

ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL

**ANNUAL REPORT TO THE BISHOP OF ROCHESTER
REGARDING SAFEGUARDING 2022**

**REPORT FOR THE PERIOD:
1st April 2022 – 31st December 2022**

Contents

Introduction	3
Education	4
Volunteers	4
Safeguarding Action Plan	5
Diocesan Committees	7
Safeguarding Training	7
Domestic Abuse, Modern Slavery and Vulnerable Adults	9
Victims and Survivors and the Loudfence	9
Cathedral Sunday Club	10
Cathedral Safeguarding Officer	10
Dean's Perspective	11

Introduction

This is the fifth Annual Report submitted by Chapter on safeguarding in and across the Cathedral community. It covers the period from April – December 2022. It has become customary to produce this report not only as evidence of the Cathedral’s commitment to the priority of safeguarding across the board, but in order to inform the Bishop, and other interested parties, of what has been completed, progressed or identified as significant during the past year. This report is prepared for; discussed by and ultimately approved by the Chapter of Rochester Cathedral and is then sent to the Bishop of Rochester who discusses it at a Chapter Meeting, and then it is published and shared with stakeholders and interested parties, and on the Cathedral Website. This year the period covered is briefer than a year, as it has been decided to follow a calendrical year in the future.

2022 was a year of challenge and consolidation. The most significant event for us was the publication of the Learning Lessons Review (LLR) on the activities and case of William Scott Farrell (WSF), former Director of Music who was jailed for sexual offences committed here and elsewhere. Consequently, new systems have been introduced and are now in place via the National Safeguarding Team (NST) to improve processes and procedures, such as the National Case Management System (NCMS) and Information Sharing Agreements (ISAs) now in existence with all police forces across England and Wales.

Meanwhile there have been significant developments in our ongoing approach, with constant reference to the Safeguarding Action Plan (SAP), a new version of which was implemented at the beginning of 2023.

The ensuing sections elucidate more specific updates on particular aspects of safeguarding at Rochester Cathedral.

Music Department (including links with the King’s School, Rochester)

The positive relationship between the Cathedral music department and The Kings School (KSR) continues to develop with all Years 4-8 choristers attending KSR. We also have two girls from the Senior Girls Choir, and we have a choral and organ scholar programme running for Years 12-13 (eight pupils). The benefits of joint working and good communication with key structural

meetings on a weekly and termly basis is now firmly embedded and strengthen relationships with the school and the overall parent body. The Chorister Tutor (employed by KSR and funded by the Cathedral) is another positive benefit of the increased joint working, and they are now supported by a second professional chaperone, also a retired teacher. We will always value the role of volunteer chaperones, but recruiting has its challenges, and the Director of Music is actively seeking how best to future-proof this essential area of choir support to ensure the continuation of the robust systems of care for all our young singers to which both KSR and the Cathedral are committed.

Key safeguarding documents, procedures, protocols and policies and the Chorister Handbook are kept under annual review. The Principal Lay Clerks, who are the permanent singers, have proved extremely successful in establishing a professional ethos for the choir (five out of six are directly involved in education or related activity) and are supported by a select pool of Deputy Lay Clerks. The recruitment to all these roles follows a rigorous process of safer recruitment.

Education

School visits are gradually returning to pre-pandemic levels, including the return of overseas groups. All schools are asked to complete safeguarding documentation at the point of booking a visit to the Cathedral. Any groups arriving without prior booking are also asked to complete the same form. Guidelines for dealing with un-booked groups and missing persons have also been updated and shared with volunteers and the Visitor Services Team. Safeguarding is discussed at all Learning Team meetings. Informal briefings with Learning staff and volunteers take place before and after each learning session.

Volunteers

Sandy Struben, the Volunteer Manager, has overhauled all aspects of volunteers' understanding and reporting of safeguarding. Care and attention is taken to ensure that all volunteers remain up to date in their learning and knowledge. As we are continuing to move forward from the Covid-19 pandemic, we ensure that volunteers feel safe and comfortable to return, but that their vulnerabilities are taken into account. Volunteers are given the opportunity to wear PPE if they wish. They are asked to complete a declaration form which acknowledges that there may

be risks volunteering at the Cathedral with regards to Covid but they do so of their own volition, considering their health and personal circumstances and advice given about staying at home if unwell. New volunteers are provided with an induction around the Cathedral, focusing on safeguarding. No volunteer is able to return to or continue working in the Cathedral without up-to-date safeguarding training and a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check in place (if required). For some volunteers, in-person training is preferred and we are continuing to provide the opportunity to learn with face-to-face training sessions. Volunteer Information folders held at the Welcome Desks are updated regularly with current safeguarding information, incident forms and a flowchart of how to report an incident.

