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institute for excellence

# Lincoln Cathedral

## Independent Safeguarding Audit

October 2021



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND





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## About SCIE

The Social Care Institute for Excellence improves the lives of people of all ages by co-producing, sharing and supporting the use of the best available knowledge and evidence about what works in practice. We are a leading improvement support agency and an independent charity working with organisations that support adults, families and children across the UK. We also work closely with related services such as health care and housing.

We improve the quality of care and support services for adults and children by:

- identifying and sharing knowledge about what works and what's new
- supporting people who plan, commission, deliver and use services to put that knowledge into practice
- informing, influencing and inspiring the direction of future practice and policy.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 THE AUDIT PROGRAMME

- 1.1.1** The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) is delighted to have been asked to provide an independent audit of the safeguarding arrangements of the cathedrals of the Church of England.
- 1.1.2** This programme of work will see four cathedral audits in 2018, 19 in 2019, 18 in 2021 and a final two early in 2022. It represents a significant investment in cathedrals and an important opportunity to support improvement in safeguarding.
- 1.1.3** All cathedrals are unique and differ in significant ways from a diocese. SCIE has drawn on its experience of auditing all 42 Church of England dioceses, and adapted it, using discussions and preliminary meetings with different cathedral chapters, to design an audit methodology fit for cathedrals. We have sought to balance cathedrals' diversity with the need for adequate consistency across the audits, to make the audits comparable, but sufficiently bespoke to support progress in effective and timely safeguarding practice in each separate cathedral. Cathedral representatives will play a key role in adapting the audit framework to their particular cathedral context. Only in this way will we achieve bespoke audits that are right for each place respectively. Bespoke audits will in turn optimise the usefulness of the audit process and outputs to supporting progress in effective and timely safeguarding practice. We look forward to working with you to this end.

### 1.2 THE AUDIT PROCESS

#### **SCIE Learning Together and our approach to audit**

- 1.2.1** SCIE has pioneered a particular approach to conducting case reviews and audits in child and adult safeguarding that is collaborative in nature. It is called Learning Together and has proved valuable in the adults' and children's safeguarding fields. It is built on work in the engineering and health sectors that has shown that improvement is more likely if remedies target the underlying causes of difficulties, and so uses audits and reviews to generate that kind of understanding. So, Learning Together involves exploring and sharing understanding of both the causes of problems and the reasons why things go well.

#### **Key principles informing the audit**

- 1.2.2** Drawing on SCIE's Learning Together model, the following principles underpin the approach we take to the audits:
- Working collaboratively: the audits done 'with you, not to you'
  - Highlighting areas of good practice as well as problematic issues
  - Focusing on understanding the reasons behind inevitable problems in safeguarding
  - No surprises: being open and transparent about our focus, methods and findings so nothing comes out of the blue

- Distinguishing between unique local challenges and underlying issues that impact on all or many cathedrals

## Supporting improvements

- 1.2.3** The overarching aim of each audit is to support safeguarding improvements. To this end our goal is to understand the safeguarding progress of each cathedral to date. We set out to move from understanding how things work in each cathedral, to evaluating how *well* they are working. This includes exploring the reasons behind identified strengths and weaknesses. Our conclusions will pose questions for the cathedral leadership to consider in attempting to tackle the underlying causes of deficiencies.
- 1.2.4** SCIE methodology does not conclude findings with recommendations. We instead give the cathedral questions to consider in relation to the findings, as they decide how best to tackle the issue at hand. This approach is part of the SCIE Learning Together audit methodology. The approach requires those with local knowledge and responsibility for progressing improvement work to have a key role in deciding what exactly to do to address the findings and to be accountable for their decisions. It has the additional benefit of helping to foster ownership locally of the work to be done to improve safeguarding.

## The process

- 1.2.5** The process will involve reviewing documentation as well as talking to key people, including focus groups. Further details are provided in the Appendix.

The site visit will be either 3 or 2.5 days. Cathedrals have been selected for the three-day audit to provide a broad base, or on the scale of an operation and/or where concerns may have been raised in the past for the cathedral.

## 1.3 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

This report is divided into:

- Introduction
- The findings of the audit presented per theme
- Questions for the cathedral to consider are listed, where relevant, at the end of each Findings section
- Conclusions of the auditors' findings: what is working well and areas for further development
- An appendix sets out the audit process and any limitations to this audit

## 2. CONTEXT

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### 2.1 CONTEXT OF THE CATHEDRAL

- 2.1.1** Lincoln Cathedral is a large and impressive building dating back to 1072. It sits in the heart of the city of Lincoln, which has a population of c.100,000. The local authority is Lincolnshire County Council, with the city's district council being the City of Lincoln Council. The city is served by Lincolnshire Police.
- 2.1.2** The Corporate Body of the Cathedral Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Lincoln is first and foremost a church, the seat of the Bishop of Lincoln and a centre of worship and mission led by the Cathedral Chapter. A minimum of four services take place each day of the year. It is the principal 'mother' church of Lincolnshire and holds many of the county-wide services of celebration, commemoration and memorial. Lincoln Cathedral is a place of pilgrimage, where people come to seek God, to learn more about faith, or to take time out of a busy day for quiet reflection. It is a place of welcome and hospitality where all, of any faith or no faith, are encouraged to feel at home.
- 2.1.3** The Cathedral is governed by its Constitution and Statutes under the Cathedrals Measure 1999. The Cathedral Chapter is the governing body of the Cathedral, directing and overseeing the administration of its affairs. The Chapter presents an annual report to the Cathedral Council, a body representing the interests of the wider Church and community, which offers support and advice. These two bodies, together with the College of Canons, form the legal entity of Lincoln Cathedral. Core staffing of the clergy Chapter is the Dean, Precentor and Chancellor. The Chapter further includes a self-supporting minister, a parish priest and four lay canons with expertise in finance, business, logistics and property. The Chapter Clerk and Administrator is the senior lay member of the Cathedral's staff, responsible for the operational management and administration of the Cathedral within the strategic and financial framework set by Chapter.
- 2.1.4** Lincoln is relatively less diverse than many other UK cities in terms of ethnicity and faith denomination with 95.6% of the population being white. There are also small populations of South Asian, Irish, Chinese and African inhabitants – each making up less than 1% of the total population. The majority of people living in Lincoln were originally born in England and 58% of people describe themselves as Christian. There are a number of social issues, in common with many other cities, such as homelessness and rough sleeping in the local area and immediate vicinity of the Cathedral.
- 2.1.5** The medieval city centre dates back to the thirteenth century and is well preserved with many landmarks such as the castle, Bailgate, High Bridge and half-timbered housing. The city therefore attracts a high number of tourists with 90,000 visitors per annum passing through the Cathedral.

### 2.2 CONTEXTUAL FEATURES RELEVANT TO SAFEGUARDING

- 2.2.1** The Cathedral was first consecrated as a cathedral in 1092. It was destroyed by fire and when rebuilt after an earthquake in 1185 it was reportedly the highest building in the world for around 200 years. The building is therefore Gothic in style and the features of the building reflect this style of architecture. This includes the presence of small and more concealed spaces such as the side chapels and the deep external



recess of the Galilee Door. It also has an extensive crypt area, cloisters and a variety of vestries and rooms. The nave of the Cathedral is a relatively open space with a separate quire. Behind this sits the high altar and chapels accessed by the side aisles.

- 2.2.2** There are several entrances to the Cathedral's nave which have historically been open in order to welcome visitors from multiple points, however there is only one main entrance during opening hours with the north door open for those attending evensong. The Cathedral charges visitors for entry but does allow a time of reflective prayer without charge in the early mornings.
- 2.2.3** Several areas of the Cathedral have been developed over time to better provide for those visiting or working within it. These include a new song school, development of the building formerly leased to Lincoln Minster School into a visitor centre, a new café and a recently developed learning centre.
- 2.2.4** Bellringing takes place within one of the towers which is accessible from both inside and outside the Cathedral building.
- 2.2.5** The Cathedral has had some widely reported and high profile safeguarding concerns which are both non-recent and recent and which continue to pose some questions for those working there.

## **2.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE SAFEGUARDING STRUCTURE (INCLUDING LINKS WITH THE DIOCESE)**

- 2.3.1** The Dean of Lincoln, as the lead figure in all aspects of Cathedral life, carries the ultimate responsibility for safeguarding. Supporting her in this are a number of clergy and lay staff, including:
  - The Canon Precentor with responsibility for music and liturgy, including the choirs, servers and bell tower, and the strategic lead for safeguarding
  - The Chapter Clerk, lead for operational safeguarding within the Cathedral
  - The Cathedral Safeguarding Officer (CSO) with responsibility for professional safeguarding advice across the Cathedral
  - The HR Manager, newly appointed to a new dedicated role to provide support to the Dean and senior management team
  - The Director of Music who reports to the Canon Precentor and has oversight of the choirs
  - The Dean's Verger who ensures the safety and security of the Cathedral buildings, reporting to the Dean
  - The Volunteer Coordinator who looks after recruitment, training and wellbeing of volunteers within the Cathedral
  - the Education Manager with responsibility for school visits and educational activities in the Cathedral, reporting to the Chancellor
  - The Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor (DSA), Diocesan Survivor Advocate and Diocesan Case Worker, who support the Cathedral's safeguarding work through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

**2.3.2** The Cathedral is supported in its governance by Chapter, which is comprised of the Dean, Canon Precentor and Chancellor, a fourth non-stipendiary residentiary canon, a clergy representative of the diocese and four lay members. Other senior staff are present as attendees when relevant issues are being discussed.

## **2.4 WHO WAS SEEN IN THE AUDIT?**

**2.4.1** The audit involved reviewing documentation and case files and talking to people at the heart of safeguarding in the Cathedral, such as the Dean, Chapter members, safeguarding staff, music leads, Volunteer Coordinator, Volunteer Team Leader, the Tower Captain and those managing the floor of the Cathedral. The fieldwork aspect of the audit was conducted over three days. Further details are provided in the Appendix.

## **2.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE AUDIT**

**2.5.1** Due to the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic, certain aspects of the audit were necessarily different:

- No focus groups were held during this audit and instead surveys were made available for both adults (staff, congregants, volunteers and parents of children involved in the Cathedral) and children (including choristers, bellringers and servers). These were analysed by the audit team and findings explored and referenced throughout conversations. This nevertheless limited the depth of knowledge that could be gained from participants and was further limited by the inability to hold follow-up discussions with respondents. There were very few responses from children within the Cathedral.
- Clergy blue files were not made available for the auditors, which while not necessarily limiting the audit, may have meant that processes in place were not seen in detail.
- Auditors were unable to speak to the Chancellor who had not yet returned to work.

