

Description

Gloucester Cathedral faces the challenge of maintaining the safeguarding training of dozens of staff and hundreds of volunteers, and it does this well.

Training is either done online, or led by a DSA, or both DSAs for more senior staff and music department staff. Face-to-face sessions are supported by relevant senior staff, so the Dean and Canon Precentor attend some sessions for volunteers; the Canon Precentor supports training for vergers; and volunteer managers are present for volunteer sessions. All volunteers with a role that involves public contact have face-to-face training.

The House of Bishops' national training framework is used, and supplemented by tailored sessions as relevant to the cathedral's needs. There have been awareness-raising sessions, for example, on dementia, autism, and mental ill-health.

Within the music department, staff receive additional C5 training from the DSAs, which refreshes and stretches existing safeguarding awareness, and lay clerks have a refresher session at the start of each academic year.

Training for new front-of-house staff is to be developed with the DSAs.

Analysis

The training provision at Gloucester Cathedral is good. The DSAs' training is tailored with pertinent scenarios, and all the reports to the auditors were that the quality is very high. It would now appear that there is a positive cycle in which word-of-mouth feedback about the training encourages more people to take it up.

The importance of training is made clear to people. Letters to new volunteers, for example, make it clear that it is a requirement for any role, and the presence of people such as the Dean, Chapter Steward, Canon Chancellor, Canon Precentor and volunteer leaders gives the training significant status. This is a real strength.

Safeguarding forms part of everyone's induction training, and a clear plan for the training provision needed for volunteers is in place, so the cathedral knows what it has to resource in the year ahead.

Thought is evidently given to how to maximise the impact of training: mental health awareness sessions, for example, are run just before Advent, as the Christmas and New Year period is the busiest in terms of visitors to the cathedral with mental health difficulties. There is a thoroughness evident also, with sessions tailored to particular groups, such as bell ringers and Breakfast Club volunteers, and checks made that lay chaplains have had diocesan safeguarding training before they can start.

Within this careful planning, however, the auditors met a small number of people who have been in role for a long time without receiving safeguarding training, and these loopholes should be identified and closed wherever possible.

There was also some uncertainty among staff as to why some paid staff receive online training, when volunteers in similar roles are trained face-to-face.

Questions for Gloucester Cathedral to consider:

- How can the cathedral ensure all staff and volunteers are picked up in the training programme?
- What are the expectations around training for paid and voluntary staff, and are these clearly communicated to people?

3.5 SAFER RECRUITMENT

Description

Gloucester Cathedral contracts with the Diocese to provide human resources support, led by the Director of Resources & Safeguarding. This includes support with recruitment, interviewing, DBS checks and induction, and is clearly laid out as part of the SLA. The final arbiter on recruiting people with blemished DBS checks is the Director of Resources & Safeguarding.

Analysis

The auditors noted a very clear process for the safe recruitment of volunteers, including references, interview, and DBS checks where appropriate. All volunteer recruitment goes through the volunteer management team, so there is consistency, and this is supported by welcome checklist for all new starters, which covers safeguarding aspects of recruitment.

The auditors saw five HR files of paid staff, all from the music department. There were some good features to be seen, such as the files of senior staff being subject to an internal safe recruitment audit. While there was some inconsistency in practice relating to references, HR and safer recruitment were tightened in 2014 to address this.

There is uncertainty nationally about the need to do DBS checks for servers. Currently only the Head Server is DBS-checked.

Questions for Gloucester Cathedral to consider:

- Can references consistently address questions of safeguarding, where appropriate?

4 FINDINGS – ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORTS

4.1 POLICY, PROCEDURES AND GUIDANCE

Description

Gloucester Cathedral works under the House of Bishops' safeguarding policies, and supplements these with its own *Safeguarding Handbook for Staff and Volunteers*, most recently updated in July 2018. This has useful contact details and procedures for a range of cathedral activities, and templates for risk assessments that each department can use.

Both the general employee handbook and the general volunteer handbook cover safeguarding.

The cathedral also scrutinises the safeguarding protocols of choral societies and numerous other organisations that visit, and will not allow an organisation to host an activity in the cathedral unless these are judged to be suitably robust.