Staff

In January 2022 Chapter appointed a new Cathedral Safeguarding Officer (CSO) to raise and maintain awareness and understanding throughout the Cathedral community of the safeguarding needs of children and adults, and actively promote a culture to ensure that safeguarding is of paramount importance. The CSO is the first point of call for professional advice when a safeguarding concern is raised, ensuring that all advice is in line with legislation, policy, and guidance from the Church of England. Larry Deabreu was appointed to the part-time role and started work at the Cathedral at the end of March 2022. Larry's hours, initially 14 each week were increased to 21 a week after six months in the role. Mentoring and support for Larry is provided by Greg Barry, Lead Safeguarding Advisor to the Diocese.

Safeguarding Action Plan

The new SAP replaces the previous action plan of 2021 which itself succeeded the one drawn up as a consequence of the SCIE report of 2019. Its predecessors have been archived and trace developments in various areas, leading up to January 2023 where the new SAP commences. This SAP also draws into itself some specific recommendations pertinent to Rochester Cathedral made in the Past Cases Review 2 published by the National Safeguarding Steering Group in October 2022. It also includes recommendations made in the LLR into the case of WSF. The sources of recommendations are given in separate columns for reference purposes.

While this report serves as a summary and snapshot of the year, the SAP is the working document, updated regularly and should be referred to as the most current document relating to safeguarding activities, aspirations, and tasks. The SAP is very much a work in progress, regularly and continuously being updated by the CSO and the Chapter Safeguarding Lead (CSL). The Dean is ultimately responsible for Safeguarding and this document informs presentations and discussions at the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel (DSAP). It serves as a plan for action for the Cathedral Safeguarding Group (CSG), the Safeguarding Committee (which will be formed under the new Cathedrals Measure) and the Chapter of Rochester Cathedral. The agenda of each and every Chapter Meeting includes Safeguarding. The Cathedral website has a safeguarding section and Cathedral policies relating to safeguarding, once approved by Chapter are placed there for public access as appropriate.

As well as indicating areas for development, improvement, completion and review, the SAP adds an indication of risk should failure or inadequacy arise and these risk factors serve, to some extent, but not necessarily, as an indication of priority.

Overall, the purpose of the SAP is to ensure that the Cathedral is a place that victims and survivors of abuse feel safe and supported and that it is a safe place to work, worship and visit by embedding a culture of safeguarding across the Cathedral community. This culture includes any activities carried out in the name of the Cathedral away from the Cathedral and its surrounds.

Learning Lessons Review – William Scott Farrell

2022 provided a number of challenges to Rochester Cathedral in the safeguarding arena, particularly as a result of the aftermath of the WSF LLR and its subsequent recommendations. Written by Chris Robson it was published in May 2022. Meetings were held with those affected, including parents, and the Cathedral is grateful for the assistance and support given by the diocesan safeguarding team and the NST.

WSF was the Cathedral's Director of Music between 2008 and 2018. The review examined his employment; the Cathedral's response to his arrest and subsequent conviction for sexual offences committed whilst he was Assistant Director of Music and Director of Music at Ely and Rochester Cathedrals, respectively. It is the first review of its kind concerning a cathedral

organist and is of national significance. There is much to learn and take on board consequently. It is worth noting that while Rochester Cathedral has taken the recommendations of the LLR very seriously on board, it seems that others have not been so swift to do so and we would like to see that happen. The Dean, and Chapter continue to express a profound sense of contrition and regret in the wake of what happened.

Diocesan Committees

The Canon Chancellor, as CSL represents the Cathedral at the Diocesan Safeguarding Executive Committee (SEC) while the Dean sits on the DSAP. This interconnectedness with the Diocese provides opportunity for mutual support, advice and accountability. The significant benefit of having had the Lead Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, Greg Barry, as mentor to our CSO is also to be acknowledged and affirmed.

