

Diocese of Lincoln Safeguarding Strategy (2023-2026)

Ensuring that safeguarding is an integral part of mission and ministry, creating a safer culture

This strategy is to be adopted by the Diocese of Lincoln; This document uses the language 'diocese' as an umbrella term to encompass all key stakeholders including the Diocesan Board of Finance, Cathedral Chapter, Bishop's Office, Parishes and Diocesan Board of Education. This document details the strategic aims and operational objectives of the diocese, which are broken down into six areas. These areas share common themes and are interdependent upon each other:

- Prevention
- Responding well
- Quality Assurance
- Survivors
- Communications
- Education and development

This strategy recognises the national context of Promoting a Safer Church and seeks to create a strong diocesan safeguarding environment where issues are recognised and addressed with care, compassion and professionalism. The Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel (DSAP) itself seeks to have a culture that is forward thinking with a desire for learning. There is also a recognition of the National Quality Assurance Framework's 'what does good look like'.

This is a three-year strategy which will be reviewed annually to reflect progress, context and developments.

Foreword from the Bishop of Lincoln

Prevention

Making the Diocese of Lincoln a safe and supportive place for all, having in place a planned range of measures which together are effective in preventing abuse.

Safer Recruitment and People Management – Everyone holding a role within our Churches is safely recruited.

This is a vital part of our overarching safeguarding policies and procedures. It sets out our organisation's commitment to recruiting staff, volunteers and post holders who are suitable for working with children and vulnerable adults.

It sends a clear message to key stakeholders, including those who wish to cause harm, that the Diocese of Lincoln and the Cathedral prioritises the safety and welfare of children and vulnerable adults and seeks to prevent those who wish to cause harm from holding positions of responsibility.

What does good look like:

- ❖ *Requirements as set out in 'Safer Recruitment and People Management' House of Bishops' guidance are followed where appropriate and evidence in all recruitment and management processes and associated files (e.g. HR).*

Ensure that front facing stakeholders are aware of what guidance applies to them and enable their compliance

The voluntary nature of much of the organization must be acknowledged and the right support offered.

'Front facing' includes all areas that provide organized activities or open spaces and events where children and vulnerable adults are or could be in attendance. This includes the Cathedral, parish churches, diocesan office and the Diocesan Board of Education (who have their own safeguarding policies).

It is important that front facing groups are not only aware of what they need to do but that they follow it through, in order to create a safe environment for all, especially the most vulnerable. And that they create an environment that prevent harm from being caused in the first instance.

It is also important that parishes ensure that further harm is not caused to those who have already experienced harm, or indeed further harm caused by those who identify themselves as posing a risk, by failing to provide a safe environment for disclosure and action.

Messaging and communication is also key in this area, ensuring safeguarding material is visible and accessible including contact details.

What does good look like:

- ❖ *The safeguarding standards are applied to all areas of ministry and activity, including non-traditional developments (e.g., fresh expressions of Church and food banks).*
- ❖ *Structured and written risk assessments and risk management plans are completed in all areas of ministry and activity, including non-traditional developments [such as Fresh Expressions], to identify potential safeguarding risks to both those delivering and those receiving activities.*
- ❖ *Where lone working is necessary and unavoidable, appropriate precautions are taken to keep everyone safe.*

Training – Each individual role has the required training level, including Core Training, Role Specific pathways and any additional identified training.

The training ensures that all those who hold a position of responsibility, at all levels, have a relevant working knowledge of safeguarding and are therefore able to carry out good safeguarding practice. Prevention is of the utmost importance, if harm cannot be prevented for any reason, it is important that all responsible individuals are empowered to be able to recognise and respond.

For a comprehensive explanation of the desired outcomes of each training pathway, please see the 'Outcomes' row for each in [Learning and Development Framework \(2021\)](#)

What does good look like?

- ❖ *Learning Pathways that are delivered remain faithful to the models set out in the Safeguarding Learning and Development Framework and are evaluated.*
- ❖ *Church officers ensure they are up to date with their safeguarding learning and development requirements, in line with their roles and responsibilities.*

Responding Well

All safeguarding concerns are responded to appropriately, in line with the full extent of the national House of Bishop's guidance.

Recognise – The first step to responding. Safeguarding concerns are recognised, understood and the appropriate actions taken.

There is an awareness of thresholds and a responding triage. Concerns, allegations and failures to comply are all responded to well. 'Well' is defined as being in line with national policy and guidance, both internal House of Bishops' and statutory.

Safeguarding professionals need to focus on safeguarding risks. Non-safeguarding matters should be triaged to others as appropriate. It is unsafe practice for organisations to treat non-safeguarding situations as safeguarding.

What does good look like?

