Getting Ready for the INEQE audit

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND
Diocese of Norwich

Welcome to our Monthly Safeguarding Briefing
October 2026

Welcome to the fifth edition of our safeguarding review newsletter. Previous monthly versions can be found **HERE**. As we continue through this important programme of work, thank you to everyone who has engaged with the process through the surveys so far. The commitment and openness shown across the Diocese has provided valuable insight and is helping to ensure that the review accurately reflects both our strengths and the areas where further development is needed.

In this edition we share how we are progressing and where your continued help is needed. The survey provides an important opportunity for clergy, staff, volunteers and others connected with the Diocese to share their experiences and perspectives. Every response contributes to building a fuller picture of safeguarding culture, practice and effectiveness. If you have not yet completed the survey, I would encourage you to take part and make your voice heard.

Looking ahead, INEQE's stakeholder interviews will take place between **6 and 18 January 2027**. These interviews will enable the review team to explore themes emerging from the survey and documentation in greater depth, providing further opportunities for individuals and groups to contribute their views and experiences.

Communication will remain a priority throughout the remainder of 2026 and into the review period. We are committed to keeping everyone informed about progress, key milestones and opportunities to engage. Regular newsletters, updates and briefing materials will continue to be shared so that colleagues understand where we are in the process and how their contributions are helping to shape the review.

Thank you once again for your ongoing support and engagement. Please continue to share these newsletters across your Parish so that everyone can hear about this work. By working together and participating openly in the review process, we can ensure that safeguarding continues to develop and strengthen across the Diocese.

🔑This month's key messages 🔊

- Message from the Audit Project Manager
- **An update of current audit preparations for the Diocese and Cathedral**
- How **you** can help us in our preparations
- **Surveys are live! Have you taken part yet?**
- Updated promotional resources for the survey are available!



Message from Keith Philpot
(INEQE Project Manager)

“We’ve seen a significant increase in survey completions over the past month, with **962 responses** received across all groups to date. This is a fantastic achievement and a real testament to everyone’s efforts in encouraging participation. We have now reached almost a third of our target of 3,000 responses. Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to complete the survey or promote it to others. Please continue sharing and encouraging participation so that we can reach our target and ensure as many voices as possible are heard.

As we head towards the final deadline of **11th November**, we’re keen to see even more responses, particularly from the Diocese, cathedral workforce, and our parish and cathedral volunteers and congregations. Whilst this date may seem far away, your feedback matters more when not rushed towards the end, so please encourage early completion and reinforce the message that every view counts. Every submission also helps build a stronger, more accurate picture to inform the auditors of our safeguarding work, so please take a few minutes to complete the survey if you haven’t already and encourage others to do the same”

The tool is designed to give a rounded and honest picture of safeguarding across the diocese and cathedral, it is not a pass/fail inspection, but an opportunity for a specialist safeguarding organisation to journey with us, to review our progress and future learning needs. Please also continue to share these newsletters with your

clergy and PCC members so that there is a collective understanding of our messages.

-Keith

Current Audit Preparation Status



Preparation for the INEQE safeguarding audit in January 2026 (6–18 January 2026) continues at pace.

The Diocese and Cathedral are busy sourcing, formatting and uploading evidence to INEQE's 360° Audit Tool.

To ensure the most productive use of time, INEQE's approach is to analyse all available information in advance of the site visits due in January 2027. This information is collected using INEQE's 360° Safeguarding Audit Tool.

What is the 360° Safeguarding Audit Tool?
The 360° Safeguarding Audit Tool is a series of questions set against a framework that captures an organisation's baseline policies, practices and other information relevant to the audit. For example, beyond policies, this includes records relating to safeguarding training, safer recruitment practices, previous audits, reviews or reports commissioned by or into the Church body. Mapped against the National Safeguarding Standards, the 360° Safeguarding Audit Tool also provides a baseline against which the overall sufficiency of safeguarding is assessed, and any progress evidenced (i.e. against previous audit recommendations). Each Church body receives an individually tailored 360° Safeguarding Audit Tool as part of their Audit Briefing Pack which must be fully completed online by the 12 November (extended from 5 November due to key personnel being absent). Amendments cannot be made after this date.