Analysis

The *Safeguarding Handbook* has a number of strengths:

- It is introduced by the Dean, thus giving it senior clout
- It is reviewed annually
- There are useful practical elements, such as templates, resources, and contact details
- It is localised and detailed enough so as not to clash with or duplicate national policy documents
- It acknowledges safeguarding risks honestly, and urges people to dare to ask challenging questions

Overall, the auditors noted a degree of thoroughness and rigour in the procedures, risk assessment templates, and partnership agreements with other organisations.

Information sharing protocols

Gloucester Cathedral has specific information sharing protocols with partner agencies. The cathedral should satisfy itself that it is compliant with new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

4.2 DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING ADVISERS AND NOMINATED SAFEGUARDING PERSON

Description

Safeguarding provision at Gloucester Cathedral is managed by the diocesan Director of Resources & Safeguarding, who has been in post as Head of HR since 2008, and who added safeguarding leadership to her role in 2012. She was acting Chapter

Steward for the cathedral prior to the current Chapter Steward starting, and this has helped the close partnership between the two organisations. The Director of Resources & Safeguarding oversaw the 2016 SCIE diocesan audit, and has brought a consistently professional approach to safeguarding across the cathedral and diocese. She is an honorary lay canon at the cathedral, reflecting her long service to the diocese and the cathedral.

Casework, training, and daily safeguarding operations for the cathedral are led by the two Diocesan Safeguarding Officers (DSAs), both of whom work three days a week, and who overlap each Wednesday.

The longer-serving DSA, in post since 2014, is a nurse by profession, with extensive safeguarding experience prior to coming into post, and has recently completed an MA in safeguarding in an international context. The more recent DSA started in 2017, is a qualified youth worker and has worked in bereavement services, and as a local authority early help team manager.

As part of the SLA, the cathedral purchases the equivalent of two days a month of DSAs' time. There is provision within the agreement to alter this, substantially if needed, should a cathedral matter require additional work.

The DSAs have ready access to the Dean of Gloucester whenever they need to discuss a case with him.

Both DSAs are managed by the Director of Resources and Safeguarding. The newer DSA receives professional supervision from a social worker locally. The longer-serving DSA, having left one supervisor for not giving her the challenge she needs, is considering using the same social worker as her colleague for her supervision and if this is not possible will select a new social worker for supervision.

There has been a new appointment of a Cathedral Nominated Person for Safeguarding (NPS), to act as an additional and complementary safeguarding contact point for the cathedral congregation and community on Sundays and during other congregation-led events; and a liaison with the DSAs, clergy and senior staff. The NPS is a chorister parent, with a son having moved from the boys' to the youth choir. She was in fact made NPS some years ago, but the role fell into abeyance. Her reappointment is on the understanding that she is included in communication loops about safeguarding, so can fulfil her role properly. The NPS has professional and school governance safeguarding experience.

Analysis

The provision of safeguarding services at the cathedral is good. The DSAs do high-quality casework (see 3.2) and training (see 3.4), and are evidently accessible to, and are supportive of the cathedral. There are no issues about needing to delineate diocesan days from cathedral days; there is flexibility both formally in the SLA, and by virtue of the relationships between the diocese and the cathedral. The amount of time allocated to the cathedral is adequate to its needs.

Both DSAs, and the Director of Resources & Safeguarding, are well-known to the congregation and volunteers, and there is a clear sense that people understand they

can be approached with any concern.

The NSP role was too new at the time of the audit to make a comment on its effectiveness, although the auditors agree that it has the potential to perform a useful bridging function. It is positive that communication about the appointment came from the Dean, and was widely circulated. The cathedral will need to determine exactly what functions the role can best fulfil, how that will be communicated, and what liaison between the NSP and the DSAs will work. Practicalities such as the NSP having a dedicated mobile phone for the role will have to be considered.