## 3. FINDINGS – PRACTICE

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### 3.1 SAFE ACTIVITIES AND WORKING PRACTICES

#### Precincts and buildings

##### *Description*

- 3.1.1** The management of the Cathedral is principally the work of the vergers team, which comprises the newly appointed Dean's Verger and two other full-time vergers, one part-time verger and two beades who are volunteers. In addition, there are two extra vergers on zero hours contracts who are called on when required. The vergers are responsible for managing facilities within the Cathedral building itself and for events, working closely with the Facilities Management Team who manage the wider precincts and buildings.
- 3.1.2** A single verger opens the Cathedral at 7.30 am in time for the 8 am morning prayer. The Cathedral is usually locked up following evensong unless there are additional events or concerts in the evening. Vergers do this alone and risk assessments are in place. Vergers do carry radios, but these are left in the Cathedral prior to lockup. Each of the team has undertaken foundation safeguarding training, with the Dean's Verger having completed level 3 training, by virtue of other roles held.
- 3.1.3** Public access to the Cathedral is through either the west door for visitors or the north door for those attending evensong. Doors are locked with fobs and the main external doors with day and night locks. Keyholders for the day locks are unable to access the Cathedral once the vergers change these to the night locks.
- 3.1.4** Lincoln Cathedral, like many cathedrals, has several side chapels that, by their nature, are more hidden areas of the building. The Cathedral also has a crypt. Vergers pay special attention to these areas and to the volunteers who work around the cathedral. The Cathedral does not have CCTV.
- 3.1.5** There are several routes for volunteers and staff to seek help or support when in the Cathedral building, including a telephone at the main welcome desk and handheld radios positioned with volunteers and vergers across the Cathedral. The Dean's Verger has yet to build links with the local policing team but plans to do so as his role embeds.
- 3.1.6** The vergers do encounter homeless people sleeping rough around the Cathedral, particularly in the deep recess of the Galilee Door. Vergers offer signposting to local support and notify the CSO if they have a specific concern.
- 3.1.7** It is the Chapter Clerk, Director of Works and Property, Facilities Manager or Dean's Verger who is notified for out-of-hours alarms (including fire and intruder). There is a separate intruder system for the education centre, café and shop.
- 3.1.8** Lincoln Cathedral has a missing child/adult procedure in place and has practiced evacuation procedures in case of fire. Staff are aware of the possible need to lock-in in the event of a terrorist attack or incident but have not had a practice or walk through of this procedure yet.
- 3.1.9** The Cathedral holds a weekly 'Under the Tower' operational meeting for all departments, including clergy, to attend and coordinate upcoming events and activities.

## Analysis

- 3.1.10** The members of the vergers team are well recognised and effective in their arrangements for the safety and security of the site and visitors. However, some of the policies and procedures require further work to ensure that they continue to underpin safeguarding processes to ensure that the Cathedral is a place of both welcome and safety for visitors, staff and volunteers.
- 3.1.11** Auditors saw evidence of good working between the vergers team and other departments such as volunteers and duty chaplains. The Dean's Verger has a clear understanding of safeguarding and the need for this to be an integral part of the vergers' work. In addition, the vergers team are all aware of the spiritual and ethical nature of a Cathedral and the requirement to welcome all. The management of the Cathedral site works well and the vergers team members are well regarded.
- 3.1.12** However, there remain some short times within the day and evening when vergers work alone, or in parts of the Cathedral that are relatively isolated. The Cathedral has a Lone Working policy but it does not specifically include the vergers team and places the onus on those undertaking lone working to know the risks it poses, rather than ensuring mechanisms for safety. While the vergers are less concerned, auditors heard that radios are left locked in the Cathedral overnight prior to a single vergers locking up. Therefore, they are without contact unless carrying a mobile phone and there remains the potential for vulnerability.
- 3.1.13** A potential further weakness is presented by the current lack of any CCTV coverage of the Cathedral. The Dean's Verger was clear in his extensive security experience that CCTV is only as good as those monitoring it, which auditors accepted, but no access to CCTV footage does mean that it is difficult to be assured that the building is safe to enter should an intruder alarm be triggered out-of-hours, when vergers are not present. This could potentially put individuals at risk where they do not know the situation they are walking into and so compromise their safety.
- 3.1.14** The responses of the survey of staff, volunteers and congregants of the Cathedral reflected a view regarding lone working, whereby 33 respondents (46%) felt that lone working was only moderately avoidable in their current roles, and 7 respondents (10%) felt that it was not at all avoidable.
- 3.1.15** Despite this, the competence demonstrated by those in key roles around the Cathedral floor in managing safety and security was judged to be good. However, some of the policies and procedures underpinning the safety and security of others is dated. The new Dean's Verger has within his role the mandate to revisit systems, practices and policies in place which he intends to redevelop and formalise.

### Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- What are the perceived costs and benefits of some form of CCTV system within the cathedral?
- How can the Cathedral best support the vergers team in ensuring that policies and procedures are reviewed and updated?

## Children

This section is about children who come to the Cathedral in various capacities. It does not cover choristers, child servers or children who bellring, who are referred to in section 3.2.

### *Description*

- 3.1.16** Lincoln Cathedral benefits from a newly built education department, including disabled access, toilets, facilities for leaving school bags and a large hall for activities and eating which are not accessible to the public. The new centre has benefited from a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant and engages with children and school groups from the local area and beyond, bringing them into the Cathedral for learning opportunities and events.
- 3.1.17** The department is led by the Education Manager, who has been in post for four years and has a background in managing and running Heritage Lottery funded projects. The Education Manager has completed level 3 safeguarding training and the volunteers within the department have completed levels 1 and 2. All staff and volunteers within the education department have a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check in place.
- 3.1.18** The education department is supported by a team of volunteers, who help to deliver and facilitate school and group visits. All go through a safe recruitment process, including the taking-up of references, an informal interview with the Volunteer Coordinator and a further meeting with the Education Manager.
- 3.1.19** School visits are managed safely and agreed procedures are in place to support a consistent approach that includes initial contact and booking, sharing of risk assessments, allocation of volunteers and supervision on the day of the visit. From September 2021 to March 2022, 26 primary schools with 800 pupils and 300 secondary pupils have either already visited or booked to visit Lincoln Cathedral via the education centre.
- 3.1.20** Currently, due to the pandemic, the Cathedral's Sunday School is not running and the Cathedral has taken the opportunity to reassess its location which was previously within one of the side chapels off the nave. It is hoped that the new Sunday School will take place in the Chapter House which provides a large secure space in which sound will not disturb the main body of the Cathedral.
- 3.1.21** Lincoln Cathedral has a small number of children and young people who are servers. All arrivals, departures, robing and activities within services are conducted in public areas and always with a minimum of two adults present. The lead servers are DBS checked and supervise the child servers at all times.

### *Analysis*

- 3.1.22** The auditors judged that there is a range of safely managed provision for children at Lincoln Cathedral and this has benefited greatly from recent new buildings and Lottery investments in addition to well-led activities and good systems for safeguarding.
- 3.1.23** School visits work on a well-tested system that helps to assure the safety of children and others while in the Cathedral. Volunteers within the department are DBS checked and have received training.
- 3.1.24** However, there is a potential gap in the messaging around supervision of children and while there are well considered risk assessments and paperwork in place between visiting schools and the Cathedral, it is not made explicitly clear that teachers and school staff hold and maintain responsibility for children from their school throughout



the entire visit and should operate their own safeguarding policies and procedures including adult to child ratios. This expectation could be made clearer.

- 3.1.25** Information requested from schools regarding children attending on visits does not include safeguarding or specific related needs. Auditors reflected that while the Cathedral is entirely reliant on information the school chooses to provide, more directed questions might be helpful.
- 3.1.26** Auditors heard that the new plans for the Sunday School would be safer and provide a larger, sound-proofed space. There is a plan for large mats to be placed on the stone floor for safe activities and the Chapter House provides a good space with only one access point. However, auditors also heard that this provision was being organised and overseen by the CSO and questioned whether this was a good use of her role.
- 3.1.27** The survey showed that a significant number of adults (17%) felt that their own or the welfare of children could be higher across the Cathedral. Of the respondents, however, those who identified themselves as chorister parents were clear that their children's wellbeing was well considered. Very few children completed the survey and so it has been difficult to make a judgement on how safe they feel.

#### Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How could the messaging around the responsibilities for visiting teaching and school staff to maintain supervision of children from their school be made clearer, and practice supported to ensure that this happens?
- How might schools be asked for more useful or explicit information about any additional needs of visiting children so that Cathedral staff might better support them?
- How can Chapter be assured that arrangements for the new Sunday School are in place with advice on safeguarding from the CSO rather than being arranged by her?

## Adults

### *Description*

- 3.1.28** Lincoln Cathedral, as common to many, represents a place of welcome for those seeking support, worship or shelter. The staff and volunteers therefore regularly engage with those who may be considered vulnerable by virtue of their physical, emotional or mental health needs. This includes a small number of homeless people, those with learning difficulties and elderly adults with possible dementia. Explicit in the job description of the Dean's Verger is the requirement to provide welcome and care for homeless members of the community, and many within the Cathedral, including the verger team, are familiar with individuals and know them by name. The CSO works with the vergers and homeless people to signpost to support organisations.
- 3.1.29** Currently there are no formal arrangements for offering food or a hot drink to the homeless although in practice this does happen. There is a practice of not giving money to those seeking it but instead to offer signposting, where needed, to the local services, homeless shelters and food banks that can be accessed. When required, the Cathedral has offered a taxi for homeless people to reach a required appointment.
- 3.1.30** For those seeking or in need of spiritual support, the Cathedral offers this by way of voluntary duty chaplains who can be contacted should a member of the public request

it or if those working in the Cathedral feel it to be beneficial. The Cathedral also has a newly established pastoral care team to support those in need of assistance.

- 3.1.31** There is an understanding across those managing volunteers of the potential vulnerabilities that volunteers themselves may have, by virtue of their age or health, and the need to both monitor and support them in their work. Several examples of when such support has been offered, and changes to working duties made, were heard throughout the audit.

### *Analysis*

- 3.1.32** The auditors judged that there is a positive recognition of the needs of various groups within the Cathedral, including of volunteers themselves. However, much of this is assumed rather than set within policy, meaning that action taken relies on the individual rather than the system in place. Auditors saw evidence of actions taken in certain situations which, despite being well intended, were perhaps outside the safeguarding system and not in line with actions considered in other instances.
- 3.1.33** Auditors saw a great deal of evidence through case work, and heard through examples, of a high quality of safeguarding in specific cases. However, there were occasions where others took the lead rather than the CSO, or where pastoral issues were immediately seen as safeguarding and the CSO was called to manage. Auditors noticed a conflict between ensuring that concerns are appropriately reported to the CSO for a decision on safeguarding, and also ensuring that not everything meets the threshold of a concern and is therefore sent to the CSO. The auditors questioned whether a lack of additional training for those in public-facing roles on the issues such as substance abuse, mental health and domestic abuse contributed to this.
- 3.1.34** The Cathedral has in place a Pastoral Care policy which relates in the main to home visits undertaken by those in a pastoral role. It covers the safety of the visitor but does not include the safeguarding of those vulnerable adults they are visiting or provide a guide on what to do if there is a concern.

