

Diocese of Norwich Past Cases Review 2 Executive Summary

This summary has been written taking direct information from the Final Report prepared by the Independent Reviewer for the Diocese of Norwich Past Cases Review 2.

The PCR 2 Background and Overview document (July 2019) Past Cases Review 2 described the aspirations for the outcome of the review as:

“By the end of PCR 2, independent review work will have been carried out in every Diocese and church institution within both the letter and the spirit of the protocol and practice guidance. Any files that could contain information regarding a concern, allegation, or conviction in relation to abusive behaviour by a living member of the Clergy or Church Officer, (whether still in that position or not) will have been identified, read, and analysed by independent safeguarding professionals. At completion of the review process, it will be possible to state that:

All known safeguarding cases have been managed correctly and reported to statutory agencies or the police where appropriate

That the needs of any known victim have been considered and that sources of support have been identified and offered where this is appropriate

That all identified risks have been assessed and mitigated as far as is reasonably possible”

Full details of the PCR2 process can be found at:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/past-cases-review-2>

Recommendations were made to address the shortcomings found including an updated version of the PCR to be implemented in 7 Dioceses identified as needing further work due to failings in the process. (**The Diocese of Norwich was not one of these identified dioceses**). The recommendations were accepted by the Archbishops' Council and Past Cases Review 2 (PCR 2) was designed to enable Dioceses to take a proactive approach to identifying cases of concern and to evaluating safeguarding responses and was to include a review into the handling of both adults and child safeguarding concerns.

Headline Data

In 2019 The Bishop of Norwich, The Rt Revd Graham Usher made a clear decision that the Diocese of Norwich would review all clergy and personnel files held of individuals who were alive. The Diocese did not review deceased clergy files as this was not within the scope of the guidance issued by the House of Bishops in 2019. This national decision not to review deceased clergy files has been raised by the Diocese of Norwich's Independent Reviewer to the National Safeguarding Team.

In total 2824 files were reviewed.

2699 of these files related to licensed clergy, retired clergy with permission to officiate, lay ministers, those in holy orders, staff employees and volunteers who have or have had substantial contact with children or vulnerable adults.

The remaining 125 files relate to safeguarding cases.

Within all the files reviewed 10 new cases were identified, 2 of these were new safeguarding cases identified from records held by parishes and 8 new cases were identified from the 2699 files reviewed. The cases when broken down relate to 5 clergy, 1 retired clergy, 1 Lay Minister and 3 volunteers.

Of these 10 cases, none were identified by the Independent Reviewer as needing to be referred to the police or local authority. The cases were not previously known to the Diocesan Safeguarding Team and on assessment each required further information to ensure there was no identifiable or ongoing risk to others. This has been completed.

The Independent Reviewer identified 40 cases within the known safeguarding files where further action was needed. Again, none of these actions required referral to the police or social services. The actions which were needed related to reviewing processes and paper file records not being updated due to the COVID pandemic. The Independent Reviewer noted in his final report that he recognised the Diocesan Safeguarding Team had already adopted the recommendations relating to these files and were updating records accordingly.

Local Themes

The Independent Reviewer stated that the Bishop's Staff Team at the diocese present as totally committed to safeguarding.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Team has fully implemented the Learning and Development Framework (2021) and employs a Diocesan Safeguarding Trainer to facilitate safeguarding training. A dedicated safeguarding administrator is employed part time to assist the Safeguarding Team.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Team ensured risk assessment and management is documented, and records indicated decision making is sound. Equally there is evidence of effective multi agency work between the Diocesan Safeguarding Team, local authority, police, and social services.

The reviewer recorded that the current Diocesan Safeguarding Team are highly motivated and professional. The two safeguarding advisers and safeguarding trainer all have the required qualifications to enable them to work as skilled safeguarding professionals.

Local Recommendations

The independent reviewer recommended that all future records of safeguarding relevance must remain on clergy and personnel files as instructed by the current Church of England policies. This includes records of safeguarding training and the relevant safer recruitment checks.

Survivor Engagement

In completing the PCR 2 the Diocese has wanted to ensure that Victims and Survivors voices are actively heard throughout.

Within the report the Independent Reviewer stated that there is clear evidence that the current Diocesan Safeguarding Team place the welfare of the victim/survivor as paramount. This was evidenced within safeguarding files and hearing the voice of some survivors.

However, there are circumstances where a person who has been abused experiences further trauma when the Church of England's own legislation does not place the person abused as central to the process. The PCR 2 has further highlighted this, and action has been taken by reporting this directly to the National Safeguarding Team.

In following the House of Bishops' Guidance, Responding Well to Victim and Survivors of Abuse (2021) the Diocese of Norwich Bishop's Council of Trustees is working towards ensuring this guidance is fully implemented.

The Diocese of Norwich Bishop's Council of Trustees have pastoral counselling and therapeutic services already available which it continues to fund for victims and survivors of abuse. The Diocese of Norwich will continue to grow a pool of independent services who offer different types of therapeutic intervention which will meet an individual's needs.

Alongside this, the provision of a support person will be further developed to enhance the ability to respond well to those who have been abused.

Specific Support was set up prior to the PCR 2 review commencing with a local charity working with victims/survivors of abuse to ensure that support was available for those directly affected by the PCR 2. A service level agreement remains in place with the Sue Lambert Trust to continue with this support during this active publication phase and beyond.

Information is available about external support on the safeguarding page of the Diocese of Norwich website.

If anyone continues to be affected by abuse within a church context please contact a member of the Diocese of Norwich safeguarding team on 01603 882345 or contact Safe Spaces on 0300 303 1056. Safe Spaces is a free and independent support service providing a confidential, personal and safe space for someone who has been abused by someone in the church or as a result of their relationship with the Church of England, the Catholic Church in England and Wales or the Church in Wales.