsletter (see 2.11).

It is encouraging that no one reported any resistance to the rolling out of so much training. Indeed, the Parish Focus Group, while not yet aware of the new framework, seemed keen to have more training in this area.

2.6.2 Organisation and recording systems

Alongside the improving picture on the delivery of training, there needs to be a system to make sure the training is properly logged, so that those who have done it have their renewal dates set, and those who have not can be chased up. In addition, the administrative tasks of booking rooms, supplying refreshments and printing material will need to be done in ever greater volume.

At the moment, and by way of a temporary arrangement, these tasks are divided between the administrators supporting the BASCVA, the archdeacons, and the Bishop. While there may be a benefit from the clergy training being managed from the Bishop's Office, the Diocese should devise a system that tracks the overall training of everyone who needs it, so that, for example, it would be easy to see where a parish has an untrained incumbent as well as untrained church wardens, because that could then be flagged as a risk that needs addressing.

A safeguarding return for parishes (see 2.11) could assist with this. However the data is gathered, the task only really feels manageable if a greater administrative resource is dedicated to safeguarding (see 2.2).

(Reference: part 1 of S.11 audit: Select and train those who are to hold the Bishop's Licence in safeguarding matters. Provide training on safeguarding matters to parishes, the Cathedral, other clergy, diocesan organisations, including religious communities and those who hold the Bishop's Licence.

And to part 8: Those working closely with children, young people and adults experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect ...have safeguarding in their induction and are trained and have their training refreshed every three years.)

Considerations for the Diocese

The Diocese is developing a detailed training delivery plan and should give thought to whether the SEC and/or BSAP should be responsible for overseeing its implementation.

If volunteer trainers are recruited, consideration to be given to how to quality assure their work.

Communication about safeguarding training to be developed for the parishes.

An overall database of training numbers could be considered alongside the delivery plan.

2.7 SAFE RECRUITMENT OF CLERGY, LAY OFFICERS AND VOLUNTEERS

From a sample of six clergy Blue Files, it is possible to offer a tentative conclusion that the recruitment of clergy generally adheres to Safe Recruitment practices, but there could be further improvements. In most cases, the person's application form, with referees, was on file, and the references were sought and stored as well. This was not always the case, however, and the practice here could be tightened. One recruitment file was of a person with safeguarding concerns from another diocese, and the Bishop considered a very clear Current Clergy Status Letter from the applicant's previous bishop, and appropriately weighed the risks with the BASCVA before appointing.

The Blue Files include a sticker relating to DBS checks, and the details of the checks themselves, along with a record of the clergyperson's safeguarding training, are kept on a well-functioning spreadsheet maintained by the Bishop's Executive Administrator. The Blue Files do not have a copy of any photographic record of identity, such as a passport, and nor were they consistent in storing people's Confidential Declarations.

On those Blue Files that the auditors explored where there were safeguarding concerns, there was no obvious flagging system – such as coloured stickers or inserts – that safeguarding concerns were present. This is not in line with national guidance, where the expectation is that there is either a clear cross reference to a safeguarding file or safeguarding documentation is duplicated within the Blue File. Often there was paperwork relating to the safeguarding incident/s, but at times this was separate from the Blue File, raising the possibility it may not be forwarded to any future dioceses.

The Bishop expressed a view that the purpose of and practices surrounding Blue Files could usefully be clarified at a national level.

Lay recruitment files, based on a small sample of three, are similarly patchy in terms of storing references and photographic identification.

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

Considerations for the Diocese

Develop consistent local expectations, in line with national guidance, about what is stored on Blue Files and lay HR files, including a flagging system for safeguarding concerns on Blue Files.

2.8 DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE (DBS)

The Diocese commissions CCPAS to electronically manage DBS applications and renewals. Broadly, this appears to work well, and members of the Parish Focus Group commented favourably on the speed with which applications are processed.

Parish Focus Group members did express concern about a lack of clarity regarding who is eligible for a DBS check, which they felt is compounded by unclear guidance from the national church.

DBS checks for clergy are administered by the Bishop's Executive Administrator, and at parish/volunteer level, the safeguarding/HR administrator helps track the applications. Blemished DBS checks (of which there were ten out of over 1,200 in 2015) are now referred to the SEC for consideration. The auditors saw two instances from the SEC minutes of this, and it appears to function appropriately. The auditors reviewed one case involving a blemished DBS, which the SEC had considered. The notes from the SEC discussion could be kept on the safeguarding file to ensure robust recording keeping.

