

Agenda ref	9.1
Report title	Safeguarding Annual Report 2024
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1. Annual report

A draft has been approved by the Safeguarding Steering Group and discussed by Bishop's Staff and received by the Bishop's Council.

Key Highlights

INEQE Independent Audit:

- Diocese and Cathedral commended for its exemplary practices
- 40 recommendations - areas for improvement
- Implementation of Safeguarding Improvement Plan - progress is reviewed by DSSG

Training:

- New learning and development framework from January 2025
- Positive ongoing engagement from parishes
- Increased requests for face-to-face training
- Leadership can now be delivered as a one-day session

Parish Dashboard:

- Increased use and progress at level 3
-

Service development:

- Diocese has been certified to have met the requirements specified in the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse in respect of recommendation 1
- strengthening the independent function of the role of the DSO.

2. Future of safeguarding in the Church of England

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The proposals for two models (was originally 4), developed in response to Jay/ Wilkinson reports, were considered at General Synod in February. The Synod came to the following motion:

“That this Synod:

- a) thank all those involved in Church safeguarding, particularly the victims and survivors who give so generously of their wisdom and experience, often at great personal cost, and parish safeguarding officers who make sure that safeguarding is a priority in every level and all those who support them in dioceses;*
- b) affirm its commitment to greater independence in safeguarding in the Church of England;*
- c) thank the Response Group for its work for greater independence in safeguarding in the Church of England; and, noting the significant reservations around model 4 in paragraph 62 of GS 2378 and the legal advice from VWV dated 31st January 2025, endorse model 3 as the way forward in the short term and call for further work as to the legal and practical requirements necessary to implement model 4;*
- d) and lament and repent of the failure of the Church to be welcoming to victims and survivors and the harm they have experienced and continue to experience in the life of the Church.”*

Work is being undertaken over the next 2-3+ years to implement model 3 which will result in the creation of a single external body to provide oversight and scrutiny and to perform the casework functions of the National Safeguarding Team. This body will also act as the end stage for a single safeguarding complaints process across all Dioceses and Cathedrals to provide greater consistency.

A team is being developed and recruited to undertake this work and should be in place by September 2025.

The Diocese Safeguarding Team will continue to be employed by the DBF as part of this process.

Further work will be undertaken to explore the viability of Model 4 which would mean all safeguarding functions and staff at Diocese and Cathedral level being taken into a single body.

Adam Bond,
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