

# **Past Case Review 2 in the Diocese of Lincoln**

## **Executive Summary**

**September 2022**

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## Introduction from the Acting Bishop of Lincoln

I am pleased to be able to publish the Public Report for the Past Case Review 2 (PCR2) in the Diocese of Lincoln. The Diocese has made the unique decision to publish at this time with survivors and transparency in mind. The National Safeguarding Team and many other dioceses are working toward a publication date at the beginning of October. So, please be assured that more publications will come out nationally around that point. This report presents all the information in the report the reviewers wrote but removes third party and properly confidential information in line with the national guidance and template. We, in this diocese, may have more to say when the national report is published.

In the Diocese of Lincoln, we are emphatically committed to our churches, chaplaincies and projects and all the outreach and services they provide being as safe as they can possibly be. Part of this means learning from our mistakes and working with those who have suffered from abuse to see how we might support just outcomes, healing, and better safeguarding provision. I welcome the opportunity PCR2 has given us to speak with survivors, review how we have performed, check where we might have acted inappropriately and do what is necessary to make amends.

This second review of past cases has been necessary because the original past case review in the Church of England was not well enough designed or implemented. Thus, every diocese in England has undertaken PCR2. The Diocese of Lincoln is in a different position from the general national picture of the Church of England, in that we engaged in a significant police operation, Operation Redstone, prior to PCR2. Operation Redstone revealed several non-recent cases and resulted in a number of referrals to statutory agencies and clergy and church officers appearing, or due to appear, in court. This gave the diocese a uniquely advanced foundation for PCR2, as can be seen in the Public Report. However, PCR2 has still been a significant, lengthy piece of work. Many people have been working hard to make it happen, including our Independent Reviewers, our Diocesan Safeguarding Team, the PCR2 Project Panel, the cathedral and every single benefice who submitted their returns. Without the wholesale commitment of the Diocese, even given the pandemic, the PCR2 project would not have been possible.

The Diocese of Lincoln publishes this PCR2 Public Report in a spirit of transparency and accountability. We have published the data and recommendations provided by the Independent Reviewers which highlights poor past practice but also shows the improvements made. We acknowledge that individuals have been hurt, some very seriously, through past action and inaction in the Church of England as a whole and here in Lincoln Diocese. Although we have much to be grateful for, considering where we have come from, we are not complacent. We understand that for every case of abuse there is a survivor, and that in every mishandled case the survivor's experience of abuse is intensified. This is an important step on a continuing journey of improvement. A huge amount of work has been done in the Church of England to develop a culture supported by structures, staffing, and policies and practice which ensure the best safeguarding environment possible. In Lincoln we have both benefitted from that and contributed to it and will continue to do so.

PCR2 has been an exhaustive project, but with a specific scope. Therefore, if there are any individuals who have been affected by church abuse, whether non-recent or recent, support is available and we, in Lincoln Diocese, remain committed to acting, listening to and supporting survivors who come forward.

If you would like to speak to the Safeguarding Team, please phone 01522 504070 or email [safeguarding@lincoln.anglican.org](mailto:safeguarding@lincoln.anglican.org). We have a designated Safeguarding Advocate available to provide support and advice to anyone affected.

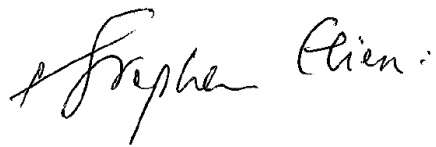
Safe Spaces is an independent service supporting survivors of church-related abuse. This Independent service is run by Victim Support and funded by the Church of England and Wales and the Church in Wales.

Phone: 0300 303 1056

Email: [safespaces@splitz.org](mailto:safespaces@splitz.org)

Webchat: [www.safespacesenglandandwales.org.uk/](http://www.safespacesenglandandwales.org.uk/)

I commend this report to you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen Conway". The signature is written in a cursive style.

The Right Reverend Stephen Conway  
Acting Bishop of Lincoln

## Background and introduction to PCR2

Failures of the Anglican Church to act on abhorrent cases of abuse have been apparent for some time now. Following a number of court appearances by members of clergy and church officers in 2007, what became known as Past Case Review 2007 was considered necessary. This Past Case Review 2007 (PCR 2007) aimed to ensure that:

- *Any current or future risk to children was identified*
- *Action was taken to address these concerns – e.g., referrals to the statutory authorities where necessary*
- *Where cases were identified support could be provided for the survivors of abuse where these people are known and still in contact with the Church*
- *Lessons from the past could be learned to inform the work of the Church today and in the future.*

The PCR 2007 was a large-scale review of the handling by the Church of child protection cases over many years. It involved a scrutiny of clergy and church officers' files to identify persons presenting on-going risks to children whose cases had not been acted upon appropriately at the time.

In 2015 concerns were expressed to the newly appointed National Safeguarding Adviser about how well the PCR had been conducted. The concerns about PCR 2007 are covered well in the *Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse 2020* (IICSA). One of the key recommendations of the IICSA report was that a further Past Case Review was required and so PCR2 was born.