The church's practice guidance, *Key Roles and Responsibilities of Church Office Holders and Bodies (2017)* stresses that safeguarding professionals should not be ordained, or have any conflicts of interest that would compromise their independence. In the light of this, the auditors explored whether the fact that the Director of Resources & Safeguarding is an honorary lay canon breaches this recommendation. It is an honorary title, with no governance function, and the restrictions in the practice guidance do not apply to the managers of safeguarding staff. In that regard, it is clear that the appointment does not breach the guidance. But the thrust of the guidance - that safeguarding professionals working for the church must be, and perceived to be, independent of church influence - means that the cathedral needs to be mindful that some survivors and others may perceive the lay canon role as meaning the safeguarding service is too closely linked to the cathedral hierarchy. The auditors also acknowledge survivors may view the appointment as a sign that safeguarding is taken seriously.

The same guidance recommends professional supervision of Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers takes place about every six weeks, which is more frequently than the DSAs use it.

Questions for Gloucester Cathedral to consider:

- How can the NSP role most effectively be established so it is an effective liaison between the cathedral community, the DSAs, and other senior people in the cathedral?
- Is the DSAs' professional supervision sufficiently frequent?

4.3 RECORDING AND IT SYSTEMS

Having effective, safe and useable IT systems supports good recording and makes sure that information is secure, but accessible to those people with a legitimate need to see it.

The case files the auditors saw are well-ordered, with key information readily accessible, and useful features such as closure summaries. Files are locked, with access reserved for the DSAs, the Director of Resources & Safeguarding and appropriate administrators.

The diocese maintains its own electronic system of recording cases with reference numbers and secure password protection. The diocese maintains its own electronic system of recording cases with reference numbers and secure password protection

and all cathedral casework files sit within this.

Questions for Gloucester Cathedral to consider:

- No questions to consider

5 FINDINGS – LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

5.1 QUALITY ASSURANCE

A safe organisation needs constant feedback loops about what is going well and where there are difficulties in relation to safeguarding, and this should drive ongoing cycles of learning and improvement. Robust quality assurance enables an organisation to understand its strengths and weaknesses. Potential sources of data are numerous, including independent scrutiny. Quality assurance needs to be strategic and systematic to support accountability and shed light on how well things are working and where there are gaps or concerns.

The Diocese of Gloucester has a safeguarding quality assurance framework, which includes the monitoring of casework, training and support to survivors among other aspects of safeguarding work. One strand of the framework specifically relates to the cathedral, and involves staff analysing case feedback, chapter minutes and other sources of information to identify areas for improvement. This degree of structure around quality assurance is a positive aspect of Gloucester's work.

A culture of learning from experience, and from others, was evident in other parts of the audit, and is a strength. Examples include:

- the Breakfast Club carried out a lessons learned review after the one troubling incident experienced there in recent years
- reflection sessions after each school visit
- benchmarking of policies and procedures against other local visitor attractions, and active engagement with forums for people managing visitor sites
- genuine attention paid to how systems operate in the light of any case work
- a review of all past cases and Blue Files in 2016

Questions for Gloucester Cathedral to consider:

- No questions to consider

5.2 COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE SAFEGUARDING SERVICE

A good complaints policy enables people to raise concerns, and to have timely and appropriate consideration of any problems. A strong policy is clear about who complaints should be made to, and how they can be escalated if necessary. Positive features include an independent element, and clarity that raising a safeguarding concern, and making a complaint about a safeguarding service, are two distinct things.

Gloucester Cathedral's complaints policy is largely clear, and sets out timescales in which complainants can expect to have their issues addressed. There are elements which could be improved:

- Complaints about chapter decisions are to be raised with the Dean, as Chair of Chapter, which seems to point a complainant back to the very body they are

- complaining about.
- People with complaints about safeguarding are appropriately directed to the (independent) chair of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel, but then to the Chapter Steward if they need to escalate a problem further. This runs counter to more normal practice whereby an independent element is brought after an issue has not been resolved internally.
- There is no apparent route to complain about the Chapter Steward, should that be necessary.
- Written complaints should be permitted by email; currently only postal addresses are provided.

Questions for Gloucester Cathedral to consider:

- Can the complaints procedure be strengthened, in particular so that complaints about safeguarding can be addressed internally where possible, and then go to an independent person if they need to be escalated?

