



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL
TRANSFORMING. TOGETHER.

2024

SAFEGUARDING ANNUAL REPORT



NATIONAL SAFEGUARDING STANDARDS

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1. CULTURE, LEADERSHIP AND CAPACITY

Church bodies have safe and healthy cultures, effective leadership, resourcing and scrutiny arrangements necessary to deliver high-quality safeguarding practices and outcomes.

2. PREVENTION

Church bodies have in place a planned range of measures which together are effective in preventing abuse in their context.

3. RECOGNISING, ASSESSING AND MANAGING RISK

Risk assessments, safety plans and associated processes are of a high quality and result in positive outcomes. The assessment and management of risk is underpinned by effective partnership working.

4. VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS

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

5. LEARNING, SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT

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

Read more about the National Safeguarding Standards

[churchofengland.org/safeguarding/
national-safeguarding-standards](https://churchofengland.org/safeguarding/national-safeguarding-standards)



A message from David Niven

Independent Chair, Diocesan Safeguarding Steering Group

The Diocese has demonstrated professionalism, sensitivity and resilience in delivering its safeguarding responsibilities over the year. Nationally, it was a year of challenge for the church and we now look to a forthcoming Synod to indicate the way forward.

The uncertainty that always accompanies proposed changes in policy and structure has been evident. However, the Bristol team have maintained clear focus on tasks and are open to healthy challenge and positive improvements.

We were one of the first to be audited and the INEQE Independent Audit praised diocesan and cathedral efforts across leadership, culture, prevention, and victim support, involving 457 stakeholders. Several helpful recommendations were made and accepted.

There is always more to do and the DSSG needs to be more diverse, in my opinion, as it moves forward.

The voices of survivors are not heard and consulted enough and we need to show safeguarding colleagues in the statutory and voluntary sectors that partnership can be improved and have many benefits both practically and in supportive activities. Discussions are taking place to launch a major networking initiative, hosted by the Bishops of Bristol and Swindon in the Cathedral in 2025.

The National Case Management system has bedded in. Safety plans have now replaced previous agreements and are being managed well. Training is a core function of the team and over 2,500 individuals have benefitted from a broadening range of subjects. The need to widen the scope and resources of the training offer remains with newer, complex, safeguarding challenges emerging.

My role is to challenge and hold practice to account. There has already been much good work delivered and reflected in the audit, but I've not seen evidence of complacency - experiencing only positivity from the team and the wider DSSG.

My contact with the Bishops and senior diocesan staff has been positive, friendly and encouraging. While there may still be a feeling of unfinished business in the national structure, Bristol has demonstrated a professional, consistent safeguarding effort throughout the Diocese and I'm very pleased to be associated with it.



David Niven
Independent Chair
DSSG

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Governance & Leadership

Diocesan Safeguarding Steering Group (DSSG)

The DSSG meetings oversee safeguarding activity within the Diocese. There are standing agenda items which include national updates, performance metrics and the Safeguarding Improvement Plan (which outlines the development work of the Diocesan Safeguarding Team (DST) and the DSSG).

‘Quarterly Metrics’ are provided at each meeting as well as updates regarding use of the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard by parishes. This has been particularly effective. These figures report on training, casework and DBS compliance levels.

Quarterly metrics are proving invaluable in assessing and driving improvements.