The scope of PCR2 was far greater with the following key objectives:

- To identify all information held within parishes, cathedrals, dioceses or other church bodies, which may contain allegations of abuse or neglect where the alleged perpetrator is a clergy person or other church officer and ensure these cases have been independently reviewed.
- To ensure all allegations of abuse of children, especially those that have been recorded since the original PCR, have been handled appropriately and proportionately to the level of risk identified and with the paramountcy principle evidenced within decision making
- To ensure that the support needs of known survivors have been considered.
- To ensure that all safeguarding allegations have been referred to the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers and are being/have been responded to in line with current safeguarding practice guidance.
- To ensure that cases meeting the relevant thresholds have been referred to statutory agencies.

The Bishop of Lincoln therefore commissioned our engagement in PCR2.

## Introduction to the local PCR2

Prior to PCR2, the Diocese of Lincoln began to review historical practice in 2015, and in 2016 the Diocese began work with the police on Operation Redstone to review non-recent cases of alleged abuse and the Church's response to them. The Diocese also commissioned a further independent review of clergy files in 2017. All of this work has provided a good foundation for the work undertaken in PCR2.

The Bishop and the Diocese welcomed PCR2, the work of the Independent Reviewers, and the opportunity for further independent scrutiny of practice and arrangements.

### Headline Data

#### Parish Returns

The diocese had a 100% returns rate from 183 benefices, which includes Lincoln School of Theology and the Community of St Francis). These returns included 77 reports of concern in total, 13 of which were not already known to the Diocesan Safeguarding Team. Six of these 13 cases were 'in-scope', meaning they required further attention. Thirty of those 77 individuals about whom concerns had been raised were already on the Diocese's Known Cases List. None required referral to statutory agencies or DSAP. The remaining 34 cases were already known and managed by the Diocese.

The majority of concerns were in respect of harm or potential harm to children; there were 21 reports of concerns about adults.

The Parish Returns provide reassurance that the Diocese and the Safeguarding Team have been made aware of the majority of safeguarding concerns in parishes. This indicates good communication between Parishes and the Diocese. However, it also highlighted seven cases which the Diocesan Safeguarding Team had not been aware of which serves as a reminder for the continued need of communication.

#### Cathedral Returns

Nine forms highlighting 9 past concerns were returned. The Cathedral Safeguarding Officer and Chapter were aware of all cases.

#### Diocesan Files

- The Reviewers have reviewed 529 files. None of the records reviewed required referral to the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel or referral to the statutory authorities.
- There were no recommended actions made in respect of 293 of the 529 files (55%). There was evidence of clear DBS checks, up to date safeguarding training and clear recording in these records.
- Of the remaining 45% (236 files), the main recommendation, which was recommended on 104 files of these files, was highlighting a lack of evidence of ministerial development reviews (MDR) or any other ministerial supervision or management.

#### Cathedral review:

The Cathedral identified that the files of 119 members of clergy, staff and volunteers should be reviewed as part of their PCR2.

None of the records reviewed required referral to the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel or referral to the statutory authorities.

## Implementation of local recommendations

### Actions already taken during the PCR2 Process

- Improvements to the administrative support in the Diocese
- Known Case List has been reviewed
- Safeguarding recommendations of individual cases have been managed

### For the Diocese

1. The Diocese to plan how it intends to complete the outstanding recommendations as part of Phases 4 and 5 of the PCR2 process, and to ensure that it has capacity to undertake ongoing internal audit to ensure that safeguarding practice is robust.
2. The Diocese to implement the national clergy recording system and the NST caseload management system for Diocesan Safeguarding Teams as a priority when they are available. In the meantime, to consider what improvements should be made to existing caseload management in the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.
3. The Diocese to ensure that the date of receipt of a clergy person's file is clearly stamped or recorded on it and follow up delayed receipt to minimise delay.
4. The Diocese to review administrative support to ensure that completed Ministerial Development Reviews are circulated and placed on clergy files in a more timely manner.
5. The Diocese to continue to act upon the lessons learned about the management of complaints or allegations made by curates about their incumbents, monitor compliance with the relevant updated procedures, and implement any further changes needed to strengthen local arrangements.
6. The Diocese to ensure that the induction programme for new Safeguarding Team members includes meeting with the Bishop and other senior clergy.
7. For any member of clergy also employed by the Diocese, the existence of an HR file is to be explicitly recorded on a clergy file and there should be further guidance to provide clarity about what information should be on which file or on both.
8. The Independent Reviewers respectfully recommend that the diocese consider introducing a framework to strengthen and evidence safe practice by individual Readers in exercising their position of trust and responsibility or liaises with the national team to request their assistance in achieving this.
9. \*It would also be useful for the frequency for completing Working Agreements for Readers to be reviewed and the forms updated to show; date of meeting, updates to personal records has been completed, development goals / certification requirements given a clear date.