The auditors saw one file in which a referral to DBS was made in relation to a worker at parish level. There were two other cases, involving clergy subject to the Clergy Disciplinary Measures (CDM), where it was not clear whether a DBS referral had been made, but where it should have been considered and discussed, if the CDM led to the removal of the Bishop's Licence.

Considerations for the Diocese

Keep SEC discussion notes on safeguarding files in blemished DBS cases, to maintain consistent record-keeping.

To ensure DBS referrals are made, where appropriate, in cases where the CDM has led to the removal of the Bishop's Licence.

2.9 COMPLAINTS AND WHISTLEBLOWING

The Diocese has in place a complaints and whistleblowing policy, specifically for safeguarding matters. It functions well as a whistleblowing policy, covering volunteers as well as employees, and giving contact details for where to go should the diocesan response prove unsatisfactory. It does not promise timescales for responding to whistleblowing alerts, as it points out these can be complex, and should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, albeit stressing that they should be handled as quickly as the complexity of each case allows.

The guidance distinguishes whistleblowing from complaints, with the key distinction being that anyone can complain about a service they have received, whereas only employees and volunteers can blow the whistle. The auditors could not see that the Diocese has a general complaints procedure, and if the complaints and whistleblowing guidance is therefore all that the Diocese has, it could helpfully give more detail about who to complain to, and how to escalate complaints should responses take too long, or be unsatisfactory. It feels reasonable that a complaints procedure should have timescales to adhere to, as a complaint is less likely to reveal information that was previously unknown to the Diocese, and which would require extensive investigation, than a whistleblowing alert.

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

Considerations for the Diocese

Develop a more detailed complaints policy, giving information about who to make complaints to, and expectations in terms of response times and standards.

2.10 QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES

People in the Diocese acknowledge that the strategic framework around safeguarding has been inadequate or absent in recent times, but with the advent of the SEC (see 2.3) and the imminent inception of the BSAP (see 2.3), a structure is being put in place that will allow the Diocese to embed the quality assurance of safeguarding. That such a structure is being built is due in large part to the Proctor Review, the commissioning of which was in itself an important quality assurance decision.

The BSAP and SEC can now plan how they will conduct quality assurance. This may involve efforts such as file sampling, surveys of people who have used the safeguarding service, evaluation of training and so on. Any efforts in this regard will be strengthened by parish data, to assess the extent to which each parish is engaging with safeguarding (see 2.11).

As part of its improvement efforts, the Diocese has sought closer working links with neighbouring dioceses, and Canterbury in particular. This has borne fruit in terms of training (see 2.6) and work with people disclosing abuse (see 2.12). Such benchmarking, be it formal or informal, may well prove productive on an ongoing basis.

The BASCVA maintains her own action plan for improvements and development,

which is positive, and which should be supported by the wider diocese (see 2.2).

The outcome of the Kendall House Report, the Proctor Review, and this audit, is that the Diocese has a large number of recommendations and considerations to address. Regular reports are made to Bishop's Council on the actions taken in relation to the recommendations made. As part of any quality assurance function, it would perhaps be appropriate for the BSAP to devise an action plan based on the various recommendations and considerations, and be the body that oversees their implementation.

Considerations for the Diocese

The BSAP and SEC to consider mechanisms for quality assurance, which may include using data to support safeguarding at the parish level.

The BSAP to consider drawing up an action plan to work through recent recommendations and considerations.

2.11 HOW DIOCESE PROVIDES SUPPORT & MONITORING OF SAFEGUARDING IN PARISHES

2.11.1 Archdeacons' responsibilities

Following on from the above points about developing quality assurance mechanisms, archdeacons in the Diocese now use Survey Monkey to carry out their Articles of Enquiry, including questions that relate to safeguarding. This will allow them to analyse the results – such as which parishes lack a safeguarding policy or parish safeguarding representative – and work alongside area deans to monitor and support parishes as necessary. The plans to analyse and use the Articles of Enquiry data are in their early stages, but they represent a good opportunity for the Diocese to support the development of safeguarding across all parishes.