Membership



Attended



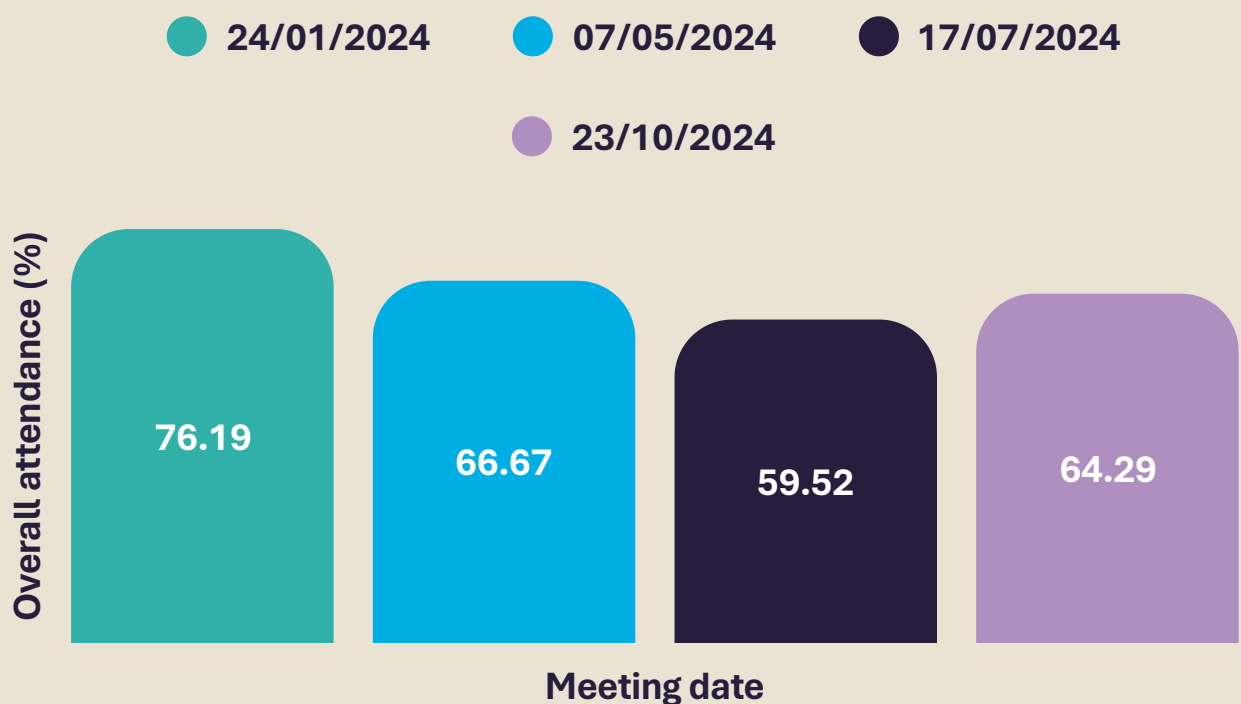
Apologies



Not required

Name	Role				
Mr David Niven	Independent Chair				
Caroline Jowett-Ive / Geraldyn Meehan	Director of People & Safeguarding				
Revd Lucy Cleland	Bishop's Chaplain				
Revd Adam Beaumont	Associate Archdeacon				
Jan Coombes	Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO)				
Claire Pengelley- Scott	PSO [resigned from DSSG July '24]				
Christopher Whitehead	Parish Officer				

Name	Role				
Ben Silvey	Cathedral Chief Operating Officer				
Rob Fortune / Julian Squires / Marianne Colio-Burdon	Avon and Somerset Constabulary representation				
Tina Wilson / John Goddard	Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), South Glos Council				
Revd Dr Sean Doherty	Principal, Trinity College Bristol				
Mr Andrew Lucas	Executive Director and Designated Safeguarding Lead, Trinity College Bristol				
Hannah Sweetnam	Deputy Director of External Relations				
Katheryn Caithness	Safeguarding Parish Support Officer (Notetaker)				
Adam Bond	Diocesan Safeguarding Officer				
Helen Styles	Deputy DSO/ Training & Dev				
Lee Coley	Diocesan Registrar				



Safeguarding staffing



Adam Bond

Diocesan Safeguarding Officer (4 days per week)



Katheryn Caithness

Safeguarding Parish Support Officer
(5 days per week)



Esther Williams

Safeguarding Case Worker
(2 days per week)



Helen Styles

Deputy DSO/ Training & Dev
(3 days per week)



Nick Papuca

Deputy DSO / Case Work
(3 days per week)

The team remained stable during 2024.

For general safeguarding queries:

safeguarding@bristoldiocese.org

Service development

Diocese

Inductions: One-to-one Safeguarding Inductions for Clergy and DBF Advisers/ Officers were continued during 2024. The DSO met with 8 new Incumbents across the diocese.

Trinity College: Trinity College in Bristol is the only Theological Education Institution (TEI) within the Diocese of Bristol. Support is provided to Trinity College with safeguarding issues including the provision of advice and guidance on safeguarding arrangements within the College and the provision of safeguarding training to both staff and the student body.

Certification:

During 2024, the Diocese achieved Certification by meeting the requirements specified in the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse regarding recommendation 1 (IICSA report into the Church of England).