### **Questions for the Cathedral to consider**

- Is the Cathedral confident that both a robust understanding of adult safeguarding and vulnerability, and an approach to support and welcome is consistently adopted and shared both within the Cathedral and for those representing the Cathedral outside of its buildings?
- How can the Cathedral ensure a balance where concerns are triaged by the CSO, but where those in front-line positions are confident enough to see that not everything is a safeguarding concern?
- What additional training could be explored that might support those in public-facing roles to understand specific issues facing those who attend the Cathedral?
- What is needed to ensure that any vulnerabilities among the Cathedral's volunteers are identified and responded to systematically?

## 3.2 CHOIRS AND MUSIC

### Choir

#### *Description*

- 3.2.1** Lincoln Cathedral has a large, well-established and active music department. There are four separate choirs including the Cathedral Choir (comprising a maximum of 40 boy and girl choristers and additional lay clerks), a Youth Choir made up of 14–21-year-olds who are mostly ex-choristers, a volunteer choir named The Consorts, made up of adults, and a children's choir named 'Ready Steady Choir'.
- 3.2.2** Lincoln's choristers are led by the Director of Music who has been in post since 2003 and was previously the joint Director of Music for the Chorister School (Lincoln Minster School) and is a qualified teacher. The links between Lincoln Minster School and the Cathedral changed in 2016 when the school ceased to be a chorister school and now children are drawn from 15 different schools for their chorister role.
- 3.2.3** The Director of Music reports directly to the Canon Precentor and has undertaken senior leadership, C4, safeguarding training. He is usually also involved in the training of choral scholars and is to complete group leadership training within the next few weeks. The Canon Precentor is the strategic lead for safeguarding within the Cathedral. They are supported in their work by the organist, who is also the Assistant Director of Music, the assistant organist who also leads the Consort Choir, and the Choir Matron, who provides daily support and administration for the choristers. All have completed safeguarding training. There are five choral scholars who stay with the Cathedral for one or two years, and live together in accommodation nearby.
- 3.2.4** The Song School is a recently refurbished, secured building comprising rehearsal rooms, separate robing and toilet facilities and an area for social gathering and rest. There are facilities for the disabled, including a disabled toilet and the staff have thought about gender fluidity and transgender issues. One-to-one tutoring is conducted within the Song School itself, or within the children's schools. Access to the Song School is via a separate front door which leads from the Cathedral Green and which remains locked.
- 3.2.5** Choristers are dropped at the Song School for early morning rehearsal by parents and then ferried to school via a series of minibuses and taxis, escorted by staff and choral scholars. After school, the system works in reverse, with children collected from school in the same taxis and minibuses and brought to the Song School for rehearsal. They also robe there prior to services. They are collected after evensong by parents from the Song School building after disrobing.
- 3.2.6** There is a separate agreement between each of the 15 schools attended by choristers and the Cathedral. This is maintained and supported by the CSO who ensures as much contact as possible with the schools. The CSO has worked with members of the music department to review the choristers' documentation and guidance and begin the process of renewing the safeguarding agreements between the Cathedral and the schools from which choristers are drawn.
- 3.2.7** There are currently 31 choristers made up of 17 girls and 14 boys singing at the Cathedral which is down from the maximum number of 40. At present, they are rehearsing and singing together, but it is planned that as the pandemic recedes, the Cathedral will go back to a system of the boy choristers singing evensong on a Tuesday and Friday and the girl choristers on Monday and Thursday evenings.
- 3.2.8** All choirs almost always perform with a 'back row' of lay vicars and choral scholars.



All undertake a DBS check because they have supervisory responsibility for choristers at certain points, such as escorting them to school. There is a *Chorister Handbook* and another handbook for chorister parents, which lays out the expectations choristers should have regarding those who work with them. There is also a 'How do we keep you safe?' booklet which aims to ensure that choristers can recognise when they do not feel safe. Choristers receive ad hoc information on how to keep themselves safe and this has included a recent talk on cyber safety, organised by the Choir Matron. The Cathedral also has a *Staff Handbook* dated 2014 and a Safeguarding Chorister's policy dated February 2021. Choral scholars and lay clerks robe within the Cathedral and use separate toilets from the choristers. A register is kept of lay vicars, choral scholars and deputies engaged for each service and rehearsal.

- 3.2.9** The choristers are supported by a Choir Matron, who attends rehearsals and services with responsibility for assuring their welfare, supervising them while in the Cathedral, registering their attendance and managing medical and other needs as well as overseeing the journey to and from school. During services, the Choir Matron sits within clear view of the choristers and provides support should a chorister need to leave the floor for any reason.
- 3.2.10** The Choir Matron maintains and monitors a book in which all concerns are recorded and shared, where necessary. The music department holds a regular weekly meeting regarding any concerns for choristers and the daily running of the Song School. These meetings are not minuted but actions are recorded on the individual choristers' files once completed. This system is discussed further at 4.3 (Recording and IT).

### Analysis

- 3.2.11** The auditors judged that choristers are safe when in the care of the Cathedral and that much good work has taken place to ensure that this is the case. Safeguarding has been strengthened recently and there is a clear priority placed on the welfare of choristers. The Director of Music takes the view that only children who are enjoying what they do will thrive; if they are not thriving, this is noted and taken up with the school and parents.
- 3.2.12** Auditors noted that girl and boy choristers are treated as equals and maintain the same schedule, with equal support. The age range is the same for girl and boy choristers. Currently girls do not wear the same robes as the boys and therefore may feel different. New robes have been on order for some time but have not yet arrived.
- 3.2.13** Music staff themselves raised concerns that the system of physically driving choristers to school or using taxis in which there is a chaperone, is fragile and dependent on every member of staff or volunteer being available every day. They reflected that, were the choral scholars to become ill, living in the same accommodation, the system would quickly break down.
- 3.2.14** Music staff also felt that they cannot be sure that information of a safeguarding nature is always shared between the school and the Choir Matron. Staff were not clear that they would be made aware if a child was on a Child Protection Plan, for example, or was a child in care. Auditors reflected that this could be a potential weakness in the system.
- 3.2.15** Auditors judged that the policies and processes in place to safeguard choristers are not of an equal standard or age. The Safeguarding Choristers policy is in draft form but does not include areas such as peer-on-peer abuse, female genital mutilation(FGM), exploitation or modern slavery as risks to recognise. This is reflected

in the *Safeguarding Handbook* for staff which also omits these issues and in addition says very little regarding social media. There is no separate social media code of practice.

- 3.2.16** The Choir Matron's book of concerns and welfare issues is not shared with the CSO and auditors felt that this could mean the CSO does not have oversight of all records on which to make a safeguarding decision.

#### Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How can the Cathedral strengthen the agreements between itself and each of the 15 schools to ensure that information is appropriately shared in order to keep choristers safe?
- Does the Cathedral recognise the fragility of the current system of moving choristers between the Song School and their respective schools and how might this be mitigated?
- How might the Cathedral ensure confidence in the content of the current policies which are in place to safeguard choristers?
- How might the music department ensure that its records about the wellbeing of choristers are systematically kept and overseen regularly by the CSO?

## Bellringing

### Description

- 3.2.17** Lincoln Cathedral has 12 bells in place for ringing. They are situated in the southwest tower. There is an additional thirteenth bell for a light ring of eight which provides the semitone required for the scale. The Cathedral also has two additional bells within the northwest tower which the vergers ring.
- 3.2.18** Lincoln's Tower Captain (also known as the Master of the Company of Ringers) has been in his role for six years. The Cathedral has a company of 15 regular ringers who attend practice on a Thursday evening. The tower is accessed either from within the Cathedral or via an external door leading directly into the ringers' chapel from outside. Usually, the company enter via the external door which means they do not have to reset the Cathedral's alarm system. The Tower Captain and one other ringer are keyholders.
- 3.2.19** Lincoln Cathedral is not a teaching tower and those wishing to learn to ring usually attend one of several churches in the area because the Cathedral bells are difficult to stand/silence. However, from time to time there are ringers at the Cathedral who are under 18. The Tower Captain has in place a system of safe handover from parents to the tower and under 18s are always accompanied by two or more adults. Contact details for those with a safeguarding role at the Cathedral are kept in the tower in case they are needed but the Tower Captain has not yet met the CSO. Ringing has only just restarted following the pandemic and this is yet to be arranged.
- 3.2.20** Any visiting ringing bands must put their request to the Cathedral's events committee for consideration. Individual ringers who attend to ring at practice are admitted but are not left alone. They must sign in and out and are accompanied by other ringers. The Tower Captain had never come across ringers becoming vulnerable themselves but was clear that he could contact the CSO for advice if needed.

- 3.2.21** All ringers at Lincoln Cathedral are classed as Cathedral volunteers and as such receive training in safeguarding to level C1 and C2. The Tower Captain and Deputy Captain are both DBS checked.
- 3.2.22** All activities in the tower are risk assessed and the Tower Captain uses the Volunteer Coordinator's risk assessment form to do this. A register is taken where each ringer ticks their name to say they are present. This register is not shared with anyone outside of the tower. Those within the tower rely on mobile phones and do not have radios. There is no lone working policy in place for lock-up of the external or internal doors following practice, but in reality the Tower Captain advised that ringers leave together and that there is always a group of people who stay together. The tower does not have its own safeguarding arrangements in place.

### *Analysis*

- 3.2.23** The auditors judged the safeguarding practice of the bell tower at Lincoln to be good in practice with a clear knowledge and understanding demonstrated by the Tower Captain. However, in a similar vein to elsewhere within the Cathedral, auditors remained concerned that policies and procedures which are in place in practice are not written down and therefore rely on the person and not the system.
- 3.2.24** Auditors heard that ringers do feel part of the Cathedral community and have been visited by the Dean, who chairs their annual general meeting (AGM). A visit from the Canon Precentor is planned for the near future. Auditors heard that the Tower Captain is aware of safeguarding contacts, and for anything else would contact the Dean in the first instance.

### **Questions for the Cathedral to consider**

- What steps would help to ensure that the bell tower feels more fully connected to safeguarding within the Cathedral?
- How can the Cathedral ensure that the good practice put in place practically within the bell tower for safeguarding is captured in written policy and procedures?

