

This Executive Summary has been endorsed by the Bishop of Gloucester, the Rt Revd Rachel Treweek.

PAST CASES REVIEW 2 (PCR2) REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

Following an independent assessment of the adequacy of the Church of England's first national safeguarding child protection file review process (2008/09), the subsequent report produced by the Independent Scrutiny Team (IST) in 2018 recommended a robust new review process. As a result of the report, its recommendations, and discussions at the Archbishops' Council and House of Bishops, the National Safeguarding Steering Group (NSSG) commissioned a national review process.

This process, known as PCR2, was established to ensure that:

1. Any files which hadn't been previously examined, along with all new files, were independently reviewed and any safeguarding actions followed up immediately.
2. Every parish would be asked to check that any safeguarding concerns about a parish employee or volunteer, either current or historic, had been passed on to the diocesan safeguarding team.
3. The review process would include concerns relating to both children, *and* vulnerable adults.

PCR2 aims

The Archbishops' Council stated that at the completion of the PCR2 process it would be possible for every diocese to have confidence that:

- All known safeguarding cases had been appropriately managed and reported to statutory agencies or the police where appropriate.
- The needs of any known victims had been considered and that sources of support had been identified and offered where this was appropriate, and that all identified risks had been assessed and mitigated as far as was reasonably possible.

PCR2 would therefore provide an opportunity for independent scrutiny of all files, cases and actions taken, and where further follow up was required. Only where there was evidence of a more recent independent review process would a diocese be granted some exemptions.

Diocese of Gloucester PCR2

In 2016 the Diocese undertook a full independent review of all historic and current files and casework relating to both children and vulnerable adults as part of its safeguarding plans. The Diocese was, therefore, able to submit this evidence to the National Safeguarding Team, and as a result an exemption was granted. The Diocese of Gloucester PCR2 process required independent scrutiny of all safeguarding work and file review from 2017, and this happened throughout 2020. All PCCs were required to provide information - or to confirm where there was no information held - so that known cases and/or any new information could be dealt with. All clergy and Readers' files, and all other appropriate staff and volunteer files, were also individually reviewed.

A total of 245 personnel and safeguarding case files were reviewed throughout the process.

Findings and conclusions

The overarching conclusions drawn by the independent reviewer submitted to the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel were:

- There is confidence that safeguarding work is carried out thoroughly by a professional team who have competent processes in place and positive relations with local agencies and within the Diocese, including via a service level agreement with Gloucester Cathedral.
- The electronic Case Management System introduced in 2020 provides improved recording of confidential safeguarding records.
- The work of the diocesan Safeguarding Team was varied and often complex. There was ongoing work to be done in helping people in parishes to understand this as part of the overall picture of safeguarding in the Diocese as we continue to develop our safeguarding culture.
- There was evidence that the combined HR and Safeguarding Team model for working was helpful in some aspects of safeguarding case work in which issues sometimes overlapped with employment or other personnel aspects.

Developing our culture

The outcomes of PCR2 feed into all our ongoing diocesan safeguarding plans, and these are reviewed and challenged regularly by the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel, and our Independent Chair.

We remain committed to doing all that we can to ensure that our worshipping communities offer the safest places possible for children and vulnerable people. We do this through building confidence and capacity, by ensuring that everyone has opportunities to be aware of safeguarding and by ensuring everyone knows how to raise concerns and seek advice and support. We have a strong commitment to following robust safeguarding processes, supporting Safer Recruitment in parishes, and keeping support for victims and survivors as a priority.

We continue to work with statutory agencies as well as specialist local organisations, so that we can deliver high quality safeguarding advice, casework practice and training.

Contact

If you have further questions about the safeguarding work of the Diocese of Gloucester, or any aspects of this report, or if you have any safeguarding concerns please contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Team at safeguarding@glosdioc.org.uk

The Diocese of Gloucester Safeguarding Team, endorsed by the Bishop of Gloucester, the Rt Revd Rachel Treweek.