Supplementing the Articles with a fuller parish survey of safeguarding would enable the Diocese to draw up a benchmark picture of attitudes to safeguarding, and what support the parishes need to take it forward. This could usefully help shape the ongoing work of the BSAP and SEC, and future surveys could then monitor the effectiveness of their efforts to promote safeguarding across the Diocese. Mindful of the historically slightly detached relationship between the Diocese and the parishes (see 1.2), asking this of parishes is only likely to be effective if any issues raised are then addressed. This will require sufficient administrative and professional safeguarding support to be in place to identify and act on any themes that emerge.

The BASCVA feels supported by the Archdeacon of Bromley & Bexley, as the safeguarding lead (see 2.1), and is confident in the constructive backing from both archdeacons currently in post. The Archdeacon of Tonbridge post is vacant at the time of writing, although an appointment has been made, of someone with a social work and probation background. This could be a useful asset, one which strengthens the Diocese's safeguarding response at the archdeacon level.

The Bishop is undertaking a series of eight-day visits to each of the deaneries in the

Diocese (see 2.1) and using that opportunity to discuss safeguarding with people locally. The Archdeacon of Bromley & Bexley described how safeguarding is now the major part of his Visitation charge service each year.

2.11.2 Support given to parish safeguarding coordinators

Reflecting the hitherto limited safeguarding resource, not much time has been available for a systematic offer of support to the parishes around safeguarding, outside of casework. There is, for example, no safeguarding newsletter. Support to parish safeguarding representatives currently extends to training, and the provision of templates to support various safeguarding functions. These were appreciated by people at the Parish Focus Group.

The auditors were told of thought being given to developing deanery-level support networks for parish safeguarding representatives. This sounds positive, and it may be that a survey of parishes could help inform what that would look like.

Considerations for the Diocese

When staffing allows, consider a survey of the safeguarding situation in parishes, to inform how best they can be supported.

Consider a safeguarding newsletter.

2.12 RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

2.12.1 Responding to victims/survivors

Authorised Listeners are not used by the Diocese. The Diocese supplied the auditors with a paper setting out the reasons:

- The term suggests, one survivor has told the Diocese, that the Authorised Listener is on the 'side' of the Church of England
- Many survivors will not wish to engage with any support that the Church of England provides, if they have been abused within a Church of England setting
- It would be a very demanding role for the Authorised Listener, who would be a volunteer. This also has implications for how a listener would access training, supervision and support, and their professional accountability
- The number of Authorised Listeners would inevitably be small, and this would limit the choice for survivors. The Diocese would like everyone to be able to hear disclosures of abuse appropriately, and then refer people on according to their needs

Instead, the Diocese uses the BASCVA to have an initial discussion with survivors, and to determine with them what might be wanted by way of ongoing support. This approach has the advantage of being tailored on an individual basis, and the auditors were impressed by the Diocese's determination to be flexible. The auditors

also noted that the BASCVA has sought advice from the Independent Domestic and Sexual Violence Adviser in the Diocese of Chichester, which suggests a determination to get such an important part of her work right, and which would appear to be of a piece with her skilled support to survivors (see 2.5).

By having no structure or guidance in place, however – such as whether to offer counselling support, and if so, how many sessions – survivors may be left with no steer as to what might be available, and the BASCVA would be left with similarly little framework for what might at least be an initial offer in different circumstances. The Diocese could consider putting in place a basic framework for an offer to survivors that would retain flexibility but give everyone involved a starting point for discussions about the support the Diocese could give.

Members of the Parish Focus Group were uncertain where people disclosing abuse could go for ongoing support, so any new framework could be communicated at parish level, to maximise its uptake.

The Diocese has recent experience of needing to offer support to a large number of survivors, because of the abuse at Kendall House. The Diocese, together with the Diocese of Canterbury, provided a helpline for former Kendall House residents, staffed by CCPAS. The helpline number is clearly available on the homepage of the diocesan website, and remains active until the end of 2017, when its continuation will be reviewed.

The two dioceses involved hosted a joint service for survivors of abuse – not limited to Kendall House residents – at Holy Trinity Church Beckenham. This was a positive initiative, and the dioceses are considering if it should be a regular activity. The Bishop acknowledged, however, that in some senses nothing the Diocese could do can be an adequate redress for what some people experienced at Kendall House.

2.12.2 Proactive efforts to create a safe culture

The Diocese employs a Diocesan Children and Young People Adviser (CYPA), who is heavily engaged in safeguarding work. She sits on the SEC, and is actively involved in advising parishes on how policies and procedures, including those relating to safeguarding, can apply in practical terms. There are 43 children's/youth workers across parishes in the Diocese, so the CYPA is an important figure in supporting them to work safely with young people.