## **3.3 CASE WORK (INCLUDING INFORMATION SHARING)**

### *Description*

- 3.3.1** When safeguarding concerns are raised, a timely response is needed to make sense of the situation, assess risk and decide if any action needs to be taken, including whether statutory services need to be informed. In a Cathedral context, this includes helping to distinguish whether there are safeguarding elements to the situations of people receiving pastoral support.
- 3.3.2** The auditors judged that case work at Lincoln Cathedral is a strength and that it benefits from close working between the CSO, the DSA and external agencies.
- 3.3.3** The diocesan safeguarding team (DST) includes a dedicated member of staff for supporting survivors and this work has been incorporated into that of the CSO working alongside the diocesan team.

### **Effectiveness of responses and information-sharing practice**

- 3.3.4** The auditors looked at six case files as part of this audit and discussed some of those cases further in relation to specific areas of the Cathedral through individual

conversations. These related to potentially vulnerable adults, homeless people, non-recent abuse allegations, children and risk assessments. There were a smaller number than expected for case work relating to children within the review period, partly because the CSO post is new and partly because activities for children ceased over the period of the pandemic and not all have resumed. Lincoln Cathedral has a MoU in place with the Diocese of Lincoln, which outlines how the two organisations align in relation to safeguarding.

- 3.3.5** The auditors found that when incidents are reported, there is evidence of a timely and appropriate response from the CSO, who meets regularly but informally with the DSA. Case work included professional and appropriate challenge of other agencies where required and good follow-up to those raising concerns so that a culture of confidence is encouraged. The CSO has contacted schools regarding the welfare of choristers and followed up appropriately, using a sensitive approach.
- 3.3.6** The CSO works in an informal but close partnership with the DSA, making appropriate referrals to external agencies. Auditors saw evidence of good information sharing from the CSO. In one example this included work with adult social care and health, which the auditors reflected on as excellent practice.
- 3.3.7** In some cases, however, the CSO became involved only after others had decided on actions, seeing the case as pastoral care. Auditors reflected that there is an uncertainty regarding what should be referred to the CSO which has not yet been clarified.
- 3.3.8** Safeguarding records are kept securely by the CSO who uses a child protection online management system (CPOMS) database. This has the advantage of being able to quickly produce a chronology for the CSO to use as an overview of a case. However, the current record-keeping processes in use in the Cathedral, whereby some individual departments, such as the Song School, keep their own local records, may represent a potential threat to good responses and information sharing because the broader picture of a concern may not be recognised – with constituent concerns held in disparate places and so subject to individual judgement on whether or not to share. This is addressed further at 4.3.

### **Effectiveness of risk assessments, safeguarding agreements and the risk management plan**

- 3.3.9** The auditors saw one example of a safeguarding agreement and safe behaviour plan. There was evidence of close communication between the Cathedral, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and the subject of the agreement with respectful, supportive approaches to establishing and managing the role in a collaborative way were found.
- 3.3.10** Auditors did not see evidence of review for this case, which has not yet been carried out.

### **Quality of recording**

- 3.3.11** The CSO did not see some of the cases she presented as case work per se and felt that most of the cases reviewed were simply the bulk of her work. Cases were not therefore presented as case files, but as chronologies from the CPOMS database. The CSO does not use paper files for case work. However, there was evidence that all information, including email exchanges, was stored and added to the electronic chronology, making it easy to read and with clear outcomes. In most cases, it was clear as to the sender and receiver of such emails, however not always.

### Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How can the Cathedral satisfy itself that all safeguarding information is kept in one place and that the CSO has good oversight of concerns?
- How can the Cathedral be reassured that electronic case files contain clear details of those referring and those taking action?
- What would be the benefits of introducing a single, simple means of reporting concerns which would support pastoral care and enable systematic oversight by the CSO?

## 3.4 CLERGY DISCIPLINARY MEASURES

- 3.4.1** The auditors are aware of Clergy Disciplinary Measure (CDM) processes for some staff within the Cathedral. Blue files were not seen but the issues arising from such measures and the changes to staffing, policy and process were discussed as part of the audit.
- 3.4.2** Auditors reflected that care should be taken, when initiating a CDM process, that other relevant issues, which may also be safeguarding matters, are considered and acted upon.

### Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- There were no considerations under this heading.

## 3.5 TRAINING

- 3.5.1** Safeguarding training is an important mechanism for establishing safeguarding awareness and confidence throughout the Cathedral. It requires good quality substance, based on up-to-date evidence, with relevant case studies, engaging and relevant to the audience. It also requires strategic planning to identify priority groups for training, details of the training needs/requirements of people in different roles, and an implementation plan for training over time that tracks what training has been provided, who attended, and who still needs to attend or requires refresher sessions.

### *Description*

- 3.5.2** Ensuring that all staff and volunteers are trained at a level commensurate with their post within the Cathedral context is a challenge. Lincoln Cathedral uses the House of Bishops' national training programme. All clergy have received, or have scheduled, safeguarding for senior leaders (C4) training, in line with these requirements.
- 3.5.3** The auditors heard that almost all volunteers and staff at Lincoln Cathedral have completed basic awareness (C0) training, with the majority undertaking foundation (C1) training as appropriate to role. Volunteers now have this training as part of their induction.
- 3.5.4** In practice, staff training records are stored by the newly appointed and dedicated HR Manager on the Cathedral's IRIS system, which is used to identify when refresher training is required. For volunteers, the Volunteer Coordinator keeps a spreadsheet which identifies training, taking a three-month timescale at a time to ensure all volunteers remain up to date. This is an old-style system but does work well. It is



hoped that potentially the volunteers will be added to a more formal database over time.

- 3.5.5** As per the MoU in place, the diocese and CSO work together to provide training courses for the Cathedral's face-to-face training needs. This includes leadership (C2) training.

#### *Analysis*

- 3.5.6** The auditors judged that training is well thought out and in place for staff and volunteers. There is a central tracking system which although not the same for staff and volunteers, works well.
- 3.5.7** The auditors reflected that, with a large active volunteer body, the Cathedral has made a significant achievement in being able to ensure that all receive basic awareness training in safeguarding. However, there has been no cut off date by which all volunteers must have attended training. This means that there are a small number of less active volunteers who could be in public-facing roles without basic safeguarding training. Auditors reflected that this was an area of potential weakness.
- 3.5.8** Auditors also heard how the breadth of training provided through the current suite included some additional training such as the recent anti-terrorism training run in a multi-agency forum. However, the range of training does not fully cover the challenges and potential training needs of all the different departments and public-facing roles. Providing additional topical and contextual opportunities that will support good safeguarding practice, for example domestic abuse, de-escalation, mental health and substance abuse would go some way to mitigating this.
- 3.5.9** At present, there is no formal way of evaluating the impact of training on practice across the Cathedral, although it is possible that the suggested new Performance and Development Review process will assist with this. There is no training plan or systematic reporting of delivery against set targets which might also prove helpful.

#### **Questions for the Cathedral to consider**

- How might the Cathedral ensure that all volunteers have completed training in safeguarding?
- What additional contextual and supplementary training would best support those in public-facing roles to identify and manage risk and support those in need?
- What steps are needed to ensure that the Cathedral meets the new learning and development requirements and how might progress be monitored and reported?
- How might the Cathedral satisfy itself that safeguarding training is having a positive impact in practice?

## **3.6 SAFER RECRUITMENT**

### *Description*

- 3.6.1** Lincoln Cathedral's Statement of Safeguarding Principles (2021) includes the following: 'We will carefully select, support and train all those with any responsibility within the Church, in line with Safer Recruitment principles, including the use of criminal records disclosures and registration/membership of the relevant vetting and barring schemes.' This commitment is reflected in the *Safeguarding Handbook* (2020)

and is included in the *Staff Handbook* (2014) in respect of ‘appointments (paid and voluntary) involving contact with children and/or vulnerable adults thereby requiring disclosure checks via the disclosure and barring service’.

- 3.6.2** The *Safeguarding Handbook* contains a section on safer recruitment which sets out the process and references the House of Bishops’ practice guidance (2016).
- 3.6.3** The Cathedral’s risk register identified its top strategic risk (September 2021) as the ‘inability to fulfil the intended role and purpose of the cathedral due to inadequate HR systems, including performance management, if insufficiently robust, resilient, or well deployed. Lack of cohesive raft of HR and training policies’. Controls identified included the *Staff Handbook*, a robust paper filing system, the procurement and use of the new IRIS HR system for employees and the appointment of the HR Manager (who took up post in June 2021). Mitigating actions being taken included the review and roll out of the Performance Development Review (PDR) process, the development of an HR strategy and continuing HR training for managers. The safeguarding self-assessment prepared for the audit also identified as a priority the importance of ensuring that systems for record keeping and safer recruitment were robust.
- 3.6.4** Lincoln Cathedral employs 81 staff (both full and part time) and, pre-pandemic, was supported by around 600 volunteers. The safe recruitment of staff is within the remit of the HR Manager. There had been no dedicated HR capacity prior to this, although there was a post of HR Coordinator; HR advice was available on a consultancy basis from an external organisation, and the Chapter Clerk had oversight of all staff appointments. The charity Thirtyone:eight was (and still is) used for DBS checking.
- 3.6.5** The HR Manager reports to the Chapter Clerk, who has been in post since January 2018. They are responsible for the administration of safer recruitment, including DBS checks and verification of identity documents. They work alongside departmental heads and have been trained in safer recruitment but are not yet the lead recruiter for DBS purposes; this role remains with the Chapter Clerk only at present but will be transferred. The diocese oversees clergy recruitment and records; the HR Manager has not yet established links with the diocese but is planning to do so.
- 3.6.6** Since taking up post, the HR Manager has been reviewing the HR processes for staff and has developed templates to support managers (not all of whom have yet been trained in safer recruitment) in safely recruiting staff. There is now an induction checklist, which includes safeguarding basic awareness training. The recruitment packs have been revamped to include a safeguarding statement, and DBS is included as appropriate in role descriptions. A confidential declaration is used for all posts. The HR manager sits on appointment panels to support managers and provide HR oversight of the process.
- 3.6.7** A successful application to the Heritage Lottery Fund led to the creation of a Volunteer Coordinator post in 2018. This was originally for a period of two years, but the Cathedral subsequently allocated funding to make this post permanent. The Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for all volunteer recruitment, training, support and record keeping. They liaise as appropriate with the Chapter Clerk and the CSO in the event of a blemished DBS check. They have been working to gather all information about volunteers onto a single database. This was originally kept in spreadsheet form but is in the process of being transferred on to the ThankQ database, which was originally purchased to support communication and fundraising. Prior to this, there had been no central record keeping; records had been kept by volunteer group leaders, some of whom were staff, such as at the education office, and some who were themselves volunteers, such as the Head Steward and the

Master of the Company of Ringers (Tower Captain). The Volunteer Coordinator originally appointed had left shortly before the audit, and the post is in the process of being recruited to.