This is the culmination of the DBF's involvement in the Pathfinder project, which has sought to improve the safeguarding provision and the consistency of practice across the region.

Service development continued...

Out of Hours/ Holiday Advice Access:

An Information Sharing Agreement is in place with [Thirtyone:eight](#) to enable individuals from Parishes to access their 24 hour helpline and for urgent telephone advice to be provided during DSO leave. Requests for advice are shared with the Diocese, though we do not at present receive usage data.



Regional

South West Safeguarding Trainers Network:

A network for safeguarding trainers in Church of England Dioceses in the South West. The group has established itself and meets quarterly to provide support and share good practice across the region.

Regional DSO meeting: These are now established as quarterly meetings and are facilitated by the Regional Safeguarding Lead.

National

INEQE - Independent Safeguarding Audit Programme: The Diocese volunteered to be an early participant alongside Bristol Cathedral in the independent safeguarding audits of dioceses and Cathedrals.

The INEQE Safeguarding Group conducted an independent audit of the Bristol Diocesan Board of Finance and Bristol Cathedral in the first quarter of 2024. The audit aimed to assess the sufficiency of safeguarding arrangements within the Diocese and Cathedral, focusing on the Church of England's new National Safeguarding Standards.

Key findings from the audit include:

- **Progress:** The Diocese and Cathedral have made significant progress in implementing safeguarding measures and improving their safeguarding culture
- **Culture, Leadership, and Capacity:** There is a strong commitment to safeguarding at all levels, with effective leadership and adequate resources dedicated to safeguarding efforts.

The audit engaged a total of **457** individuals through various methods, including one-to-one discussions, focus groups, online surveys, and confidential interviews.

Audit engagement and analysis

302 documents collated and analysed prior to fieldwork.



377 anonymous survey responses were collected from victims and survivors, children and young people, and those worshipping or working within the parishes, the Cathedral, and for the Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF).

Focus groups took place with:

9 choristers



6 chorister parents



30 staff and volunteers



11,400

regular worshippers actively engaged with us through Sunday attendance and other regular activities in 2023.



The Diocese serves a population exceeding **1 million** people, with over **200** churches and approximately **18,000** worshippers.



15,000 children and young people are educated in **72** church schools within the Diocese.



Service development continued...

- **Prevention:** The Diocese and Cathedral have robust prevention measures in place, including comprehensive training and clear policies
- **Recognising, Assessing, and Managing Risk:** Effective systems are in place to recognise, assess, and manage risks related to safeguarding.
- **Support for Victims and Survivors:** The Diocese and Cathedral provide substantial support for victims and survivors of abuse, seeing to ensure their voices are heard and their needs are met.

The audit commended the Diocese and Cathedral for their exemplary safeguarding practices and highlighted areas for further improvement to ensure ongoing safeguarding excellence.

A safeguarding Improvement plan is now underway to consider how to implement the recommendations made by INEQE.

“The Diocese and Cathedral have made significant progress in implementing safeguarding measures and improving their safeguarding culture.” INEQE

Training policy and procedures

A revised version of the Safeguarding Learning a development framework was issued in 2024 and became effective on 1 January 2025.

Training

During 2024, the Diocesan Safeguarding team have continued to provide the full range of core and specialist training as required in the Church of England Training and Development Framework (2021). The framework has been updated and reissued with some changes to the requirements and delivery.



Training continued...

We have piloted the delivery of the safeguarding leadership course as a one day course in person rather than 2 separate sessions (in person and online) separated by a week. These have been well received, and we will continue to provide a variety of routes for accessing training. Domestic abuse training was revised during 2024. We have continued to provide this training with face to face sessions where appropriate as an option rather than only having the online training option.

In addition to the mandatory training, we have also provided or contributed to the following training:

- Personal Safety and Lone Working
- Mental Health First Aid
- Mental Health Awareness
- Deliverance Ministry
- Safeguarding induction for new curates
- Safeguarding for discernment candidates

Attendance numbers have remained strong, and participants continue to be well engaged.

“

“Thanks once again for a brilliant course. You have devised a great way of training us.... You deliver the sessions incredibly well – a very safe pair of hands.”

“Always a complex course but I have come away feeling more confident and empowered to make some changes, even if they may seem small!”

