

Welcome to our Monthly Safeguarding Briefing July 2026

Welcome to the second edition of our monthly safeguarding briefing for July. If you did not read June's briefing you can find it [here](#).



As part of our ongoing preparations for the INEQE Safeguarding Audit, we are continuing to make good progress in ensuring that our Diocese and Cathedral are ready to demonstrate best safeguarding practice and identify areas where we can strengthen our culture and processes further.

You can read more about the INEQE audit and watch our videos through the newly created section of our safeguarding website, which can be found [here](#).

The audit will take place from **6 – 18 January 2027** as part of the national Church of England review following the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA).

These briefing newsletters will be shared monthly throughout the rest of 2026 so that all members of the Diocese, Cathedral, Parish members and all our volunteers are working together to ensure that we continually promote safeguarding in everything we do.

Key messages for July

- Findings from our self assessment of safeguarding standards show further work is required. This is for the **whole diocese** (every church, every parish) and goes beyond the role of the Safeguarding Team and Parish Safeguarding Officers.
- **How we are developing our safeguarding culture?**

- We will be hosting an online event in August and also in September to brief Parishes on the audit and questionnaire phase
- **Do you know how to contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer?**
- Keep up to date with the INEQE Audit through our dedicated webpage, which can be found [here](#).

Our Self Assessment findings

As part of the wider preparation for the INEQE Safeguarding Audit, the Diocese Project Team have completed a self-assessment exercise using the National Safeguarding Standards (more information about these can be found [here](#)) which forms part of the National Safeguarding Team audit tools. This snapshot gives an early indication of areas of strength and where further development may be needed.

The data will be shared with INEQE as part of the audit. It helps them get a clear sense of what's working well and where improvements can be made. In turn, they'll give us constructive feedback and tailored recommendations to help us keep building a strong, safe culture across the diocese.

Diocese Results

The self assessment results provide a valuable opportunity to reflect on how we are embedding safeguarding across our diocese, particularly when compared with the comparator dioceses (Most Similar Dioceses (MSD) average).

Standards	Comparator Diocese (MSD)		Diocese of Norwich	
	Average Score	%	Average Score	%
Culture , Leadership and Capacity	3.5	89	3.0	75
Prevention	3.5	86	2.0	50
Recognising, assessing and Managing Risk	4.0	100	2.7	67
Victims and Survivors	3.8	94	3.1	78
Learning, Supervision and Support	3.7	92	3.0	75

Firstly, a big **THANK YOU** to all of you who are making a difference - whether this be attending safeguarding training, providing effective governance of safeguarding through the PCCs, or co-ordinating safeguarding provisions within your parish. Compliance to our safeguarding training is at it's highest level ever which is a massive collective achievement for all.

The Project Team's assessment of the Diocese of Norwich shows a commitment to safeguarding, with solid performance in areas such as **Culture, Leadership and**

Capacity (75%), Victims and Survivors (78%), and Learning, Supervision and Support (75%). These scores indicate a positive foundation, where awareness and support structures are in place and continuing to develop. However, they also show more work is required.

The data also highlights important areas for further focus and improvement:

Prevention (50%) stands out as the area with the greatest gap compared to the MSD average (86%). This suggests an opportunity to strengthen proactive safeguarding measures, ensuring risks are anticipated and reduced before concerns arise.

Recognising, Assessing and Managing Risk (67%) is another area where improvement could help align practice more closely with best-performing dioceses.

These findings are not about criticism, but about growth. They offer a clear direction for us as a Diocese to deepen our safeguarding culture, moving from a foundation to consistently strong and proactive safeguarding across every parish.

By reflecting on these results together, encouraging open conversations at PCC level, and embedding safeguarding into everyday decision-making, we can continue to build safer church communities for everyone.

Our Responses: Culture

We've taken time to look at best practice across other dioceses and, as a result, are strengthening our commitment through a strategy document that aligns with the National Safeguarding Standards. This strategy will help shape and communicate the steps we are taking together to Promote a Safer Church. This is a positive step forward in building an even stronger safeguarding culture across our parishes.



The strategy is shaped around five standards, helping guide how we create safer environments, support those with responsibilities, and respond well to concerns. It also reinforces our pastoral care for both victims and survivors, and for those who may be the subject of concerns, ensuring a compassionate and balanced approach throughout.

Building on this renewed commitment, the strategy will set out the journey ahead—supporting parishes to embed the five safeguarding commitments into everyday practice, strengthening prevention, improving how we recognise and respond to risk, and ensuring consistent, compassionate support for all those affected by safeguarding concerns.