### For Parishes

Parish Audit Tool and Dashboard should be promoted to encourage parishes to engage with them as a resource, which provides an opportunity to monitor local compliance with practice standards. This will enable clear and timely communication with senior clergy and the Diocesan Safeguarding Team around any safeguarding concerns.

### For the Cathedral

1. The Cathedral to develop a Safeguarding Delivery Plan in the light of the recommendations made to conclude the PCR2 process.
2. The Cathedral to review the capacity of the Volunteer Coordinator post and the need for dedicated administrative support.
3. The new Volunteer Coordinator to ensure that all volunteers have signed volunteer agreements by the end of April 2022.
4. The Cathedral to ensure that second references are requested for the nine volunteers identified by the PCR2 Review as only having one reference and that two references are consistently recorded before a volunteer starts at the Cathedral from this point onwards.

### For the national Church and the National Safeguarding Team (NST)

1. The NST to confirm the planned timescale for the learning lessons reviews in respect of the response to management of a safeguarding allegation in the Diocese of Lincoln and the implementation of safeguarding procedures in Lincoln and at a national level. In addition, to provide progress reports and the final lessons learned as soon as possible.
2. Given the Church's commitment to safeguarding, it is respectfully recommended that the Church of England gives further consideration to ensuring that safeguarding matters are addressed and recorded in episcopal visitations and ministerial development reviews and that further guidance is produced about the safe recruitment and management of Readers. It may be useful to align the MDR process more closely to supervision and appraisal in other sectors in guidance produced at national level.

### Survivor Strategy

The Survivor Strategy can be found [HERE](#).

The Diocese employs a [Safeguarding Advocate](#) (SA) who was a member of the Diocesan PCR Reference Group. The SA has the lead for survivor support and engagement and works with the DSA to ensure the support needs of all those impacted by PCR2 are considered and provided for.

There has been evidence of good support to victims and survivors in the clergy files reviewed

Over a three to four-month period, the SA has an average caseload of between 18 and 25 clients, both male and female, affected directly or indirectly by abuse in a church context.

### Role of Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel (DSAP)

A [Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel \(DSAP\)](#), with an independent Chair, provides independent scrutiny of safeguarding practice and policy in the Diocese. Its members comprise of diocesan and cathedral staff, lay church personnel, and external partners from the statutory and voluntary sectors. The Diocesan Bishop and Diocesan Secretary are invited to attend, as well as the appointed Diocesan Strategic Lead on Safeguarding (senior clergy post).

DSAP will monitor, provide overview and accountability for ensuring the completion of local recommendations.



## Index of Definitions

Clergy file	Known colloquially as “blue” file. The personnel file for each deacon, priest or bishop that builds up over the length of their ministry and is kept at each stage by the Bishop’s Office of whichever diocese they are currently ministering or residing in.
Benefice returns	The reports all local parishes, churches and benefices returned to the diocese covering a range of information about safeguarding based on their records and living memory. Lincoln diocese made contact with benefices as the majority of worship leaders (ordained and lay) operated across several parishes within the benefice structure.
MDR	The ministerial development review (MDR) is a regular process that helps priests and deacons to take time out to reflect upon their ministry and how they are getting on. It provides a chance to consider if there is a need to refocus in order better to fulfil their calling and the mission of their parish. It is conducted in Lincoln Diocese with a bishop or archdeacon.
Benefice	Any ecclesiastical parish or group of ecclesiastical parishes under a single stipendiary minister.
DSAP	Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel (DSAP), with an independent Chair, provides independent scrutiny of safeguarding practice and policy in the Diocese. Its members comprise diocesan and cathedral staff, lay church personnel and external partners from the statutory and voluntary sectors.
Chapter	The Chapter is the group of clergy and lay people who form the governing body of the cathedral.
National clergy recording system	The National Register of all Church of England Clergy who are authorised to carry out ministry within the Church of England.
NST	National Safeguarding Team provides advice and support to dioceses, cathedrals, National Church Institutions and other Church bodies about safeguarding policy, training and casework.
NST caseload management system	A method of recording, monitoring and securing information about the work that safeguarding teams undertake that supports its effective management, in a form that is confidential, reliable and consistent across the national church and the dioceses.
Parish Dashboard	Online tool which makes it easier for our churches to manage their safeguarding requirements, which also enable the Diocesan Safeguarding Team and senior clergy to ensure each parish is up to date with its safeguarding administration and offer support to those who may be struggling. The Dashboard has been designed to display a clear and simple dashboard on a computer, mobile phone or tablet.
Phase 4 and 5	Phase 4 of the PCR2 process refers to the making of arrangements between the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser and the Independent Reviewer for completion of recommendations on individual cases.  Phase 5 refers to the continued ongoing management being taken forward of identified cases in the usual way by the Diocesan Safeguarding Team. And the eventual closing / signing off recommendations as completed by the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel which will be forwarded to the PCR Project Management Board.