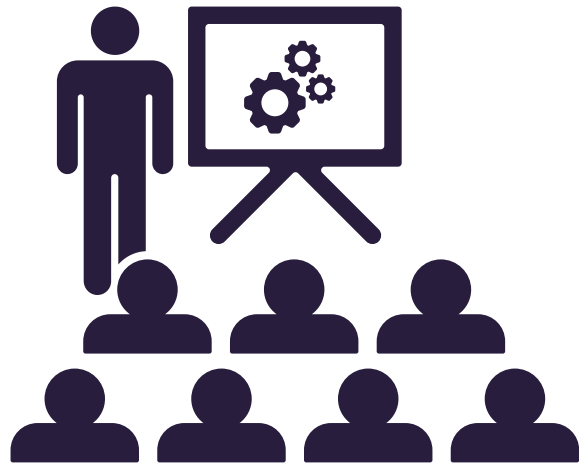
“The activities outside of the sessions - breakout groups, scenarios - blend together to ensure that we are trained in a very ‘active’ rather than ‘passive’ way.”

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Safeguarding Training Courses

The full suite of training available within the Diocese is as follows:

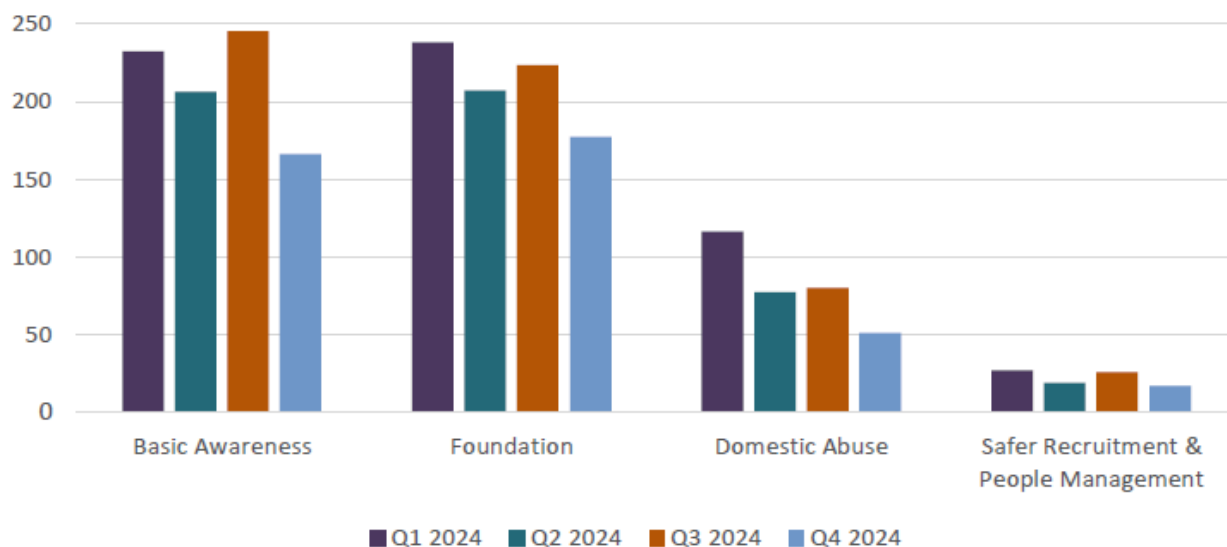
- **Basic Awareness** is a pre-requisite for all face to face training and recommended for all, available online via the safeguarding training portal.
- **Foundations** provides an introduction to safeguarding within a church context and equips participants with skills and knowledge to know how and when to report concerns (available online via the safeguarding training portal).
- **Leadership** equips participants to embed safeguarding practice in a leadership role within their church. It is a two part course which includes pre course requirements and post course evaluation. It is also available now as a one day course face to face.
- **PTO Pathway** is a bespoke leadership training for any clergy or Licensed Lay Minister holding PTO in the diocese.
- **Parish Safeguarding Officer Induction Pathway** aims to engage and equip all Parish Safeguarding Officers with information they need to complete the varied aspects of this important role. The course includes information on what to do in the case of a safeguarding disclosure, managing risk, safer recruitment and use of the parish dashboards.
- **Safer Recruitment and People Management** explores statutory legislation and guidance and the House of Bishops safer recruitment procedures, policies and practice guidance (available online via the safeguarding training portal).
- **Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse** looks at the nature and dynamics of domestic abuse, with a focus on church settings (available online via the safeguarding training portal).
- **Personal Safety** is an additional course provided to support clergy and other church officers whose role will often require them to work alone. Developed from training provided by the [Suzy Lamplugh Trust](#).