Safeguarding Training

In line with the Cathedral Training Policy, mandated by the House of Bishops Practice Guidance and Safeguarding Learning and Development Framework 2021, the Cathedral adheres to a policy and a plan. All staff are required to undertake Basic Awareness and Foundations Training, provided online by the NST. This makes any member of staff deployable on the Cathedral floor, better equipped to respond in the event of a safeguarding incident occurring or directly reported to themselves. Some staff are required to do safeguarding Leadership training, and alongside senior diocesan staff and clerical members of Chapter and the Chapter Clerk, have also undertaken Senior Leadership safeguarding training. Some newer senior staff need to do it when it becomes available again. Furthermore, Chapter has mandated that all staff and volunteers should undertake the Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse and Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking modules of online or in-person training (which is validated by ourselves but deploys the same material as the online Portal within set timescales).

We continue to lead the way in safeguarding learning and development in terms of the range of training we require from staff and volunteers. While some volunteers have difficulty accessing online material, this is not the case for employees. We have also developed in-person training and have been investing a great deal of time in it. Those who engage in-person say that it is a better and more convivial way of learning. Some relevant staff and volunteers

have also undertaken Safer Recruitment training, to ensure that good practice and knowledge is embedded in all our recruitment of any staff and volunteers.

In order to verify and seek feedback on the training we require and provide, a Training Survey has been devised by the Canon Chancellor and volunteers and staff are asked to complete a short questionnaire 6 months after having participated in various forms of training. This is an ongoing process, and results so far indicate that the training is valued highly and has significant impact on those who undertake it. There have also been safeguarding quizzes in the Cathedral Community Newsletter for staff, volunteers and congregants to test their knowledge informally.

Below is a schedule of the total numbers of staff and volunteers who have completed the various levels of training to date over the last two years.

	Staff (Total completed as fraction and percentage and numbers qualified during 2021 & 2022)	Volunteers (Total completed in 2021 & 2022)
Basic Awareness 2022	96/97 (99%) 18 in 2022	186/300 (62%) (65 in 2022)
Foundations	92/97 (95%) 24 in 2022	297/300 (99%) (158 in 2022)
Leadership	9/12 (75%) (3 pending)	30/30 (100%) (18 in 2022)
Safer Recruitment	16/18 (89%) (2 pending)	3/3 (100%) (12 in 2022)
Modern Slavery	59/97 (61%) 43 in 2022	123/300 (49%) (89 in 2022)
Domestic Abuse	59/97 (61%) 44 in 2022	221/300 (74%) (157 in 2022)
Senior Leadership	5/8 (62.5%) (3 pending)	N/A

It is clear that there are many who have not yet done all of the courses in safeguarding we may require of them. However we give them plenty of time (a year) to complete the set and the ebb and flow of personnel means there will always be people with courses pending.

Domestic Abuse, Modern Slavery and Vulnerable Adults

Victims, survivors, and perpetrators of domestic abuse are part of our community, and it affects us all. We know both anecdotally and statistically that some of our volunteers, staff, congregation, and visitors are affected personally by this widespread and harmful phenomenon. We have made a concerted effort to raise awareness of it not only through intensive promotion of the C of E course, which is compulsory for most staff and volunteers, but actively seeking and forming good relationships with OASIS (Domestic Abuse Services Medway) who have already provided in person training to our Chaplains and staff members and we will be looking to continue with further follow up Domestic Abuse Awareness training. All staff and volunteers have been required to undertake online or in person training in this area of concern and the completion rate is high (see table). The CSG has two representatives who keep us alert to these issues as well as those affecting vulnerable adults. Some of our volunteers are themselves vulnerable adults of whom we take special care. We also require training in awareness of Modern Slavery, and while this may set us apart from other churches and cathedrals, we feel strongly that this is a way of raising awareness among our staff and volunteers of a hidden issue with which they may come into contact in an open and free to enter cathedral as well as in their daily lives. Again, the completion rate is high.

Victims and Survivors and the Loudfence

Alongside the careful work members of the diocesan team do with victims and survivors, the Canon Chancellor (Safeguarding Lead) and others offer pastoral support accordingly. This careful, sensitive and painful work is ongoing and confidential.

After the pioneering and significant work of the Cathedral and Diocesan Safeguarding Season in 2021, the Loudfence was recreated in November 2022 and once again attracted attention and response worldwide. Other cathedrals and churches have followed our example. As well as sending out messages to victims and survivors (and perpetrators), it raises awareness and demonstrates our commitment to putting victims and survivors first; repentance, restitution and the overarching intention to keep everyone safe at Rochester Cathedral.

During the course of the year, sermons, preached by the Dean and others often refer to safeguarding-related themes, such as the abuse of power and domestic violence.