Cathedral and DBF Collaboration

The Cathedral & Diocesan Safeguarding Teams and Project Board have been working flat out to keep everything moving smoothly.

They're supporting colleagues across the Diocese, Parishes, and the Cathedral, answering questions, sharing guidance, and keeping the project timeline on track.

With regular check-ins and a focus on spotting and solving issues early, we're making sure the audit stays on schedule and that we hit all the key deadlines.

The Diocesan INEQE Project Board now meets fortnightly to coordinate activity and monitor progress.

The next board meeting will take place on the **3rd of November**, with a key focus on reviewing evidence and identifying any potential gaps in the evidence.

Keith Philpot and Susan Bulpitt, the Diocese and Cathedral Project Single Points of contact (SPOCs), remain in regular communication with INEQE through Biweekly 'Keeping in Touch'

(KIT) meetings. This includes creating the audit schedule for the onsite visit in January. The visit schedule will be completed by 8 December.

How you can help🤝

In early October we had our second meeting with INEQE where we discussed the fantastic response to the first few weeks of the survey and started to understand the online and face to face meetings that will be scheduled in the coming weeks.

We are seeking your help to ensure everyone has a say about safeguarding within their church so please continue to push the survey to all volunteers, groups who use any church space and wider community partners. The more voices that are heard the greater the understanding our auditors will have of our communities.

To support you, please share the links to our video, posters and wider content that share the wider message about the INEQE audit process. The aim is to keep you fully informed and that the INEQE process and so that you and your Parish team have the support and backing of the senior leadership within the diocese. **Watch our new video HERE**





The Surveys are Well Underway! 🚀

As part of the audit process, the team from INEQE Safeguarding Group would like to engage with a wide spectrum of individuals from diocese, parishes and cathedral communities through online surveys. These surveys will act as a mechanism through which individuals can comment on matters relevant to the audit's focus.

The survey's close on **11 November but this date will sneak up faster than we think so completing the survey today is one less thing to think about.** Your feedback really matters!

The surveys are organised into different groups, so please complete **all those** that apply to you. **This may mean that you do more than one**:

- Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF), Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) and Office of the Bishop Workforce Including, for example, DBF staff or volunteers, Staff of the Diocesan Bishop's Office or Diocesan Synod.
- Parish Community – Including, for example, parishioners, worshippers, or attendees of other activities in the parishes.
- Cathedral Workforce – Including, for example, the Chapter members, clergy, staff, volunteers, choristers, or bell ringers.
- Parish Workforce – Including, for example, clergy, parish staff, volunteers, choristers, bell ringers, or worshippers.
- Cathedral Worshipping Community – Including those who visited, attended services or worshipped at the Cathedral.
- Victims/survivors of church-related abuse
- Children or Young People

You can access the surveys by clicking the following link:

Take part in the surveys here!

OR you can scan the QR Code below:

The surveys are both **anonymous** (the audit team are not seeking to identify individuals) and **confidential** (individuals will not be identified in INEQE's report).