The CYPA described seeking the advice of the BASCVA frequently, and liaising to make sure consistent advice is offered across the parishes. The BASCVA clearly sees the CYPA as an ally, and would welcome the opportunity to develop their joint working.

The Mission and Community Engagement team employs a dementia specialist project officer to develop the Diocese's support to worshippers with dementia, and to build dementia-friendly churches and other services. The auditors did not have a chance to explore this fully, but it looks like an impressive initiative, dedicated to making the Church safer for one particular cohort of vulnerable adults.

Considerations for the Diocese

A framework to guide discussions about a diocesan offer of support to survivors, consistent with Responding Well, which is communicated to parishes.

2.13 INFORMATION SHARING

The auditors saw no indication of any problems with information sharing in the Diocese. While there were cases in which the wider involvement of people may have been beneficial (see 2.5), casework never appears to be hampered by difficulties in the exchange of information. That there are no informing-sharing protocols with statutory agencies does not therefore seem to be problematic.

The diocesan website contains contact details for, and a photograph of, the BASCVA, which promotes the sense that she is accessible for people who wish to share information with her.

Within the Diocese, the BASCVA has access to the Bishop and archdeacons, and shares information with them appropriately, although as discussed, formalised meetings may be helpful.

The Parish Focus Group was unsure as to who they should be sharing information with if the BASCVA were unavailable, but the arrival of a new safeguarding worker should alleviate this issue.

The safeguarding homepage of the diocesan website only really covers DBS matters, and could usefully be improved to include key safeguarding messages.

Considerations for the Diocese

Consider revamping the safeguarding pages of the diocesan website.

2.14 LINKS WITH NATIONAL SAFEGUARDING TEAM

The Diocese is not making routine use of some key safeguarding tools expected by the National Safeguarding Team (NST), but as discussed in 2.5, this seems to reflect time pressures rather than a lack of awareness of the national agenda. The auditors were told of a sense that the Diocese needed to catch up with where the national church was, and there was support for the direction of travel nationally.

The auditors saw two cases involving liaison with the NST, which was thorough and appropriate. There were no cases in which it appeared that the NST ought to have been involved, but were not.

The Bishop did highlight concerns that the purpose and use of Blue Files in becoming increasingly unclear, and that this is something that would need to be addressed at a national level.

3 Conclusion

This section explains the overall conclusions of the audit, drawing out the safeguarding strengths and the areas for further development.

3.1 What's working well

The Bishop has demonstrated a commitment to safeguarding. Not long after coming into post, he commissioned the Kendall House Report, which was then followed by the Proctor Review, as well as the Visitation on the Cathedral. He has shown a willingness to increase the safeguarding team, has attended the start of training sessions to highlight it as a priority, and backs the agenda in policy documents.

There is a realisation that the Diocese is playing catch-up on safeguarding, and there has been a good level of activity in the last six to nine months, including the recruitment of a new safeguarding worker.

The structure for the new Bishop's Safeguarding Advisory Panel (BSAP) and the Safeguarding Executive Committee (SEC) looks positive, and well-structured to hold the Diocese to account.

The Diocese has an experienced and committed Bishops' Adviser for Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults (BASCVA), who does sensitive and supportive work with survivors.

The BASCVA feels well supported by the newly appointed lead for safeguarding, and there are the beginnings of structure around the BASCVA to support her.

There is a thoughtful and reflective Diocesan Secretary who is committed to increasing resources for safeguarding in the Diocese.

The Diocese has a robust approach to the need for a DBS check to be in place before anyone takes on a role that needs one, and there are other elements of safer recruitment taking place.

There has been a proactive approach to developing safeguarding links with Rochester Cathedral.

There has been a willingness to use local networks to drive along improvements, for example commissioning the trainer used by Canterbury to deliver safeguarding training, and meeting with the survivors' worker from Chichester.

A programme to ensure that all members of the clergy have had safeguarding training has been put in place promptly and effectively.

There is a two-year project in place to develop churches in the Diocese as safe places for people with dementia.

3.2 AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

It is encouraging that there will be further capacity, but training tends to generate more work, and some of the recommendations of the Kendall House report, the Proctor Review and this audit will also generate work. The Diocese may need to consider provision for further expansion at some point in the future, including of the administrative support around safeguarding.