- 3.6.8** The Volunteer Coordinator conducted all initial interviews with prospective volunteers, involving departmental staff when the applicant already knew which role they wished to be appointed to. An application form was required, ID checked, and references taken up. An induction process was introduced which included the completion of safeguarding basic awareness training online or, where possible, face to face. The DBS process was already in place.
- 3.6.9** The Volunteer policy sets out clearly the principles, processes and expectations of volunteers. These include the selection and vetting process, induction and support, and the requirement to complete safeguarding training. The volunteer statement, which is a statement of expectations of both volunteer and the Cathedral, supports this and is signed by every new volunteer.
- 3.6.10** Not all volunteers have completed basic awareness training. The Volunteer Coordinator has used the return of volunteers post-pandemic as an opportunity to reaffirm standards and expectations, including in relation to the safety and wellbeing of the volunteers themselves. All volunteers are now required to collect a new electronic swipe card (which replaces the previous system of ID badges) in person from the Cathedral and these will not be issued until basic training is completed. Anyone who does not collect their swipe card will lose their right to volunteer.
- 3.6.11** The Cathedral's Safeguarding Strategy Delivery Plan (August 2020) identified a number of improvements needed to ensure safer recruitment practice was embedded across all recruitment of staff and volunteers. Two recommendations were made and progress on these is monitored by Chapter through its consideration of regular reports by the Chapter Safeguarding Lead (CSL) and the CSO. One of these (reviewing role descriptions and revisiting eligibility for DBS clearance) remains to be completed.

### *Analysis*

- 3.6.12** Safer recruitment of staff and volunteers is developing well. The use of electronic databases will enable systematic monitoring and more detailed reporting.
- 3.6.13** The auditors noted a good understanding of the importance of the recruitment process in setting out publicly the Cathedral's approach to safeguarding for those who are coming into contact with it, possibly for the first time.
- 3.6.14** The auditors reviewed six HR files, three for staff and three for volunteers, all of whom had been recruited in the last three years. Those for the staff showed that safer recruitment processes were being systematically applied for new appointments, and record keeping was good. References were requested and received for all roles, with specific questions being asked in relation to some which enabled a good quality reference. One file contained detailed interview records which demonstrated good use of safeguarding scenarios during the appointment process. The auditors noted that the adults barred list was not checked for all appointments of staff to posts requiring DBS checking, and questioned whether this was a deliberate decision or simply an oversight.
- 3.6.15** Volunteer files were less comprehensive but still showed improving practice. The auditors understood that there is much still to be done to review records of both staff and volunteers who have been in their roles for some years and whose recruitment was less robust than it is now, in order to identify and fill any gaps in information.



- 3.6.16** The auditors reflected that the introduction of the two electronic databases (IRIS and ThankQ), together with the appointment of the HR Manager and the imminent implementation of a PDR process, will strengthen practice. The training of relevant departmental managers in safer recruitment should be prioritised to support this further.
- 3.6.17** The appointment of the HR Manager coincided with the introduction of revised Safer Recruitment and People Management Guidance (2021) by the House of Bishops. The guidance contains a safer recruitment and people management assessment tool which the auditors reflected provides an opportunity for the Cathedral to review its processes further and establish a new baseline against which progress may be measured and reported.

**Questions for the Cathedral to consider**

- What needs to happen to ensure that the Cathedral's recruitment and record keeping practices meet the standards set out in the new national guidance and how will this be monitored and reported?

## 4. FINDINGS – ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORTS

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### 4.1 POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND GUIDANCE

#### *Description*

**4.1.1** Lincoln Cathedral has several policies and sets of procedures to cover safeguarding which include:

- Chorister Handbook
- Chorister Parents' Handbook
- Lincoln Cathedral Volunteer Handbook
- Lone Worker policy
- Safeguarding Choristers policy
- Lincoln Cathedral Safeguarding Handbook
- Social Media policy
- Staff Handbook
- Whistleblowing policy
- Transform and Thrive

**4.1.2** Many of these policies, including the Safeguarding Choristers policy, Transform and Thrive and the Whistleblowing policy are available on the Cathedral's website.

**4.1.3** The Cathedral also has a reporting flowchart which outlines the action to be taken in reporting a safeguarding concern, for staff and volunteers.

**4.1.4** The auditors heard how, for volunteers, the safeguarding policy is shared via the *Volunteer Handbook*, though this needs to be updated to include the most recent version. For staff, policies are stored in an accessible 'shared area' within the Cathedral's IT system. For volunteers, this was less clear with many not knowing where to find a policy should they wish to read it.

#### *Analysis*

**4.1.5** The auditors judged that much work has taken place to develop policy related to safeguarding, and this is especially true with reference to the choirs. However, gaps still exist.

**4.1.6** The Transform and Thrive document sets out values adopted by the Cathedral and while much work has been started to update policies, auditors reflected that many of them do not link together and are out of date. Policies, such as that covering social media, do not include the most up to date information, the *Staff Handbook* does not include issues covering any aspect of safeguarding, or outline expected behaviour from staff. The *Chorister Handbook* is well written and clear but does not include issues such as peer-on-peer abuse, which is also not covered within the Safeguarding Choristers policy. Auditors judged this to be insufficient, with policies not adequately covering the detail needed to ensure that all those working within the Cathedral could effectively recognise, report and record concerns.

- 4.1.7** There are a large number of policies and procedures relating to safeguarding, which is positive, but has created a slightly confused picture whereby guidance overlaps and is replicated in several places, with gaps in others.

#### Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- Who is best placed to review the content and range of the existing suite of safeguarding policies within the Cathedral?
- What are the current gaps in policy and procedure?
- Should there be a mechanism for regularly reviewing policies throughout the year?

## 4.2 THE DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING ADVISOR/CATHEDRAL SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

### *Description*

- 4.2.1** Lincoln Cathedral's CSO takes responsibility for most safeguarding work, with the exception of allegations made against clergy. She took up post in January 2020 and is the first to occupy this position; Cathedral case work had previously been carried out by the DSA. The CSO is line managed by the Canon Precentor.
- 4.2.2** The CSO is a qualified social worker with a long background in social work. She continues to work part time for the local authority as a social worker and so receives reflective supervision as required for her professional registration.
- 4.2.3** The DSA for Lincoln has been in post since January 2021, has a professional background in public protection and brings experience in risk management, county lines, exploitation and multi-agency working. The DSA is line managed by the Diocesan Secretary and has undertaken senior leadership (C4) safeguarding training. The MoU between the diocese and Cathedral details areas where the CSO and DSA should link together but does not go into details about how this is achieved.
- 4.2.4** The auditors heard how the DSA and CSO have sought to support significant change in safeguarding within the Cathedral since their respective appointments, which has included an increasing focus on working together, making use of each other's respective skills, and an evolution of the previously defensive culture to one of greater openness and greater collaboration between the diocese and the Cathedral for safeguarding work.
- 4.2.5** The DSA is supported in his work by a Survivor Advocate, Case Worker, Training and Development Coordinator and an administrator. Currently the Assistant DSA post is vacant. All staff within the DST have backgrounds in police, domestic abuse or public protection and take responsibility for specific areas of the DST's work.
- 4.2.6** Both the DSA and CSO have job descriptions in place that describe their responsibilities for safeguarding.

### *Analysis*

- 4.2.7** The auditors judged that the CSO at Lincoln Cathedral is effective, well recognised and highly regarded. Cathedral safeguarding work is supported by an increasingly strong relationship with the diocese, and the DST. However, the collaboration between the DSA and CSO is currently ad hoc and not underpinned by policy or by a clear MoU. The CSO receives reflective supervision through her role as a qualified

social worker with the local authority, but it is not clear how the CSO receives her case supervision, for example, or how she is line managed for case work from within the Cathedral.

- 4.2.8** The auditors heard consistently, throughout the audit, of the high degree of respect for the current CSO, and how things had changed for the better, particularly in regard to her openness and availability and the rapid positive changes that she has helped to drive within the Cathedral. The CSO is recognised by almost everyone and consistently identified as the person they would approach were they to have safeguarding concerns.
- 4.2.9** Auditors reflected that the Cathedral's relationship with the Diocese of Lincoln would be strengthened by a pooling of skills. Currently the DST does not have a qualified social worker for provision of advice and the CSO does not have experience of risk management of offenders. Working together on a more formal footing and provision of peer supervision would be a notable strength. The auditors saw much evidence of the closeness of their working and collaboration and the positive impact this has on safeguarding development and case work unofficially.
- 4.2.10** The auditors did, however, retain a concern that is not uncommon in the work of CSOs – that the current workload of the CSO is difficult to sustain effectively. It is therefore a positive development that the team has been expanded with the addition of the HR Manager. Auditors reflected that some further consideration of the remit of the CSO role is needed. As mentioned in paragraph 3.3.7 above, there remains some confusion regarding what to refer to the CSO and there is a balance to be struck between all concerns being referred to the CSO who is a decision maker for thresholds, and the role becoming a one-person reflection of the DST, covering everything including welfare of staff, clergy and volunteers. While this remains confused, it may compromise the clear reporting and responsibility lines.

#### Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- To what extent is the Cathedral confident that the remit of joint working between the DSA and CSO as laid out in the MoU is clear?
- How might the breadth of knowledge and experience held between the DST and the CSO be pooled and made best use of for both the DSA and the CSO?
- How can the Cathedral be assured that the remit and working practice of the CSO is sustainable and that the correct information is referred?
- Who is best placed to provide case-based supervision for the CSO?
- How clear are the Chapter and senior leadership about what their 'ask' is of the CSO and how might they support the postholder to keep this manageable?

## 4.3 RECORDING AND IT SYSTEMS

- 4.3.1** As previously stated, despite recent work to develop a database of volunteer training records, the Cathedral does not currently have a centralised database for safeguarding concerns, neither does it have a centralised system for the recording of recruitment and training across both staff and volunteers.
- 4.3.2** This means that, in practice, some records are held locally, within individual departments. The auditors saw evidence of this in the verger team's incident book

and the music department's incident and safeguarding books. While concerns considered to meet the threshold are shared appropriately with the CSO, this remains open to subjectivity. It therefore raises the risk that perceived low-level concerns – that may otherwise help to build a combined understanding of risk from sources across the Cathedral – are not shared and instead held in isolation.

**Questions for the Cathedral to consider**

- How might the current system of locally held records and incident books be combined to provide better immediate oversight of low-level concerns?
- What functionality would be required of a Cathedral safeguarding database, and who would need to have access to it to ensure timely and effective information sharing?