5.3 WHISTLEBLOWING

The cathedral's employee handbook has a section on whistleblowing which is clear and concise, although could usefully give details of Protect (formerly Public Concern at Work), the charity that independently supports whistleblowers.

There is no equivalent section in the volunteers' handbook, which places them at a disadvantage, should a volunteer need to raise a concern.

Questions for Gloucester Cathedral to consider:

- Can a whistleblowing procedure for volunteers be set out?
- Can whistleblowing procedures for both employees and volunteers including contact details of Protect?

5.4 DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING ADVISORY PANEL

Based on the national guidance in *Roles and Responsibilities* for Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panels (DSAPs), the panel should have a key role in bringing independence and safeguarding expertise to an oversight, scrutiny and challenge role, including contributing to a strategic plan.

Description

The Diocese of Gloucester has a well-established DSAP, chaired in a voluntary capacity since May 2018 by a recently retired police officer with relevant safeguarding experience.

The terms of reference of the DSAP are clear that its role covers oversight and challenge, strategic planning, oversight of training provision, partnership working, and the development of policy and procedures. The DSAP has a clear strategic work plan that incorporates a cathedral strand of work.

Four staff represent the cathedral on the DSAP: the diocesan Director of Mission and Ministry, who is a member of Chapter; the Chair of the Cathedral Council, also a Chapter member; the Visitor Experience Manager; and, when appointed, the Archdeacon of Gloucester, who is also a residentiary canon at the cathedral. In addition, the two DSAs and the Director of Resources and Safeguarding attend as officers, with a remit that covers the cathedral as well as the diocese.

At an operational level the cathedral is planning to hold four meetings a year for heads of Departments with safeguarding as a standing item on every agenda. These meetings will be chaired by the Chapter Steward.

Analysis

The auditors' view is that the DSAP seems to function well, with a good understanding of its purpose, and a clear work plan. The cathedral is strongly represented, and this is emblematic of the positive working relationship with the diocese. Also on the group are a number of senior people from statutory safeguarding services, which is positive.

The chair of the DSAP has regularly scheduled meetings with the Bishop of Gloucester, but not the Dean of Gloucester, and this risks at least the perception that the diocesan relationship is prioritised over the cathedral one. Regular meetings would also be beneficial given how little independent scrutiny there is within traditional cathedral structures of the Dean and Chapter.

The DSAP chair is organising governance training for the panel, so it better understands its scrutiny and challenge function, which is a positive step to take.

Questions for Gloucester Cathedral to consider:

- Can the DSAP chair have regular meeting with the Dean of Gloucester?

5.5 LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Safeguarding leadership takes various forms – strategic, operational and theological – with different people taking different roles. How these roles are understood, and how they fit together, can be determinative in how well-led the safeguarding function is.

Theological leadership

Description

The Dean of Gloucester plays a dual leadership role, being both the senior figure in the cathedral, and nationally the lead dean for safeguarding.

He is the first lead dean for safeguarding, and recognises as a challenge that the Church of England organisationally thinks in diocesan terms, and so safeguarding processes were not initially designed with cathedrals in the forefront of people's minds. Nonetheless, he believes cathedrals have by and large caught up with dioceses, and prioritise safeguarding appropriately.

The Dean describes himself as being “ultimately responsible” for safeguarding, and for demonstrating theological leadership on it by speaking openly about it, and by ensuring it is part of everyday life in the cathedral, backed by the proper resources and processes.

The named safeguarding lead in chapter will be the new Archdeacon of Gloucester. The auditors did not meet her, but clearly it will be a significant safeguarding role. Given the existing strong safeguarding leadership, it will be important to define what role the chapter safeguarding lead fulfils.

Analysis

The auditors found the Dean to demonstrate strong safeguarding leadership. Within an organisational structure in which there is little independent scrutiny of decisions made by Dean and Chapter, the Dean has actively sought greater challenge and transparency. He has committed Gloucester Cathedral to report all serious safeguarding incidents to the Charity Commission, which is now a requirement for dioceses, but not cathedrals. He has also introduced a requirement on himself to report annually to the Bishop on safeguarding, as he holds her license.