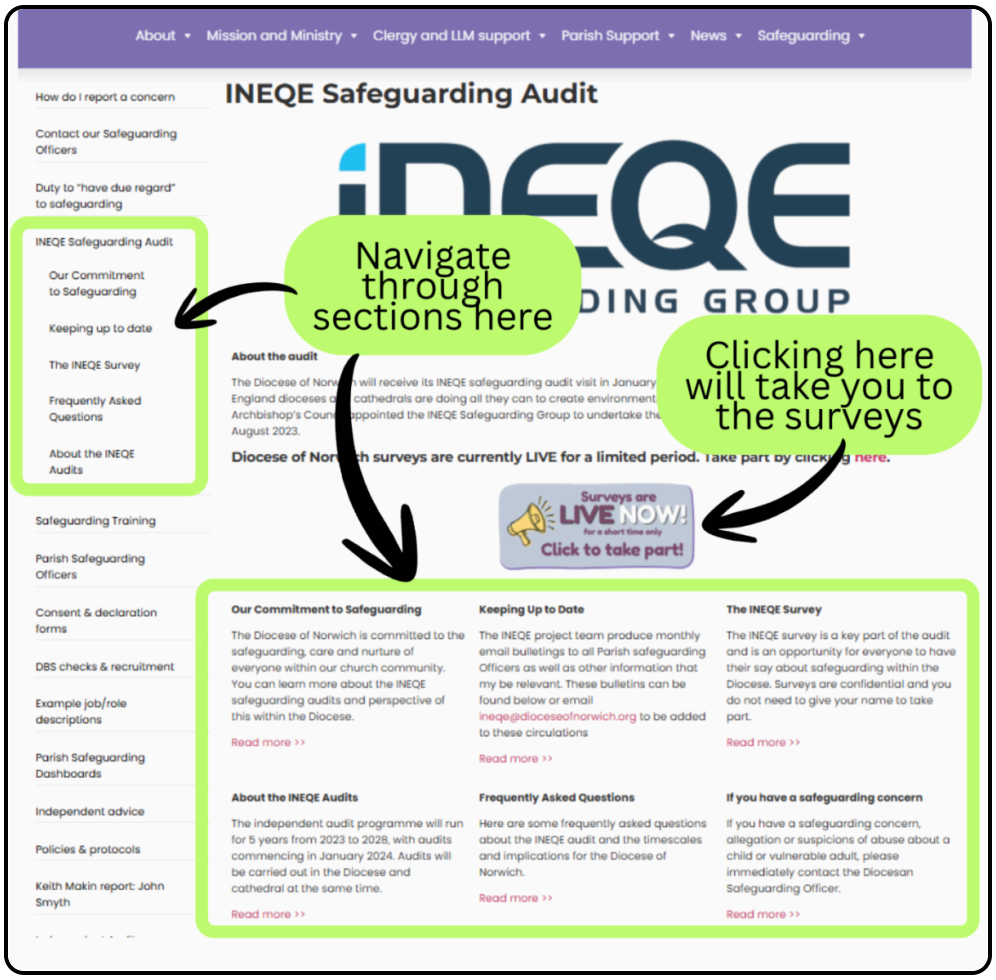
The purpose of the surveys is to enable the audit team to conduct a wider analysis of practice across Church bodies and give individuals the opportunity to contribute to the audit. No one from the Church of England or diocese or Cathedral will be provided with or have access to the survey responses.

The audits will ensure that safeguarding is not just about policies and protocols but is a living thread woven though everything we do - **creating churches where everyone feels safe**. Thank you to those who have completed the surveys so far! Please encourage others to do the same assistance— this could be a useful approach to consider locally.

Closing Date: 11 November 2026

Website Updates💻

As you will be aware from previous communications, we have updated the Diocese of Norwich website with a dedicated **INEQE Safeguarding Audit** section, which contains **key information, updates and resources** related to the audit.



As a reminder, all updates regarding the audit will be added here, so do check the webpage periodically for new updates and let others know they can find information about the audit here also.

Click here to visit the INEQE Safeguarding Audit webpage

Resources have been improved!⚒️

We've listened carefully to the feedback received about the promotional resources available. In response, we've developed a wider range of materials to make it easier for everyone to access and share the surveys in a way that works better for more people.

The new resources now include ready-to-print black and white versions, colour versions with reduced saturation to help minimise printing costs and ink usage, prints with multiple QR codes on one page (to save on paper) and posters featuring tear-off tabs containing the full survey web address. These tabs can be taken home and used to access the survey later, removing the need to scan a QR code. We hope these additional options will help make participation as simple and accessible as possible for all members of our communities.

Please have a look at what is available via the **'The INEQE Survey'** webpage.



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 Officers 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**
- Sara Shorten, Deputy Diocesan Safeguarding / Cathedral Safeguarding Officer
  01603 882345 or **sara.shorten@dioceseofnorwich.org**
- Peter Sayer, Assistant Diocesan 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

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