- *Safeguarding teams are appropriately identifying and responding quickly to those concerns which constitute a safeguarding matter, in accordance with safeguarding guidance.*
- *Collaborative discussions are undertaken to help identify which cases have a safeguarding element and which cases are best dealt with elsewhere (e.g., through HR processes or via a low-level concern policy).*

Raise appropriately – the Diocesan Safeguarding Team receive referrals appropriately. Statutory agencies are also appropriately referred to.

This also includes ensuring reporting lines into the safeguarding teams are accessible and service is able to continue during periods of annual leave.

What does good look like:

- ❖ *All concerns are recorded in a clear and concise manner and provide a narrative of the case managers actions and rationale for decision-making*
- ❖ *When required, information sharing arrangements are in place and are abided by.*
- ❖ *The sharing of safeguarding information is not conducted through personal (non-work provided) forms of communication.*

Respond well – The response to each safeguarding concern will be appropriate and in line with House of Bishop’s Guidance – namely:

- Responding to Safeguarding Concerns or Allegations that relate to Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults practice guidance (2018)
- Responding to, assessing and managing concerns or allegations against church officers practice guidance (2017)
- Responding well to domestic abuse practice guidance (2017)
- Responding well to those who have been sexually abused practice guidance (2011)

All those involved will be provided with support, particular attention is drawn to supporting survivors of abuse and also ensuring that alleged / known perpetrators of harm are supported.

Responding well to survivors is covered in the section below

Risk is assessed and managed - Risk assessments, Safeguarding Agreements and associated processes of a high-quality result in positive outcomes.

Safeguarding Agreements – Are in place for everyone who identified as posing a risk in order to manage / prevent future harm. These will also cover support provision.

The assessment and management of risk is underpinned by effective partnership working – statutory agencies are involved in risk assessment processes where suitable.

What does good look like?

- ❖ *Safeguarding teams are appropriately identifying and responding quickly to those concerns which constitute a safeguarding matter, in accordance with safeguarding guidance.*
- ❖ *When there is an awareness of a person presenting a safeguarding risk, a safeguarding agreement/safety plan is put in place, with agreed review points that reflect the assessed risk level.*
- ❖ *Safeguarding teams can demonstrate regular contact with all relevant statutory agencies, relevant Church bodies, and any other safeguarding partnerships in their locality, which enables risk to be appropriately assessed and managed*
- ❖ *The nature and form of risk assessment and management processes are provided to those who are the subject of them.*
- ❖ *Risk assessments of individuals are undertaken in respect of their own wellbeing and risk of harm, and a trained Link Person is offered, who ensures that the support needs of the respondent are met.*

Survivor Strategy

Disclosures of Harm

Ensuring that victims and survivors experience a timely, high quality response to disclosures with individualised, ongoing support in order to best meet their needs through a journey of healing and recovery.

Poor responses can compound the trauma victims and survivors have already experienced, and delay or prevent them from healing and moving forward. Responding well requires a healthy culture marked by love and compassion, where understanding of trauma informs how people respond, and various forms of concrete support are provided in a timely manner.

What does good look like:

- ❖ *When reporting abuse, victims and survivors are heard, understood, respected, taken seriously, genuinely cared for, and are not judged or met with disbelief.*
- ❖ *The response to safeguarding disclosures is victim and survivor-centered and does not cause further abuse or trauma to those making a disclosure.*
- ❖ *Safeguarding concerns are acted on appropriately, transparently and in a timely manner.*
- ❖ *Victims, survivors and Church officers are made aware of the routes to disclosure and the process that will be followed if someone reports abuse, including how personal information, data, and dignity are protected*
- ❖ *The requirements set out in the "Responding Well to Victims and Survivors of Abuse" House of Bishops' Guidance are fulfilled. This can include, but not be limited to, the offering of a Support Person in the form of a Safeguarding Advocate, therapeutic support, spiritual and pastoral support and, where appropriate, an apology.*
- ❖ *Victims and Survivors of Church based and non-Church based abuse are appropriately supported in accessing relevant support services.*

Survivor/Victim Engagement:

Survivor engagement enables those who have experienced any form of church related abuse to have a say and an active role in making the Diocese of Lincoln a safer place for all.

Survivors' voices and participation are invaluable in protecting others, developing services and assuring quality, working together with church officers and leaders/other survivors, to find solutions and advance changes in the Diocese.

The names of DSAP members will be shared with the Survivor Representatives and a summary of DSAP actions will be shared with them after each meeting and discussed with the Safeguarding Advocate and Cathedral Safeguarding Officer. The Survivor Representatives will meet prior to each DSAP and have their voices heard at each DSAP. The invitation to attend DSAP in person remains open.