The Dean is engaged with and supportive of safeguarding work. He meets the DSAs whenever necessary, and has regular sessions, for example, with Children’s Church and Breakfast Club leaders. Congregants and volunteers were left in no doubt that he prioritises safeguarding, and speaks about it often.

The auditors have also seen evidence that residentiary canons in the cathedral are appropriately involved in casework, such as sitting on response groups and acting as pastoral supports to people involved in safeguarding cases.

Questions for Gloucester Cathedral to consider:

- What will be the focus of the new chapter safeguarding lead?

Strategic leadership

Description

Strategic leadership for safeguarding rests with the Dean and Chapter. Safeguarding is a standing item on Chapter minutes, with monthly reports from the Director of Resources & Safeguarding, who attends in person three or four times a year. In addition both the Dean, and the Director of Resources & Safeguarding are members of the Bishop’s Senior Staff Team.

Chapter has one lay member who until recently was a local authority social services director, and one who is a recently retired local authority chief executive with long experience of safeguarding issues.

Given the proposed disbanding of Cathedral Councils, the Chapter at Gloucester is planning to introduce a wider stakeholder group to provide scrutiny of its work.

The Chapter Steward is the person with “executive responsibility” for safeguarding,

and has been in post since 2015. She illustrates, and understands, the blurring of strategic and operational leadership with a cathedral, in that she is a member of Chapter, and helps set the strategic direction for the cathedral, as well as being responsible for all operational functions.

As seen in 5.4, the cathedral is fully engaged with the DSAP, which sets the strategic direction for safeguarding, and works to an annual activity plan.

Analysis

It is a strength that Chapter has genuine professional safeguarding experience within it, which reflects a deliberate policy to get senior people from a range of settings to bolster Chapter. Chapter is planning a skills and experience audit of its members to maintain a diverse and pertinent range of perspectives.

The wider stakeholder group strikes the auditors as a further positive example of a willingness to be open and transparent.

The Chapter Steward demonstrates the same inclusive and approachable management style as the senior clergy, which helps generate a sense of cohesion around the cathedral.

Another notable strength in setting a strategic path for safeguarding is the close cooperation between cathedral and diocese, with senior figures working together effectively.

Questions for Gloucester Cathedral to consider:

- How can the proposed stakeholder group best support Chapter in its safeguarding work and make arrangements to consult survivor groups as appropriate?

Operational leadership and management

Description

Operational safeguarding leadership is shared between the Chapter Steward, in that she is responsible for the operational functioning of the cathedral, and the Director of Resources & Safeguarding, in that she manages the safeguarding professionals.

Alongside them, the Canon Precentor – in terms of support to the congregation and to the music department; and the Canon Chancellor – in ensuring the wellbeing of visitors, combine elements of theological, strategic and operational safeguarding leadership.

The safeguarding roundtable meetings provide a forum for operational decision-making at a departmental level.

Analysis

Throughout all aspects of safeguarding leadership, there is a cohesion – between lay

and ordained staff, and between diocese and cathedral – which serves people well.

A general ethos of openness among leaders and safeguarding professionals makes it easier for staff and volunteers to raise concerns.

There is clarity within the cathedral that operational decisions on whether to refer concerns to statutory authorities rests with the DSAs.

Questions for Gloucester Cathedral to consider:

- No questions to consider

Culture

The most critical aspect of safeguarding relates to the culture within any organisation. In a Church of England context, that can mean, for example, the extent to which priority is placed on safeguarding individuals as opposed to the reputation of the Church, or the ability of all members of the Church to think the unthinkable about friends and colleagues. Any cathedral should strive for an open, learning culture where safeguarding is a shared responsibility, albeit supported by experts, and which encourages people to highlight any concerns about how things are working in order that they can be addressed.

The crimes of Peter Ball, former Bishop of Gloucester, ended any sense in the community that safeguarding is not something the Church needs to worry about, but these now feel in the past, with what remains being people's genuine desire develop the most robust safeguarding culture they can. Appropriate policies and procedures have been in place for many years, and are constantly reviewed and improved.