Rather than being a one-time change, this marks the beginning of an ongoing process of learning, reflection, and development. The strategy will help guide our progress over time, with clear priorities, shared expectations, and opportunities for

parishes to engage, review, and strengthen their own safeguarding arrangements. In this way, the policy becomes a living framework, helping us grow a safer church culture together, step by step.

You can read more about next steps and watch our videos through the newly created **Safeguarding section of our website**, where we hope it will support and guide parishes in their ongoing safeguarding work.

Audit Readiness Briefing Sessions

The next stage of our audit preparations will be helping parishes engage with the online questionnaires INEQE will be putting online in September. Giving everyone opportunity to share their views, confidentially with INEQE is an important part of our learning.

We recognise that many parishes will have a number of questions about the questionnaires and how best to engage with people within their community. A video briefing and supporting presentation is being prepared to answer these but we are also putting some live online sessions for Rural Deans, Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSOs) and Churchwardens to engage directly with the project team. If you interested in taking part in these sessions, please put a placeholder note in your diaries. Times and dates for both sessions are;

 **Morning session:** Thursday 20th August 2026 - 10am - 11.30am

 **Evening session:** Tuesday 1st September 2026 - 6pm - 7.30pm

You only need to attend one of the briefings. **Both sessions will be recorded** for anyone who is unable to attend either session and wishes to catch up on them in their own time.

We will be sharing joining instructions both through next months newsletter and wider communication channels.

Keith Philpot (INEQE Project Manager) is also finalising plans for September, organising diaries and methods to help raise awareness of the launch of the INEQE questionnaires and how to maximise completion. **However, the above online sessions are there to help parishes support their communities and maximise responses.**

Key audit dates and times will be shared on the Diocesan website when available.

We are also currently developing and adapting INEQE materials to help raise awareness of the audit across the Diocese and Cathedral. Look out for our new posters appearing soon on the website which you can download, print, and put up.

Preparing Audit Material

A key focus now is to identify, collate and upload all relevant evidence to the INEQE Audit 360 Dashboard when it goes live on 1 September 2026.

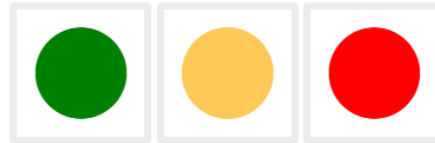
We have set up a system to collate the Parish and Cathedral information and we will

transfer that information to INEQE's system in stages starting on the 1st September. What this means for you is that you may have different deadlines for various bits of information that we will request from you.

Parish Dashboards

73% of parishes are now operational with the **Safeguarding Dashboard** which is great! We are encouraging those parishes who have not yet engaged in the dashboard to do so as this is what INEQE will look at to ensure our parishes are compliant with the national standards.

Parish Dashboards



If any parish has not yet signed up to the Safeguarding Dashboard or Hub, there's still time to get started. This is the most effective way to demonstrate your compliance with national safeguarding standards. Please contact safeguarding@dioceseofnorwich.org if you require any support.

We are here and happy to help 🤝

How do I report a concern?

If you have a safeguarding concern, allegation or suspicions of abuse about a child or vulnerable adult, please immediately contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer [here](#). If you have any difficulties, please contact **01603 882345** and a member of the Safeguarding team can help you. Your **Parish Safeguarding Officer** is also a local first point of contact for reporting safeguarding concerns.

If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, it is important that you quickly get the right help – call the police on 999.

Both of our Safeguarding Officer can be contacted on:
safeguarding@dioceseofnorwich.org or **01603 882345**

Please note: this is not an emergency service, the Advisers operate within working hours. Please leave a voicemail and someone will get back to you.

If you wish to directly contact one of the advisers in particular, their contact details are:

- Sue Brice, Diocesan Safeguarding Officer
07958 377079 or sue.brice@dioceseofnorwich.org
- Peter Sayer, Diocesan Assistant Safeguarding Officer
07342 999386 or peter.sayer@dioceseofnorwich.org

Thank you

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who has supported the INEQE Safeguarding Project so far. Whether you've contributed to surveys, attended training, helped coordinate information, taken part in the self-assessment, or simply shared your time and insights—your involvement has been invaluable. This is a collective effort, and your commitment is helping us build a stronger, safer culture across the Diocese and Cathedral.

Most of all, thank you for your safeguarding efforts that go unseen, week in, week out, that makes your church a safer place for all.

-The Audit Project Team

Email the Project Team here



Diocese of Norwich The Norwich Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd | 109 Dereham Road | Norwich, NR9 5ES GB

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