Online training

The online training provision comprises Basic Awareness and Foundations, Domestic Abuse and Safer Recruitment. There is also a module available regarding Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking (this is not mandatory so we do not track completion).

Online training participant numbers



Online course	2023	2024
Basic Awareness	935	849
Foundation	822	845
Safer recruitment	103	89
Domestic abuse	624	324
Total	2484	2107

Face to face and virtual training

We have continued to provide the Basic Awareness, Foundations, Domestic Abuse Awareness and Safer People Management face to face where required. This ensures that the training is accessible to all who need to complete it.

The leadership training is available on Zoom and in person. The Zoom option continues to attract higher booking numbers and attendance.

Course	Courses delivered	Participants
Foundation	5	60
Leadership Safeguarding	29	303
Domestic Abuse	3	30
PSO Induction Training	3	20
PTO Pathway	3	15
Total	43	428

Monitoring and reporting

Monitoring of levels of training for those holding a Bishop's licence or permission to officiate, DBF staff and Parish Safeguarding Officers is reported at each DSSG meeting. Failure to complete Safeguarding training can result in suspension of a licence.

Safer Recruitment

Any role in a Parish that is eligible for a Disclosure and Barring Service Check should have one completed prior to a person being appointed to that role. Every parish has access to the DBS system provided by Thirtyone:eight, either directly or in one case through the Diocesan Safeguarding Team. The Safeguarding Team also works with the DBS Regional Outreach Adviser to provide workshops for Parish Lead Recruiters covering DBS eligibility and use of the DBS Update Service.

All Church officers that are required to have a current DBS check should ensure it is renewed every 3 years.

Safer recruitment continued...

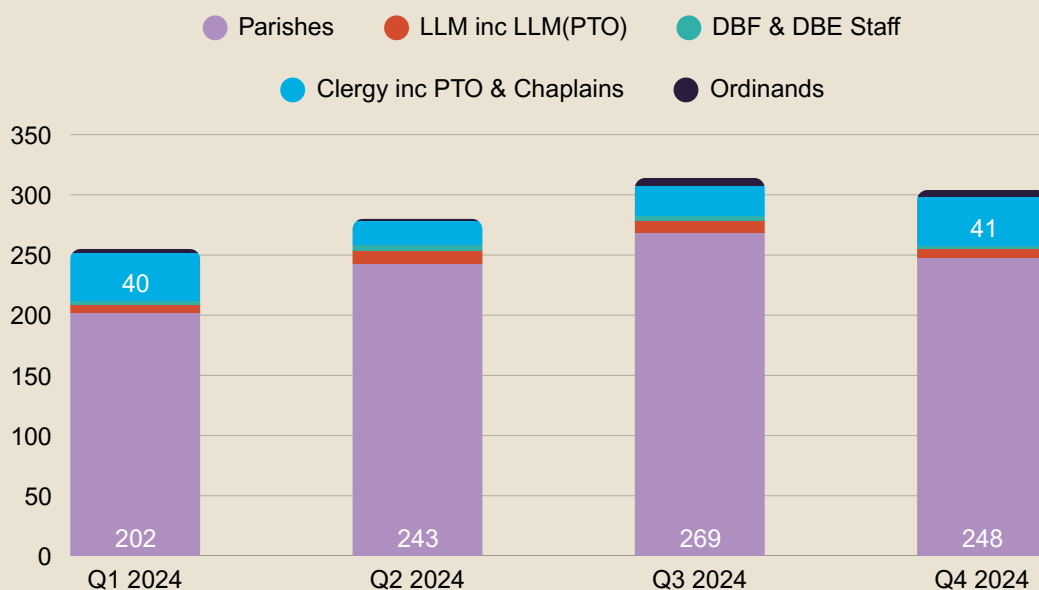
Outstanding DBS checks

Period		Clergy	LLM	DBF staff	PSOs	Church wardens
As at 31/12/24	Total number in role	346	152	22	172	264
	Outstanding checks	1	8	0	19	39
	% outstanding checks	0.3%**	5.2%	0%	*11%	*14.5%
As at 31/12/23	Total number in role	328	157	22	182	274
	Outstanding checks	0	9	0	21	35
	% outstanding checks	0.3%**	5.7%	0%	11.5%	12.8%

*Some churchwardens and PSOs are signed up to the DBS Update service and have their check reviewed in the Parish. On occasion, we are informed of the outcome, but not regularly or reliably, and so these figures are the “worst case scenario”.