## 5. FINDINGS – LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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### 5.1 QUALITY ASSURANCE

#### *Description*

- 5.1.1** A safe organisation needs constant feedback loops about what is going well and where there are difficulties in relation to safeguarding, and this should drive ongoing cycles of learning and improvement. Robust quality assurance enables an organisation to understand its strengths and weaknesses. Potential sources of data are numerous, including independent scrutiny. Quality assurance needs to be strategic and systematic to support accountability and shed light on how well things are working and where there are gaps or concerns.
- 5.1.2** Lincoln Cathedral has a Safeguarding Strategy and a Safeguarding Strategy Delivery Plan which identifies key areas and the tasks required under core headings related to safeguarding. This reveals that there is much work either achieved or ongoing and much timely completion. Outstanding areas include: 'safeguarding champions' within each department, job description reviews and leadership training. The auditors saw evidence of this action plan being scrutinised regularly by Chapter.
- 5.1.3** The auditors also saw evidence of previous efforts in quality assurance, including:
- An independent safeguarding audit, conducted in 2019 which led to the Strategy Delivery Plan
  - A local authority section 11 self-audit of safeguarding in February 2021, which had been externally quality assured and challenged
  - PCR2, which is nearing completion.
- 5.1.4** Chapter itself receives a written report from the Canon Precentor, who is the Chapter member with responsibility as safeguarding strategic lead, at each meeting, and safeguarding is a standing agenda item and recorded in the minutes. The report is written in conjunction with the CSO and contains an overview of case work together with relevant other matters such as updates on training, past case review 2 and progress with matters arising from the section 11 audit. An annual safeguarding report is presented, for which the CSO is in attendance, and this report is also sent to the Bishop (as of 2021). This enables questions to be asked and answered and a flow of information regarding safeguarding.
- 5.1.5** The Canon Precentor attends the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel (DSAP) and presents a report at each meeting which is sometimes written and sometimes verbal. The DSAP has a scrutiny and challenge function and is discussed in section 5.4. At present there is no feedback from DSAP to Chapter.
- 5.1.6** There is some capacity through the setting up of spreadsheets to monitor key activities (training, DBS, safer recruitment processes), which will be strengthened as electronic databases are introduced and populated.
- 5.1.7** The Cathedral is without an operational safeguarding group answerable to Chapter which means that all safeguarding responsibility falls to the CSO and Canon Precentor.



## Analysis

- 5.1.8** The auditors judged that Chapter is scrupulous in seeking assurances about safeguarding within the Cathedral, however there may be areas where the Chapter is reliant on what is reported to it – for example, whether all volunteers are safeguarding trained. There is a further opportunity to grow this in order to guide the strategic planning for safeguarding and enhance the depth of quality assurance that takes place.
- 5.1.9** The Chapter at Lincoln Cathedral has changed almost completely in membership over the last few years and there is an opportunity for it to grow into an effective body for supporting change in safeguarding. Auditors heard how the Dean and the Canon Precentor, supported by the Chapter Clerk have prioritised this development to ensure a higher degree of quality assurance than may have previously been in place, however while individuals certainly inspire confidence, the survey showed less confidence in the processes sitting behind these individuals.
- 5.1.10** The close working between the Cathedral and diocese further supports this with Diocesan membership on Chapter reciprocated by Cathedral representation on the DSAP and allows those leading safeguarding within the Cathedral to benefit from the discussions held at the DSAP.
- 5.1.11** The auditors noted the recent introduction of a number of good processes. The external review in 2019 was helpful in setting direction and providing a basis for systematic reporting; the section 11 QA process was thorough and useful, and the introduction of a system of regular, written reporting to Chapter positive. The request for the Cathedral to provide a regular, written report to the DSAP is appropriate. These reporting arrangements will be further strengthened when the IT systems being put into place are able to produce details of activity and highlight areas which need attention.
- 5.1.12** The auditors were concerned, however, that the number of audits and reports risk causing confusion and fatigue, and emphasise activity over evidence of quality and effectiveness. In addition, despite the assurances that are provided to Chapter and others around the quality of the safeguarding service, the auditors noted that the validity of these may be threatened by the lack of centralised oversight of safeguarding concerns and record keeping. In the absence of monitoring and reporting systems, the responsibility for providing assurance to Chapter sits with the Canon Precentor and the CSO, who risk being seen as the only people responsible for safeguarding.
- 5.1.13** The auditors reflected that the development of a single plan, as required in *Promoting a Safer Church*, could provide the strategic framework for integrating current and planned activity into a single document, against which progress could be monitored and reports to Chapter, DSAP and Bishop made. This would have the advantage of aligning with the DSAP strategic plan. This would also provide an opportunity for stepping back and reflecting what systems for data collection and reporting (including voices of survivors, children, adults) can best support Chapter in promoting a safer Cathedral and establishing a culture of care and vigilance. This is discussed further in section 5.5.
- 5.1.14** Chapter may also wish to consider what role could potentially be taken by the DSA and DSAP in providing formal, arm's length scrutiny of safeguarding arrangements.

**Questions for the Cathedral to consider**

- What are the next steps in developing the Cathedral's quality assurance arrangements and how might these be taken forward?
- How might the Cathedral seek regular feedback from a range of children and adults, including survivors of abuse?
- What role might the DSA and DSAP play in providing assurance to the Dean and Chapter about the effectiveness of Cathedral safeguarding arrangements?

**5.2 COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE SAFEGUARDING SERVICE**

- 5.2.1** A good complaints policy enables people to raise concerns, and to have timely and appropriate consideration of any problems. A strong policy is clear about who complaints should be made to, and how they can be escalated if necessary. Positive features include an independent element, and clarity that *raising a safeguarding concern*, and *making a complaint about a safeguarding service*, are two distinct things.
- 5.2.2** The Diocese of Lincoln has a Complaints Procedure which is included on the Cathedral's website. The procedure specifically excludes 'matters relating to safeguarding which should be referred directly to the DSA but does not make clear that the policy can be used to make a complaint about a safeguarding response by the DST.
- 5.2.3** The auditors did not see any cases relating to complaints made about the safeguarding service within the Cathedral.

**Questions for the Cathedral to consider**

- There were no considerations under this heading.

**5.3 WHISTLEBLOWING**

- 5.3.1** Lincoln Cathedral has a whistleblowing policy which was approved by Chapter in March 2021. It is open for use by all employees, and 'other individuals performing functions in relation to or on behalf of the Cathedral, such as agency workers and contractors, are strongly encouraged to use it as well.' A flowchart sets out a staged process, with provision for investigation and liaison with external bodies as necessary. These include the DST. There is also provision for external escalation if the matter is unresolved.
- 5.3.2** There is a Diocesan Safeguarding Whistleblowing policy and this is publicly available via a link to the Diocesan website on the Cathedral's website. There does not appear to be a more general whistleblowing policy for the diocese.
- 5.3.3** The diocesan policy effectively covers the whistleblowing process in the context of safeguarding and strikes a positive tone throughout as to the importance of whistleblowing, the value placed on it by the diocese and the protections afforded to those who do 'blow the whistle'. It is unclear how the diocesan and Cathedral policies align, nor why there is a whistleblowing policy specifically for safeguarding matters.



- 5.3.4** The auditors reflected that the inclusion of the independent chair of the DSAP as the third port of call for whistleblowers, without specifying the exact nature of their role at this point, may risk compromising the perceived independence of the role. A recent whistleblowing matter brought to the auditors' attention indicates that this may be the case.

#### Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How might the Cathedral and diocese work together to ensure that their whistleblowing policies and procedures are aligned, appropriately scoped and properly understood?

## 5.4 DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING ADVISORY PANEL (DSAP)

### Description

- 5.4.1** Based on the national guidance in *Roles and Responsibilities* (2017) for DSAPs, the panel should have a key role in bringing independence and safeguarding expertise to an oversight, scrutiny and challenge role, including contributing to a strategic plan. No specifics are provided in relation to cathedrals, with the apparent assumption being that cathedrals are part of diocesan structures.
- 5.4.2** The Lincoln DSAP was set up in 2017, shortly before the publication of *Roles and Responsibilities*. The panel has an independent lay chair, which is a voluntary position. The current chair, an experienced former local authority manager and HMI (Ofsted), took up the role in July 2018, the previous (and first) postholder having occupied the role for around 12 months.
- 5.4.3** Membership includes representatives from the diocese and the Cathedral, together with representatives from a range of statutory and voluntary organisations. The Cathedral representatives named in the terms of reference are the Chapter Clerk and the Chapter Safeguarding Lead (currently the Canon Precentor).
- 5.4.4** Minutes indicate that attendance by Church officers is generally good but that by other panel members is less consistent. Case work discussions take place at each meeting but are separately minuted.
- 5.4.5** The present terms of reference for the DSAP were revised in July 2019. They set out the DSAP's purpose as 'to provide independent scrutiny of safeguarding practice and policy within the Diocese of Lincoln. This includes Lincoln Cathedral'. They differ from the model terms of reference set out in *Roles and Responsibilities* in setting out a direct role for the panel and the lay chair in providing case work advice rather than the more arm's length scrutiny function envisaged in the national guidance.
- 5.4.6** The role description for the independent lay chair largely reflects the model role description set out in national guidance. The notable difference is that in Lincoln, the lay chair is assigned the more 'hands on' role of supporting the Bishop and others in managing complex safeguarding situations which may attract high profile media attention.
- 5.4.7** The diocesan whistleblowing procedure also specifies a role for the independent lay chair in receiving whistleblowing concerns and reviewing outcomes. This is discussed further in section 5.3.
- 5.4.8** The DSAP has a strategy (2019–2021) and an action plan for 2021 which is due for review in January 2022. It is a detailed document which aligns with the six principles

of the national *Promoting a Safer Church* policy. The emphasis is on operational activity rather than scrutiny, although there are actions aimed at providing information which will enable scrutiny, such as encouraging the take up and use of the parish safeguarding dashboard.

- 5.4.9** The DSAP terms of reference provide for the panel to 'produce an annual report of its activities for Bishop's Council and Cathedral Chapter'. The auditors did not see any report from the DSAP to the Cathedral Chapter to this effect.
- 5.4.10** There is no internal group or committee within the Cathedral, additional to Chapter, which has an overview function in relation to safeguarding.

