



## Chelmsford Cathedral

### Safeguarding Self-Assessment

#### **1. Introduction and Context.**

In late 2019 Chelmsford Cathedral was informed that the date of the Social Care Institute for Excellence would be June 2020.

To begin the planning process for the audit, the cathedral staff, including our volunteer Safeguarding Officer and our Assistant Cathedral Safeguarding Officer, met with the Senior Lay Officer of St Edmundsbury Cathedral to gain a first-hand account of the audit process.

We also contacted David Worlock, Deputy Director of Development, of the National Safeguarding Team. He agreed to visit us with members of his team in January 2020, to hold a Safeguarding Dialogical Workshop to enable an initial assessment of our readiness for a full safeguarding audit. The workshop included members from the national team, staff and volunteers from the Cathedral, the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor and members from local social services.

From that meeting the first action was to clarify the working relationship with our colleagues in the diocesan office. Through a series of meetings with the Diocesan Chief Executive and the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor work began on developing a Service Level Agreement for Safeguarding. This has subsequently been expanded to encompass other areas where close collaboration is beneficial. Work is ongoing, and as a first step we have in place a Memorandum of Understanding. In addition, a member of our clergy team, Canon Imogen Nay, has joined the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Group.

With the developing pandemic situation, the Cathedral, following national and Church advice went into lockdown. With very small windows where limited activity was possible we have not returned to a position, where for example, our volunteers have returned to active duties.

#### **2. During Lockdown.**

During this period the Cathedral was opened for a limited time each day for personal prayer and reflection adopting strict Covid protocols. Many staff were furloughed during this time and the only staff in the Cathedral were the Vergers. All ancillary buildings and facilities were closed including the kitchen and toilets in the Cathedral. At various times when the building was open for small gatherings for public worship, the Cathedral staff and Church Wardens were the only personnel on duty.

We have taken the view that the lockdown period has been a useful intervention to allow the re-engineering of all our safeguarding practices.

In early 2020 we appointed a new Volunteer Manager (Ann Bell) to oversee the Volunteer Group Leaders and this afforded the opportunity to introduce the Safer Recruiting Framework to ensure that going forward all volunteers undergo a rigorous recruitment process and have training, including Safeguarding training, prior to taking up their roles and undertaking regular training updates thereafter.

It became clear during this process that we needed to appoint a safeguarding Officer as a part time paid member of staff. Due to the Covid restrictions this appointment has only been made in the last few weeks and we are delighted that Lisa Blaco has joined us from the Metropolitan police where she served as Detective Constable dealing with safeguarding issues. Rev. Kate Moore continues to serve the Cathedral as Assistant Safeguarding Officer. Kate is a senior Head Teacher at a local primary school and has significant safeguarding experience. She is also an advisor to a number of schools across the diocese.

Finally, we appointed a new member of Chapter, (Lorna Quinn), who has Chapter responsibility for Safeguarding. Lorna is Deputy Head Teacher at the Cathedral Primary School and as part of the Senior Leadership Team is responsible for safeguarding in the school.

### **3. Safeguarding In Action**

- a) Safeguarding is a standing agenda item on Chapter agendas.
- b) Safeguarding is a standing item on the agenda of the weekly Executive team meeting.
- c) A Safeguarding Working Group meets weekly. Chaired by the Safeguarding Officer, membership includes the Canon Pastor, Chief Operating Officer, Head of Communications, Operations Manager, Volunteers Manager and Executive Assistant.
- d) We have revamped all of our safeguarding information and contact information features on all our posters, publications and our website.
- e) Many of our office systems have been updated to facilitate working from home and all our working policies have been revised and updated over this year.
- f) All Senior staff have joined the Senior Leaders Safeguarding Programme, and all staff have undertaken as a minimum C0 and C1 Safeguarding training.

### **4. Areas for Improvement/Development.**

- a) Continuous Improvement. First and foremost, we recognise that we are partway along the road to being safeguarding secure. By this we mean that the need for continual safeguarding awareness by the cathedral community is not yet embedded in hearts and minds. This has been brought into focus by effectively being closed for business for over a year.
- b) We have not had any safeguarding incidents come to the attention of our Safeguarding Officers and have no ongoing investigations. Whilst being a very satisfactory position we must question to what extent we encourage our community to raise issues with us.
- c) Some of our systems are not particularly fit for purpose, the main one being our communications software. Our database is not really fit for purpose and the next IT project will be to update our systems.
- d) Now that there is a new Diocesan Chief Executive in post the Service Level Agreement will be finalised and implemented. Also formalised in the SLA will be collaboration across IT, HR and Property support.
- e) Whilst we have stipulated that no volunteer is returning to duty until their training records etc have been verified, an agreed yearly training programme with a budget

assigned needs to be designed and implemented. We will ensure that we adhere to requirements for formal qualifications to be renewed at the specified times.

## **5. Conclusion.**

In conclusion the advent of the SCIE Safeguarding Audit and the Covid pandemic has allowed us to:

- Re-evaluate and recalibrate our internal systems
- Refresh and Revive our approaches to Safeguarding information and learning.
- Re-imagine how we deliver a safe space for all the different communities using our sacred space.

We very much look forward to the audit, our conversations with the team, and implementing the recommendations when published in your report.

15 May 2021

Nicholas Henshall  
Dean of Chelmsford

Keith Baggs  
Interim Chief Operating Officer