What does good look like:

- ❖ *The Diocese of Lincoln is committed to the development and implementation of a survivor engagement framework.*
- ❖ *Victims and survivors are proactively engaged with, and good working partnerships are established in the delivery of safeguarding activities and developments*
- ❖ *Victims and survivors are recognised for their time and commitment as individuals and volunteers in drawing on their personal experiences of abuse to support the Diocese of Lincoln's work.*

Quality Assurance

Stakeholders will be enabled to know how well they are performing their safeguarding responsibilities and use that knowledge to drive improvement, planning and development.

A Quality Assurance Framework will be developed:

- To create an environment that allows Quality Assurance to be seen as a positive
- That is a living document and will be continually reviewed to reflect changes and context
- DSAP will have responsibility for using the framework, assuring itself of its understanding and quality of service
- The National Quality Assurance Framework will be referred to in order to inform developments and ensure consistency with the national picture.

Transparent and accountable - to governance structures and reporting lines. This includes but is not limited to, Chapter, Bishops Council of Diocesan Trustees, Diocesan Synod and the National Safeguarding Team.

Being transparent also means that other stakeholders are kept aware of any challenges or workstreams that exist and will be able to offer collaboration and improve work efficiency.

Transparency under Quality Assurance also covers any improvements and recommendations made as a result and ensuring that they are taken forward in a timely manner.

What does good look like?

- ❖ *There is a functional DSAP, or equivalent committee, that provides effective oversight and challenge and can demonstrate it has contributed to improved safeguarding.*

National and local reviews will be undertaken and responded to

These include those carried out by statutory services and external agencies as well as internal processes. Peer review is also recognised as a delivery method for reviews.

Capacity and resources

Church bodies will not be able to provide effective safeguarding practice if they do not invest adequate resources in proportion to known need. Lack of investment can also result in a failure of duty of care to those in safeguarding roles which is not only bad for safeguarding but is also inconsistent with both Christian values and good employment principles.

Leaders at all levels are to take responsibility for ensuring the right level of capacity and resources.

What does good look like:

- ❖ *An annual review of safeguarding needs and demands is undertaken, covering the five key safeguarding standards of the National Safeguarding Quality Assurance Framework, which then informs consequential financial and resource plans.*
- ❖ *The resources allocated to safeguarding teams are based on the Church's national formula for safeguarding resource requirements, and Church bodies can evidence how the respective level of resourcing meets the criteria of the National Safeguarding Standards.*
- ❖ *The level of resourcing received enables members of safeguarding teams to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities by working their contracted hours, and no more.*

Communications

Promoting safeguarding through effecting messaging and communication, being proactive and reactive.

The Diocese of Lincoln will have good communications. 'Good' is defined as adhering to national guidance and having a local communications strategy in place.

Safeguarding communication should always consider survivors and be trauma informed

All stakeholders have access to an effective comms department or officer who are utilised and work together when appropriate.

Proactive Communications

Communications can be used as a helpful resource for key users including volunteers and paid staff across the board. Effective communications and messaging being accessible will aid in effectively meeting the focal points of other areas, such as information sharing for better understanding and compliance.

A communications schedule would ensure that communications are is purposeful, directed and frequent. The schedule will set out helpful and suitable topics, the means of which they will be communicated and the purpose of it.

What does good look like?

- ❖ *range of materials and methods are used to promote safeguarding and raising awareness of different types of abuse.*

Reactive Communications

A strategy to respond to publicity, whether critical or positive, across all platforms. Including traditional media outlets as well as social media.

Responses will always be in line with the aforementioned definition of 'good' communications. All relevant individuals will be consulted with.

Learning

Continued learning and development at all levels to ensure good safeguarding practice that is understood by all

Staying up to date - National Safeguarding Team and House of Bishops policy developments and updates will be adopted

Training Strategy - A training strategy will be developed which answers the following:

- In addition to the Church's learning pathways, are there local needs we need to plan for?*
- Which roles require which pathway/s?
- How many people do we have in each role?
- When did those people last receive training?
- How many times do we need to run the pathway each year to meet the assessed level of need?
- What is our local resource/capacity? Have we got the right skills and volume – including direct delivery, administrative support, equipment, IT systems etc?

- How do we secure additional resources if needed? The National Safeguarding Training Portal is found at <https://safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org>
- Our plans to develop a pool of experienced and skilled volunteer facilitators.
- How are we going to involve survivors and relevant organisations (e.g. domestic abuse organisations) in the delivery of learning pathways?
- How does this strategy relate to the safeguarding learning strategies of other local Church bodies and of multi-agency safeguarding partnerships?

Additional training - *There will be a focus on additional non-mandatory training where appropriate and need identified by each stakeholder.

DSAP monitoring – DSAP will monitor the Diocesan training picture and ensure that the right training is provided and accessible; Gauged by asking:

- Are we providing the right material?
- Are people doing it?
- Is it making a difference?