The implementation of the recommendations from Kendall House and the Proctor Review, alongside the considerations from this audit, where appropriate, need to be tracked and monitored. This could be in the form of an action plan overseen by the new BSAP.

Casework needs to be done in accordance with NST guidance in relation to, for example, risk assessments, core groups and safeguarding agreements. Prompt and inclusive core groups are especially important.

Professional supervision for the BASCVA, and her new colleague, needs to be arranged promptly.

Regular links between BASCVA, the BSAP, and the Bishop and Bishop's Council would help generate a wider sense of ownership of safeguarding, and be part of a supportive network for the BASCVA, which feels somewhat lacking at present.

There is a considerable training challenge to be met, and a strategy for how to deliver all the C0–C2 requirements will need to match the excellent work on training clergy this year.

Some more structured thought needs to be given to the offer of support to survivors; a framework which is not overly-prescriptive but which gives everyone involved some steer as to what might be available would be useful.

Filing is well organised, but needs to include case notes of all key telephone calls and other contacts, and to be compliant with NST recording guidance.

The safeguarding aspects of the website should cover more than DBS issues. Communication with the parishes on safeguarding could be improved – e.g. via a newsletter.

The support to and engagement with the parishes more generally on safeguarding needs to be developed. Safeguarding returns from the parishes could inform what this looks like, and the data could improve the overall functioning of the service.

Safeguarding agreements should be signed by the BASCVA and systematically reviewed, with thought given to how to keep on top of them during vacancies.

The safeguarding team, when in place, ought to have a more private room for safeguarding, to avoid having to look around for spaces for private conversations.

Consider the implications of growing work in the social services field – foodbanks, care home visits – in terms of safeguarding.

APPENDIX: REVIEW PROCESS

DATA COLLECTION

Information provided to auditors

The Diocese provided, in advance of the audit:

- Diocesan self-audit of 2014 and 2015
- A Review of Safeguarding Arrangements in the Diocese of Rochester, by Professor Susan Proctor, November 2016
- The Kendall House Report, June 2016 and Kendall House Report Addendum, November 2016
- Responding Positively to those who have Suffered Sexual Abuse: Diocesan Guidance and Good Practice for Pastoral Care within Parishes, February 2012
- The Protection and Safeguarding of Children: Diocesan Policy, Procedures and Good Practice for work with Children and Young People in Parishes, September 2015
- The Protection and Safeguarding of Adults when they are Vulnerable: Diocesan Policy, Procedures and Good Practice for Work in Parishes, September 2015
- Diocesan procedures for complaints and whistleblowing minutes of the last three meetings of the Safeguarding Executive Committee
- Membership of Safeguarding Executive Committee
- Terms of Reference for the Bishop's Safeguarding Advisory Panel
- Role description and person specification for the Chair of the Bishop's Safeguarding Advisory Panel
- Job description of Bishop's Adviser for the Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults
- Overview of safeguarding training – 2016/17
- Action plan and checklist for making child protection referrals
- CCPAS newsletter
- Young People First – a safeguarding code of practice
- Discussion document on why the Diocese does not use Authorised Listeners

During the audit, the BASCVA supplied the auditors with her action plan.

Participation of members of the Diocese

The auditors had conversations, in chronological order, with:

- The Archdeacon of Bromley & Bexley
- The Bishop of Rochester
- The Diocesan Children and Youth Adviser
- The Bishop's Adviser for Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults
- The Diocesan Secretary

The auditors were due to meet safeguarding representatives from Rochester

Cathedral, but unfortunately this was cancelled. As the Chair of the Bishop's Safeguarding Advisory Panel has yet to take up his role, the auditors did not have a conversation with him.

The Parish Focus Group consisted of one incumbent, two church wardens (one of whom was a lead recruiter for their parish), one parish safeguarding representative, one volunteer coordinator, and one children and youth worker.

The audit: what records / files were examined?

The auditors looked at 14 case files, of which eight related to offences or risks towards children; three related to offences or risks towards adults; and three related to offences or risks towards both. Where clergy were involved in a safeguarding case, the relevant Blue File was also examined.

In addition, the auditors looked at six clergy Blue File and three lay files for indications of safe recruitment practices.

Limitations of audit

There were no limitations affecting how the audit was carried out.