* One clergy person overdue with Police and DBS. Application made in time.

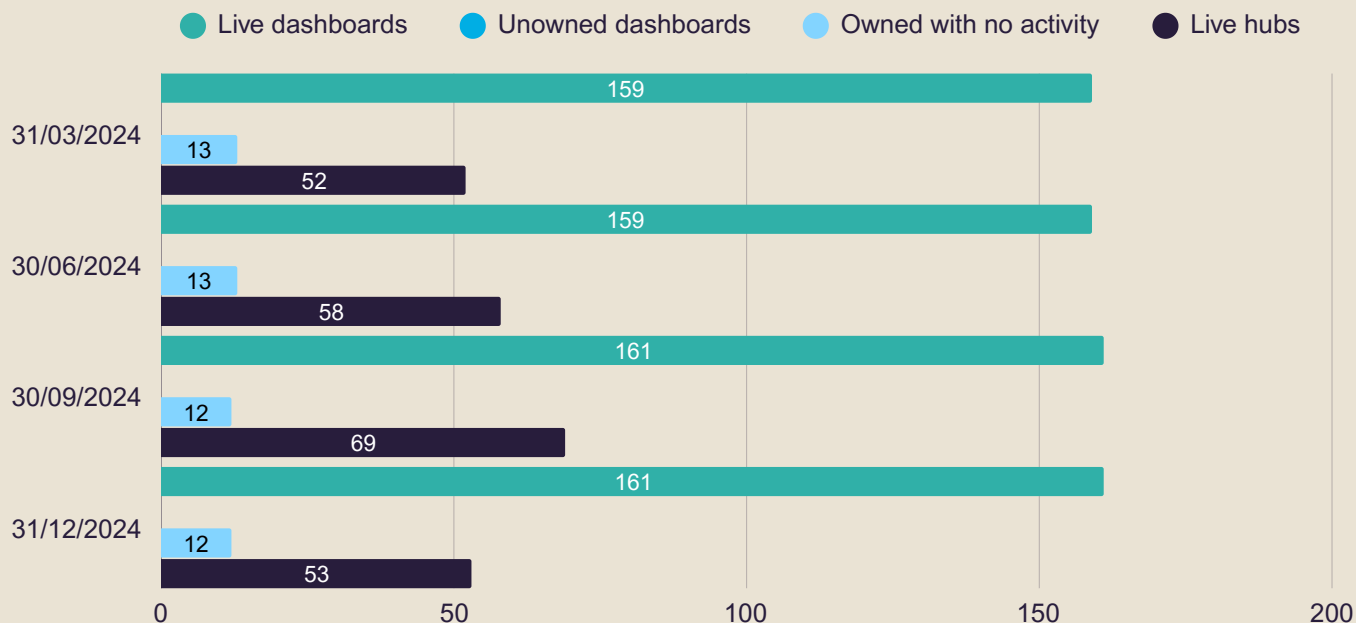
Completed DBS checks



Quality Assurance

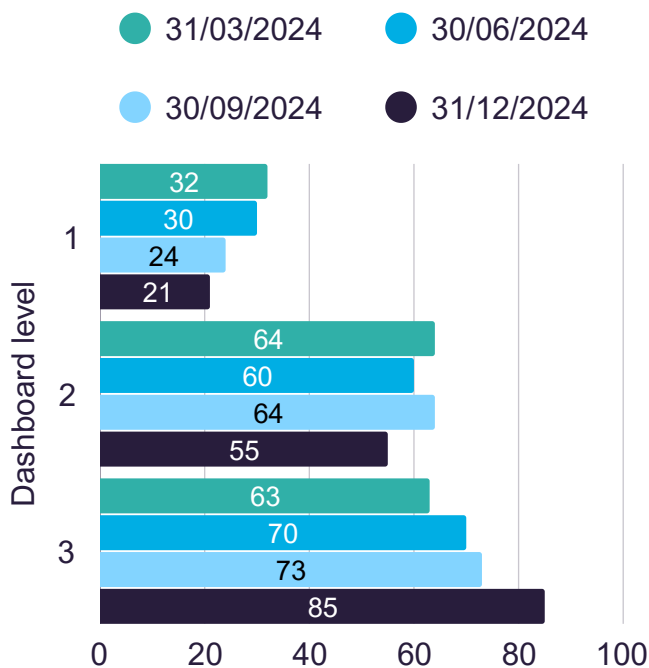
Parish Safeguarding Dashboards & Hubs

Parish use of the Safeguarding Dashboards and of the Safeguarding Hub for Safer Recruitment is monitored over the course of the year.



Case work

All cases are recorded on the National Safeguarding Case Management System (NSCMS). Either where advice is sought from the DSO and is related to a safeguarding concern, or has the potential to require a degree of intervention by the Diocesan Safeguarding Team or other types of queries, e.g. recruitment, DBS, policy, training, signposting to services for parishioners.