Cathedral Sunday Club

All Sunday Club volunteers keep up to date with Basic Awareness and Foundations Training and at Sunday Club staff meetings, safeguarding is discussed. Some leaders do Leadership too. All have DBS checks. A voluntary Children's and Young People's Representative with special regard for both the choristers and Sunday Club is in post. The Sunday Club meets weekly in the Crypt and is thriving, growing a significant body of younger members of our Sunday Eucharist congregation.

Cathedral Safeguarding Officer

The new CSO (Larry Deabreu) has embraced and relished the challenging appointment bringing a wide and diverse range of safeguarding experience to the current position having taken over the helm from the well-respected Lead DSA (Greg Barry).

Over the last ten months the CSO has dealt with a plethora of incidents, some of them safeguarding related involving children, young persons and vulnerable adults and other non-designated safeguarding matters since his arrival. The CSO, with the support of the CSL, Lead DSA and Dean's PA and Office Manager (Kay Williams) has focused on a number of priorities since his arrival some of which are linked to a number of recent recommendations, as follows:

- 1) To improve recording systems and processes. This includes introduction of a new database to cross reference different sets of 'incident' databases in order to retrieve/capture relevant data for information sharing purposes; protect staff members; identify repeated individuals of concern and to link up with partner agencies.
- 2) To provide a visible presence to all Cathedral floor staff members, volunteers, clergy and to be available to support those individuals by providing sound advice in the event of a safeguarding incident occurring. The CSO has taken an active role by getting to know the floor staff personally and giving them sufficient confidence to contact him in the event of a safeguarding concern arising.

3) Safer Recruitment. To ensure compliance, and to embed safe recruitment processes into everyday procedures, the Staff Recruitment/Selection Policy has been reviewed by the Governance and Compliance Officer (Marilyn Tyler) and, in consultation with the CSO, is in the process of being reviewed and updated to include the DBS processes.

4) Safeguarding Training. To ensure that all staff members, volunteers, clergy and alike have completed the mandatory safeguarding training as set out in the current Cathedral policies.

5) Manage the Safeguarding Action Plan (SAP). In conjunction with the CSL, to ensure that all recommendations are actioned efficiently and shared at relevant meetings of the SEC and DSAP as well as the CSG and Chapter.

The CSO still relies heavily from the ongoing support and advice from the Diocesan safeguarding team and cathedral colleagues among whom excellent professional relationships have been formed. He is fully aware that there are still lots more work to be done and to endeavour that safeguarding remains a high priority at Rochester Cathedral.

Dean's Perspective

The Cathedral is a small team committed to ensuring a safe space and welcome for all. This year we had over two hundred thousand visitors. This was both a challenge and opportunity to staff and volunteers. I am grateful for what has been achieved in such a busy Cathedral that hosts multiple services and events, serving the community and nation.

This year we have tightened procedures around the numerous outside groups who hire the Cathedral space to ensure compliance with the Cathedral's safeguarding policies. Occasionally this has met with some resistance and put extra pressure on staff. Nevertheless, the Cathedral has taken a strong stance on groups who fail to provide the information required.

By its very nature and purpose a cathedral attracts the vulnerable and the wounded. The Christian Church operates in the name of Christ the Wounded Healer whose wounds bring healing to a broken world. Many issues which arise in the Cathedral are not necessarily safeguarding issues but could potentially fall into that area. I am extremely grateful to the Cathedral Safeguarding Officer, Larry Deabreu who has been committed to assisting staff and volunteers on the Cathedral floor and going that extra mile. He has made a significant

difference to the confidence and resilience of staff. It has been essential to increase Larry's hours to keep abreast of the demands.

I would like to thank those who have been instrumental in delivering the required training for volunteers. Although safeguarding training is now rarely questioned there remains some resistance around the awareness training for domestic abuse and modern slavery which at Rochester we require. We feel this is a needed, although not a mandatory requirement from the National Church. Using the agreed material from the National Safeguarding Team we have designed an in-person course which has involved other agencies working in this area, such as the Oasis Domestic Abuse Service. This has proved very success and grounded the training in a local context.

There is always more to be done and as you can see much has been achieved this year. My thanks to everyone who works to provide a safe space for all and who has worked on this Annual Report.



The Very Revd. Dr Philip Hesketh
Dean of Rochester



Mr Simon Lace
Chapter Clerk – Executive Director



The Revd. Canon Dr Gordon Giles
Canon Chancellor and Safeguarding Lead