A culture of safeguarding seems thoroughly embedded; something that is thought about and planned for as second nature to staff and volunteers. The auditors heard of there being some minimal resistance to the safeguarding agenda, but saw no evidence of it themselves, and judged that there is in place the training, the policies, the communication and the leadership to keep chipping away at whatever scepticism may remain.

A small pocket guide about safeguarding children and vulnerable adults was cited repeatedly to the auditors as being helpful for staff and volunteers, and it contains a lot of concise, useful information.

Questions for Gloucester Cathedral to consider:

- No questions to consider

6 CONCLUSIONS

This section provides the headline findings from the audit, drawing out positives and the areas for improvement. The detail behind these appraisals are in the Findings.

Gloucester Cathedral has strong safeguarding leadership, allied to that from the diocese. There is a conscious effort made to seek external input and oversight for safeguarding decisions. Operationally, the DSAs are well-managed, and carry out training and casework to a high level.

Strategic plans, a quality assurance framework, and strong policies and procedures buttress the work of the cathedral, and guide staff, volunteers and visitors in what is expected of them.

A culture where people can learn and ask about safeguarding, and escalate concerns, has been developed. When issues do arise, they are dealt with promptly and creatively.

A slight tightening of processes around training, and improvements to complaints and whistleblowing procedures, would further strengthen the cathedral's work.

Two new people – the Nominated Safeguarding Person, and the Chapter Safeguarding Lead, will need to be supported appropriately so they can develop their roles within a well-functioning system.

APPENDIX: REVIEW PROCESS

DATA COLLECTION

Information provided to auditors

In advance of the audit, staff at Gloucester Cathedral sent through:

- a background to Gloucester Cathedral
- biographies of Chapter members
- a governance and staffing structure
- Safeguarding Handbook
- service level agreement with the Diocese of Gloucester, and recent reviews of it
- Safeguarding Activity Plan for 2018
- Complaints Policy
- Staff Handbook (incorporating a whistleblowing policy)
- training records
- Safeguarding reports to Chapter
- Chapter minutes from four recent meetings
- personal overviews of safeguarding from key clergy and staff in the cathedral
- cathedral risk register
- volunteering policy
- Volunteering Handbook
- volunteer application pack
- samples of volunteering role descriptions and risk assessments
- recruitment processes
- volunteer training details, including induction training
- safeguarding, safety and security information sheets for volunteers
- Education Centre volunteer training and recruitment details, and risk register
- Project Pilgrim risk assessments
- Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel: terms of reference, membership, strategic plan, and recent minutes
- diocesan safeguarding quality assurance framework
- assorted safeguarding plans and documents from the recent past
- overviews, schedules and safeguarding specifics of all cathedral choirs
- descriptions of arrangements with King's School and with chorister parents
- assorted choir-related risk assessments
- behavioural policies relating to the choirs
- policies and procedures of visiting/non-cathedral choirs

Participation of members of the diocese

The auditors had conversations with:

- Dean of Gloucester
- Chapter Steward
- Canon Chancellor
- Canon Precentor
- two canons – one ordained, one lay – from Chapter
- Director of Resources and Safeguarding
- both Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers
- two Education Centre leads
- Project Pilgrim Community Engagement Manager
- Director of Music
- Assistant Director of Music
- Singing Development Leader
- Dean's Verger
- other members of the verger team
- Breakfast Club leader
- Children's Church leader

Focus groups were held with:

- chorister parents
- volunteers
- congregants
- cathedral staff

The auditors also observed the choristers' preparation for evensong, evensong, and the arrangement for choristers afterwards.

The auditors saw survey responses about safeguarding from 28 members of the youth choir; 19 members of the girls' choir; and 16 members of the boys' choir.

The audit: what records / files were examined?

The auditors looked at seven case files; and five recruitment files for evidence of safer recruitment.

Limitations of audit

As mentioned, the auditors did not speak directly to choristers, users of the Breakfast Club, or bell ringers. Notwithstanding, the audit was well-organised and planned, and the auditors would like to thank Gloucester Cathedral for their efforts on this regard.