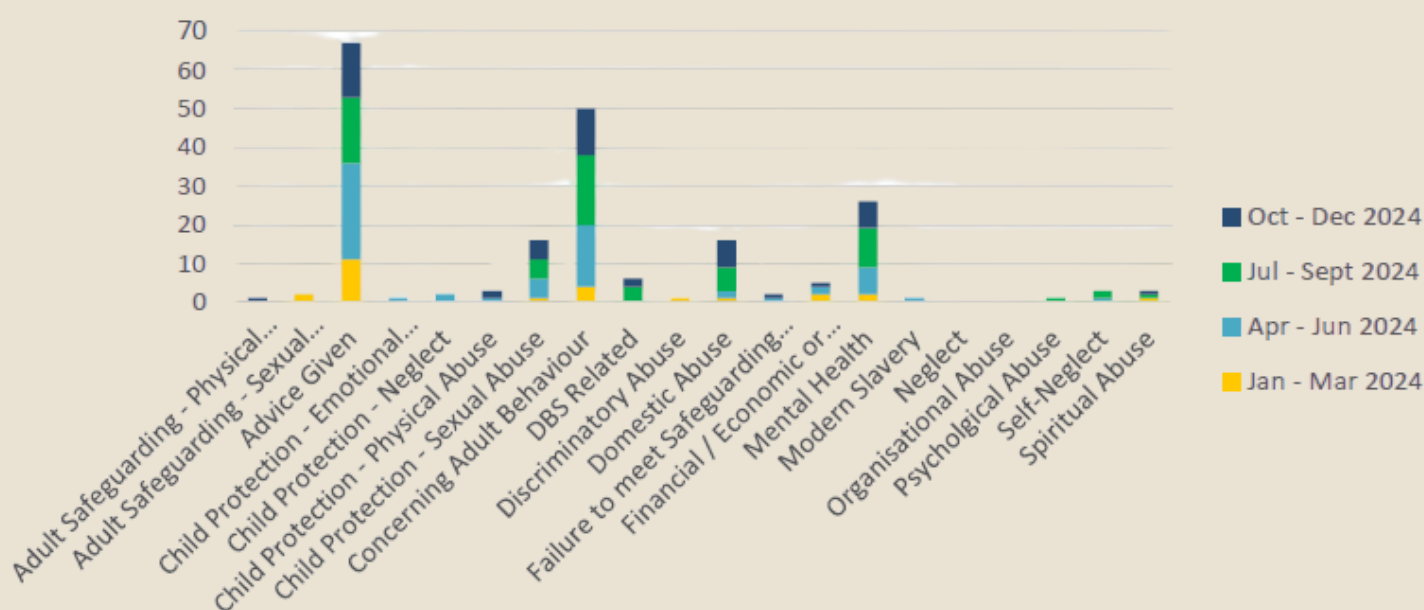


New cases per quarter

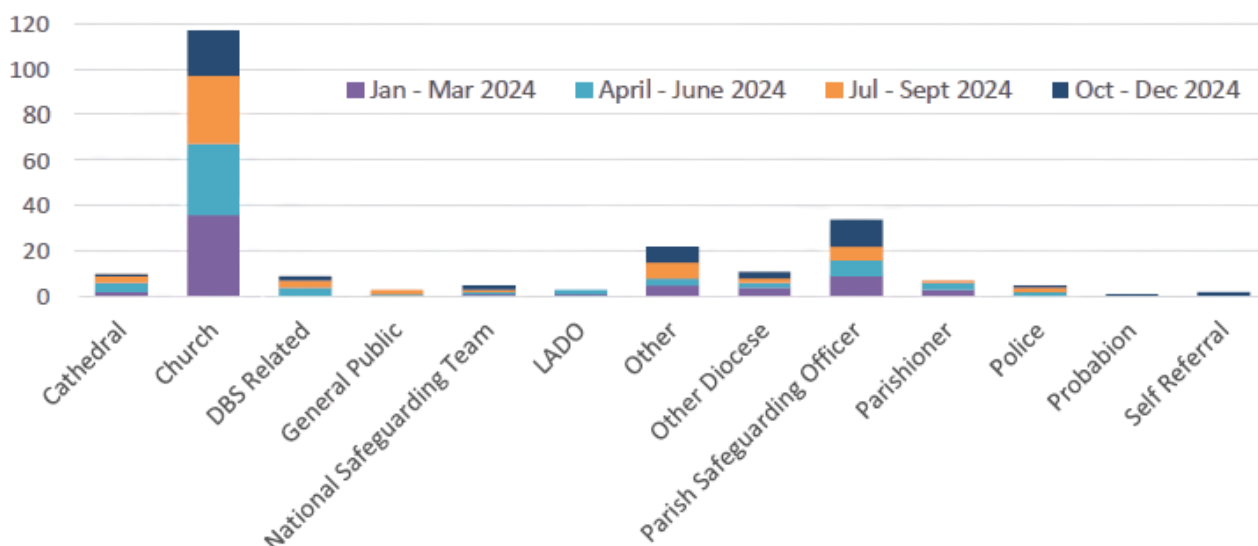
An updated Case Management System, implemented during 2022, has meant that the way cases are recorded has changed.

During 2023, every concern, whether a safeguarding case type of query, was recorded in the same system and reported together using the categorisation provided by the National Safeguarding Team. In Bristol, the categorisation system was implemented from April 2023, and consistent recording became available after that date and is broken down below.

Categories of concerns raised by quarter



Origin of new cases opened per quarter



Safety plans

(formally safeguarding agreements)

During 2023, the terminology for these types of arrangements changed and they are now known as Safety Plans. A safety plan is put in place when an individual who poses a risk to children or adults at risk would like to attend and worship at a church. Prior to the implementation of a plan, a risk assessment is completed to ensure that the plan fully meets the risk posed and that the individual is provided with the necessary support. As at December 2024, there were 15 active plans in place involving 13 individuals.