### Analysis

- 5.4.11** The DSAP has worked to provide strong leadership of safeguarding arrangements across the diocese and put systems in place to enable effective monitoring. Its overly operational focus, and the direct involvement of the independent chair in some aspects of operational activity relating to the Cathedral may have affected confidence in the DSAP's ability to provide independent scrutiny and quality assurance.
- 5.4.12** The auditors reflected that the imminent conclusion of a number of safeguarding and disciplinary investigations in both Cathedral and diocese, together with the concluding before Christmas 2021 of Lincoln's part of the PCR2 process, may provide an opportunity to review the terms of reference of the DSAP, the role of its independent lay chair and the representation of the Cathedral (which national guidance limits to 'a senior Cathedral representative'). This would sit alongside the proposed review of the MoU between Cathedral and diocese and ensure that all bodies and processes are appropriately aligned.

### Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- What needs to happen to enable the Cathedral to participate with confidence in the DSAP, and for the DSAP to provide assurance to Chapter of the effectiveness of the Cathedral's safeguarding arrangements?

## 5.5 LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- 5.5.1** Safeguarding leadership takes various forms – strategic, operational and theological – with different people taking different roles. How these roles are understood, and how they fit together, can be determinative in how well led the safeguarding function is.

### Theological leadership

#### Description

- 5.5.2** The Dean of Lincoln is the leader of every aspect of the Cathedral's life and therefore has overall theological responsibility for promoting safeguarding. The auditors heard how the Dean has a strong understanding of the importance of promoting the message of inclusion, wellbeing and listening and that she is interested in those on the margins of society who do not have a voice.
- 5.5.3** The Dean has been in her role at Lincoln since 2016, having been ordained as a priest in 1998. The Dean has previously held roles in the Diocese of Chichester and became an archdeacon in 2008. The Dean stepped back from her current role for a period of several months due to concern regarding the handling of a non-recent safeguarding issue. As a result of this experience, the Dean takes her role in

safeguarding very seriously and has sought to proactively improve the safeguarding function and accountability within the Cathedral. The Dean understands the complex nature of Cathedral life and its implications for effective safeguarding, and described herself as being, 'very vigilant, the experience has made me much more understanding of victims and how they must be feeling'.

- 5.5.4** The auditors saw some evidence that safeguarding is either implicitly or explicitly referred to through sermons, preaching and prayer, including reference to the homeless supported by Lincoln Cathedral, as well as those who fall victim of modern slavery and are being supported via the Clewer Initiative.

### Analysis

- 5.5.5** The auditors judged that while the theological leadership of safeguarding is beginning to develop at Lincoln Cathedral, it is not always overtly visible to those who are part of the Cathedral community and sometimes takes the form of notices rather than theological inclusion.
- 5.5.6** The auditors saw evidence, through surveys of the congregation, volunteers, staff and other adults involved in the Cathedral, that the wider message of the importance of safeguarding (and the value placed on it) is not always clear. For example, only 9 respondents (13%) felt that safeguarding and wellbeing featured in the message of sermons, compared to 27 respondents (38%) who felt this was moderate and 5 (7%) who did not recognise any such messaging.
- 5.5.7** The Cathedral was felt to be better at making safeguarding an obvious priority with 4 respondents (59%) feeling that this was clear, but with 22 (31%) feeling that the Cathedral was only moderately successful in making clear its safeguarding commitment. This suggests that more work is now needed to make clear that Lincoln Cathedral's commitment to safeguarding pervades both actions and theological leadership.
- 5.5.8** The Dean did raise concerns regarding some of the Bible readings specified in the Lectionary and their suitability, given the raised awareness of safeguarding matters. This is a particular issue at services attended by children, including choristers. It is an issue for the national Church, as the Dean is not the only Church officer who has expressed such reservations to the auditors.

### Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- What opportunities currently exist, or can be created, to share the message of safeguarding and its theological importance?

## Strategic leadership

### Description

- 5.5.9** The House of Bishops' *Roles and Responsibilities* practice guidance assigns different and overlapping roles to Dean and Chapter, with the former having a clear leadership role in relation to safeguarding, and Chapter having a strategic and oversight role in relation to the Church of England's *Promoting a Safer Church* safeguarding policy. This includes the requirement to have a *Promoting a Safer Church* action plan in place that sets out, in line with national and local priorities, how the policy is being put into action, and is reviewed regularly.
- 5.5.10** The Chapter of Lincoln Cathedral usually consists of the Dean, the Residentiary Canon (Canon Precentor), a clergy representative of the diocese, and four lay

members, including the chair of the Finance Committee. In addition, the Diocesan Secretary is currently a member of Chapter and a non-stipendiary residentiary canon. Those in attendance but not Chapter members include the CSO when required for an agenda item, and the Chapter Clerk. A senior executive group, meeting fortnightly and chaired by the Dean, was put into place in 2020, in order to separate out the executive functions of Chapter from its leadership and scrutiny functions. Membership comprises the Dean, the residentiary clergy and directors.

- 5.5.11** The Canon Precentor is the Chapter member with responsibility as strategic lead for safeguarding. In this role, he reports on safeguarding matters to every meeting of Chapter and attends the DSAP as Cathedral representative.
- 5.5.12** Precipitated by the impact of the Covid pandemic, *Transform and Thrive* was published in September 2020 and sets out 'the framework for discussion of a new strategic direction for the Cathedral' within the context of its vision, mission and purpose. Although focusing primarily on the financial impact of the pandemic, the challenges identified include that of developing and embedding a culture of safeguarding throughout the Cathedral.
- 5.5.13** An independent report commissioned in 2019 set a strategic direction for safeguarding which Chapter has been following and provides the basis for regular progress reporting to Chapter. Chapter clearly 'owns' safeguarding and has taken steps to strengthen arrangements, e.g. by investing in a dedicated CSO post, Choir Matron, and HR Manager. It monitors the Cathedral risk register, which identifies 'safeguarding allegations' as one of its top 20 strategic risks. Controls are more widely focused on creating a safer church through key appointments, strengthening processes and supporting survivors.

### Analysis

- 5.5.14** The auditors judged that the strategic leadership of safeguarding at Lincoln Cathedral is beginning to develop and that there is a clear understanding of the strengths and potential weaknesses of safeguarding. Since lockdown, the Dean has been able to walk the floor again and ensure higher visibility, and strategic leaders are starting to think about lines of accountability, a management matrix and a 'next steps' plan for *Transform and Thrive*. While being actively considered and improving, visibility of strategic leadership among the Cathedral community is not yet where it needs to be.
- 5.5.15** The auditors saw evidence in those with strategic leadership responsibility within the Cathedral of a good understanding of both the strengths and needs of the Cathedral. The Dean has arranged coaching to ensure the ability to step back from operational leadership and ensure strong strategic leadership.
- 5.5.16** The auditors heard consistently of the commitment to safeguarding shown by the Chapter member with strategic responsibility for safeguarding and of the strong links between strategic and operational safeguarding within the Cathedral, particularly around case management. Auditors reflected that this is a strong position, but there is potential for this to become based on the people in role, rather than the system supporting these links and the Cathedral should ensure that such links are underpinned by policy and procedures in order to ensure continuity.
- 5.5.17** Auditors also heard that such leaders are not always sufficiently visible to many in the Cathedral. The survey responses of those attending, working or volunteering within the Cathedral reflected that only 36% felt that this group were very visible, while 41% felt that they were only moderately visible on the Cathedral floor or within key departments and 17% that they were not at all visible. In order to coordinate

leadership of safeguarding that it is both recognisable and visible, Lincoln Cathedral strategic leaders need to further develop work to reinforce and develop this.

**5.5.18** Auditors also heard of the high number of reviews and audits recently carried out across the Cathedral, including the section 11 audit and PCR2. This provides a good opportunity for learning and improvement but also means that the Cathedral might be working to several potentially overlapping action plans (see also section 5.1). Auditors reflected that it might be useful to draw these into one overarching plan under *Promoting a Safer Church*.

#### Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- What opportunities are presented by the development of the next phase of *Transform and Thrive* to place safeguarding central to the vision and mission of the cathedral?
- How might the Cathedral ensure that those in strategic leadership roles are sufficiently visible to all those who work, volunteer or worship within it?
- How can the Cathedral guard against safeguarding becoming dependent on the people with strategic and operational lead and their relationships and ways of working, rather than the system underpinning such work?
- What benefits might there be in developing a strategy for *Promoting a Safer Church* with an accompanying delivery plan, and how could this be achieved?

### Operational leadership

#### Description

**5.5.19** Lincoln Cathedral benefits from an experienced CSO, who is social work qualified, shows an empathetic and pragmatic approach to her work and who is well known across the Cathedral. She works closely with the Chapter Clerk, who is the operational safeguarding lead for the Cathedral.

**5.5.20** The Chapter Clerk and CSO are supported by several others who fulfil a degree of operational leadership (i.e., Education Manager, Volunteer Coordinator, Director of Music and the Dean's Verger), all bringing a good degree of prior experience and expertise to their roles.

**5.5.21** The Chapter Clerk chairs a monthly general managers' meeting, which is attended by the CSO and includes safeguarding considerations on its regular agenda.

**5.5.22** Recently the Chapter Clerk has created a weekly meeting called 'Under the Tower' which brings together key individuals and promotes coordination and planning for routine and special events taking place in the Cathedral. However, between operational leaders, much of the coordination and contact happens through informal mechanisms such as 'walking the floor', passing conversations and the 'open door' policy of the CSO.

**5.5.23** The recent appointment of a dedicated HR Manager is a positive development which will support the mechanisms behind safeguarding such as safer recruitment recording for training, and PDR.

#### Analysis

**5.5.24** The auditors judged that the operational leadership of safeguarding at Lincoln Cathedral is strong but that this is invested within the individuals rather than evidence of a coordinated leadership embedded across all departments. The Cathedral has



identified the need for better communication across the Cathedral and there is now a further opportunity to underpin this with more formal routes of communication, collaboration and standardisation.

**5.5.25** In the absence of an operational safeguarding committee, or equivalent, the general managers' meeting is the sole forum where operational safeguarding matters may be discussed. As there is no operational delivery plan for safeguarding (as opposed to the various action plans discussed elsewhere), it was unclear to the auditors where activity is coordinated, performance discussed, good practice identified and shared, and actions identified. This means there is a dependence on individuals (the CSO, Chapter Clerk and the Strategic Safeguarding Lead) for oversight and reporting. Were the Cathedral to develop a safeguarding delivery plan, this would need to be coordinated and led by an operational group in order to ensure implementation across all parts of the Cathedral. The auditors also reflected that there is a need to ensure that there are clear guidelines for issues referred to the CSO in order for her to make any decision regarding safeguarding, while also ensuring that the role does not become so overwhelmed with pastoral issues, that issues of safeguarding are missed.

#### Questions for the Cathedral to consider

- How might more formal routes of communication between operational safeguarding leaders be managed?
- How can the Cathedral ensure that the role of CSO is clear and that safeguarding is prioritised within this role?
- How might the operational leadership for safeguarding be strengthened to become a cross-Cathedral effort rather than the responsibility of individuals, and where might this be coordinated?