Operational Budget

Description	2023 Spend	2024 Budget	2024 Actual Spend	Variance
DBS Disclosure Costs	13,568	17,500	14,735.46	2,764.54
Safeguarding risk assessments & investigation	2,347	6,600	3,402.30	3,197.70
Safeguarding training	349	3,300	183.56	3,116.44
Safeguarding resources	5,437	2,200	13,587.60	-11,387.60
Independent review	0	1,000	0	1,000
DSO & DSSG working expenses	6,025	12,000	5,382.93	6,617.07
Safeguarding Systems (Salisbury Project)	0	5,000	2,500	2,500
Totals	27,726	47,600	39,791.85	7,808.15

Staffing Costs

Description	2024 Spend
Safeguarding Salary	139,037

Glossary

- **DBF** - Bristol Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd
- **DBS** - Disclosure and Barring Service
- **DSO** - Diocesan Safeguarding Officer
- **DSSG** - Diocesan Safeguarding Steering Group
- **DST** - Diocesan Safeguarding Team
- **IICSA** - Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse
- **LADO** - Local Authority Designated Officer
- **LEP** - Local Ecumenical Partnership
- **LLM** - Licensed Lay Minister
- **PCC** - Parochial Church Council
- **PSO** - Parish Safeguarding Officer
- **PTO** - Permission to Officiate