## 5.6 CULTURE

### *Description*

- 5.6.1** The most critical aspect of safeguarding relates to the culture within any organisation. In a Church of England context, that can mean, for example, the extent to which priority is placed on safeguarding individuals as opposed to the reputation of the Church, or the ability of all members of the Church to think the unthinkable about friends and colleagues. SCIE's experience auditing safeguarding in faith contexts more broadly suggests that in areas where there is experience among senior clergy of previous serious abuse cases, a culture of openness and humility in approaching safeguarding issues can be stronger and accompanied by a move away from responses which give too much attention to reputational issues and the welfare of (alleged) perpetrators, as opposed to the welfare of victims and survivors.
- 5.6.2** Any cathedral should strive for an open, learning culture where safeguarding is a shared responsibility, albeit supported by experts, and which encourages people to raise concerns about how things are working in order that they can be addressed. An open learning culture starts from the assumption that maintaining adequate vigilance is difficult and proactively seeks feedback on how safeguarding is operating and encourages people to highlight any concerns.
- 5.6.3** Lincoln Cathedral has a clear sense that safeguarding is a priority in all that is done within the Cathedral. Auditors heard this message clearly throughout conversations.

Auditors also felt that the Cathedral knew itself well and had identified through its self-assessment document (submitted to auditors prior to the audit) areas such as communication and quality assurance loops which were also identified as part of the audit.

- 5.6.4** There have been recent examples of failure by senior leaders to recognise and report potential safeguarding concerns in line with agreed procedures, which have been extensively publicised. Very recently, there are unfinished processes locally and nationally which indicate a degree of mistrust between individuals across both Cathedral and diocese and a lack of confidence in diocesan procedures, which potentially affect the actions and wellbeing of a number of individuals. This has led to a climate of anxiety which may in turn have led to a tendency to over-share information for fear of not sharing it enough. At the level of case work, leaders need to be confident to leave this to the CSO and DST.
- 5.6.5** The return of the Chancellor following court proceedings will be an opportunity to unify as a Chapter and give strong messages to survivors that they are welcome in Lincoln.

### *Analysis*

- 5.6.6** The auditors judged that safeguarding is a commonly understood priority across the Cathedral and many opportunities are being taken to further reinforce this culture. However, there remain areas of inconsistency in the more public messaging around this, which will require additional work in order to continue to develop and sustain a unified and safe culture.
- 5.6.7** The Cathedral is not complacent about culture but has perhaps been cautious regarding change due to past experience and has not challenged arrangements or considered alternatives for safeguarding leadership and representation which might better suit staff roles and support individuals.
- 5.6.8** The Cathedral does engage with external services and support linked with safeguarding and is showing marked progress in a culture based on a shared sense of genuine and open responsibility to others, rather than on one which is based on reputation.
- 5.6.9** The auditors heard that the Dean has been the subject of some unkind comments on social media which, together with a small number of strongly expressed comments in the survey for this audit suggest that there remains a feeling of unease in leadership from pockets across the wider Cathedral community. There were, however, also some very positive survey comments regarding the Dean, and the Cathedral has worked hard to provide reassurance, but needs to continue to address these issues.
- 5.6.10** Despite this, during Covid, the Cathedral has increased its online community and ensured its culture is reflected both online and via social media. Auditors heard how questions related to safeguarding are raised and answered as appropriate through the Cathedral's social media. However, it has been difficult for the Cathedral to maintain a place of welcome throughout the pandemic with the need for social distancing and lockdown, and this has had an effect on the range of people available to support those in need.

**Questions for the Cathedral to consider**

- How might the Cathedral reassess roles and responsibilities in safeguarding to better meet needs?
- What further actions might be put in place to promote greater confidence that the Cathedral has learned from recent experience and is building and embedding a culture which puts the experiences of victims and survivors at its heart?
- How can the profile of the Cathedral's commitment to safeguarding be better reflected to those that use and visit the site?



## 6. CONCLUSIONS

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- 6.1.1** The vergers team are well recognised and effective in their arrangements for the safety and security of the site and visitors. There is some further work to be done to ensure that this continues to be underpinned by agreed procedures to ensure that the Cathedral is both a place of welcome and safety.
- 6.1.2** There is a range of safely managed provision for children at Lincoln Cathedral.
- 6.1.3** While there is a positive recognition of the needs of various groups within the Cathedral, including of volunteers themselves, there is not yet a clear ethos or recognition of the potential vulnerabilities of adults who may visit the Cathedral.
- 6.1.4** Much good work has taken place within the choirs in recent years to strengthen and reinforce safeguarding efforts and there is a clear priority placed on the welfare of choristers.
- 6.1.5** The safeguarding practice of the bell tower at Lincoln Cathedral is good in practice but would benefit from being reflected in tower-specific policy and procedures.
- 6.1.6** Case work at Lincoln Cathedral is a strength with the introduction of a dedicated CSO post. This has benefited from a close working with the DSA and external agencies.
- 6.1.7** While progress is being made in developing the central tracking and monitoring of training, there remain vulnerabilities while this process is fully established in ensuring that all within the Cathedral have a current and up-to-date understanding of safeguarding.
- 6.1.8** The process of safer recruitment is evident and record keeping is good. There is a process in place for safer recruitment of volunteers.
- 6.1.9** Much work has taken place to develop policy related to safeguarding, and this is especially true with reference to the choirs. However, gaps and overlap exist and there is no formal mechanism for the review of policies.
- 6.1.10** The CSO at Lincoln Cathedral is highly effective, well recognised and regarded. Cathedral safeguarding work is supported by a very strong relationship with the DSA team.
- 6.1.11** Chapter seeks assurances about safeguarding within the Cathedral but can only do this based on information received.
- 6.1.12** The DSAP provides strong leadership of safeguarding arrangements across the diocese and put systems in place to enable effective monitoring but may have an overly operational focus. Direct involvement of the independent chair in some aspects of operational activity relating to the Cathedral may have affected confidence in its ability to provide independent scrutiny and quality assurance.
- 6.1.13** Theological leadership of safeguarding is developing at Lincoln Cathedral, and ideas are in place, but it is not always overtly visible to those who are part of the Cathedral community.
- 6.1.14** The strategic leadership of safeguarding at Lincoln Cathedral is good and there is a clear understanding of the strengths and potential weaknesses of safeguarding. However, despite Covid 19, the visibility of strategic leadership among the Cathedral community is not yet where it needs to be.
- 6.1.15** The operational leadership of safeguarding in Lincoln Cathedral is strong and

generally well embedded across all departments. There is now a further opportunity to underpin this with more formal routes of communication, collaboration and standardisation.

- 6.1.16** Safeguarding is a commonly understood priority across the Cathedral and many opportunities are being taken to further reinforce this culture. However, there remain areas of inconsistency.

## 7. APPENDICES

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### Information provided to auditors

In advance of the audit, auditors received the following documents:

- Annual report to Chapter dated 13 July 2021
- Safeguarding Strategy Delivery Plan
- Safeguarding report to Chapter dated 11 May 2021
- Safer Church notice (with photos) dated 9 September 2020
- Blank safeguarding agreement between the Cathedral and schools attended by choristers
- Cathedral floor plan
- Cathedral Safeguarding Officer's job description dated May 2019
- *Chorister Parents' Handbook* dated September 2021
- Choir Matron job description and person specification (undated)
- Chorister information sheet dated September 2021
- Code of Confidentiality and Data Protection Summary for staff and volunteers (undated)
- Blank confidential returns form (undated)
- Data Protection Impact Assessment dated 2018
- Data Protection Implementation Document dated 3 May 2018
- Data Protection policy dated 12 November 2019
- Data Sharing Agreement between the diocese and Cathedral (undated)
- Dean's Verger application pack dated April 2020
- Declaration of Interest policy dated March 2018
- Emergency Action Plan for Fire dated November 2019
- Guidance for Lost Children and Adults (undated)
- Health and Safety Policy dated December 2017
- Helping Hands poster dated 5 March 2021
- How do we keep you safe? (booklet) (undated)
- Lincoln Cathedral safeguarding flowchart dated September 2021
- *Lincoln Cathedral Volunteer Handbook* (undated)

- Lincoln Cathedral Volunteer policy
- Links to website and sermons
- Lone Worker policy (undated)
- Lone Working risk assessment (undated)
- Major Incident Plan dated 16 May 2018
- Media and Press policy dated 2017
- MoU between the Diocese of Lincoln and the Cathedral dated 9 March 2021
- Risk Register report dated 9 September 2021
- Strategic Risks dated 6 May 2021
- Brief Overview of Cathedral Functioning (undated)
- Pastoral Care policy dated 1 February 2021
- Privacy Notice dated October 2020
- Lincoln Cathedral Choir – A Guide for Probationers dated December 2021
- Lincoln Cathedral Choir contract dated September 2021
- Safeguarding Choristers policy dated February 2021
- *Lincoln Cathedral Safeguarding Handbook* dated 2 September 2020
- Safeguarding Lead Role Description dated October 2017
- Safeguarding statement (undated)
- Safeguarding Strategy Delivery Plan dated March 2019
- Section 11 Audit for the LSCP dated 17 February 2021
- Social Media policy dated November 2017 (in draft form)
- *Staff Handbook* dated July 2014
- Statement of Safeguarding Principles dated 2021
- *Transform and Thrive* dated September 2020
- Blank volunteer agreement
- Volunteer Problem Solving Process dated 2019
- Whistleblowing Policy dated 9 March 2021
- Chapter minutes dated 11 May 2021
- Chapter minutes dated 13 July 2021
- Chapter minutes dated 14 September 2021

- Lincoln Cathedral Risk Assessment Guidelines (undated)
- Redacted DSAP minutes January 2021
- Redacted DSAP minutes April 2021
- Redacted DSAP minutes July 2021

### Participation of staff

The auditors had conversations with:

- The Dean
- The independent chair of DSAP
- The Cathedral Safeguarding Officer
- The Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor
- The Diocesan Case Worker
- The Canon Precentor (strategic safeguarding lead)
- The Chapter Clerk (operational safeguarding lead)
- The Education Manager
- The outgoing Volunteer Coordinator
- The Volunteer Team Leader for duty chaplains
- The HR Manager
- The Director of Music
- The Assistant Director of Music and organist
- The assistant organist
- The Choir Matron (stand-in)
- The Dean's Verger
- The Tower Captain

### What records/files were examined?

The auditors reviewed:

- Children's survey responses
- Adult's survey responses
- Staff recruitment files
- Volunteer recruitment files
- Safeguarding case files



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