

DIOCESE OF NEWCASTLE

SAFEGUARDING ADVISORY GROUP

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Group (DSAG) will oversee safeguarding arrangements in the diocese. The role of the Group is to:

- Offer external expertise and challenge to the diocese on safeguarding matters;
- Advise and make recommendations to the diocesan bishop and senior leadership team on the development and effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements;
- Seek to ensure the implementation of House of Bishops' safeguarding policy and practice guidance;
- To have particular regard to the rigour of the Church's arrangements to respond to allegations against church officers, manage risk and support victims/survivors of abuse;
- Seek to ensure that effective arrangements, including information sharing is in place with statutory partners;
- To advise on arrangements to support and monitor the implementation of good safeguarding practice in parishes;
- Consider information and themes from quality assurance processes e.g. diocesan self-assessments, lessons learnt reviews, independent audits and file audits to make recommendations to improve safeguarding arrangements.
- Receive anonymised¹ management information relating to case work, including risk assessments and safeguarding agreements that the diocese has completed to maintain oversight of safeguarding work;
- To monitor the diocesan requirements relating to safer recruitment, DBS Disclosures and safeguarding training and advise accordingly;
- To contribute to the diocesan safeguarding strategy and its annual progress review;
- To advise the bishop on any circumstances where the diocese proposes to depart materially from the House of Bishops' safeguarding guidance, (includes both policy and practice guidance). To advise the National Safeguarding Team if the DSAG continues to consider that a safeguarding matter is not being dealt with properly in the diocese or other church body;
- Review progress annually and report this to the bishop and the identified diocesan body/ies.

It is not the role of the DSAG to be part of the case management process. It is their role to consider information from quality assurance processes, as above.

At the discretion of the chair of the DSAG, the Group may choose to have a sub-group that monitors risk assessments and safeguarding agreements. The purpose of this subgroup is to review the quality of risk assessments (both standard and independent) and safeguarding agreements. This sub group should have clear terms of reference and a membership that reflects the necessary experience and skills to

¹ Anonymised for this purpose means that no person or place involved in the case is identifiable from the information provided. This would exclude references to individuals by initials for example, as people with even limited local knowledge may be able to identify people.

undertake this role. This is not an exhaustive list. It is meant to highlight core functions. Each group should have a clear terms of reference outlining its role and function.

Membership

The chair should be an independent (independence signifies not employed in another role in the diocese nor discharging managerial functions in the diocese) lay person with responsibility for ensuring that the panel's advisory and scrutiny functions are carried out effectively. He/she will be appointed for a period of 3 years by the diocesan bishop in consultation with the DSA in accordance with the House of Bishops' guidance in relation to role description and person specification. This can be extended for a further three years following a review of effectiveness. They should have extensive, recent and professional safeguarding expertise and experience, ideally someone who has operated at a senior level in either a statutory sector or relevant voluntary agency.

The DSAG will be advised by the diocesan safeguarding adviser, who will attend meetings and offer advice.

The DSAG should aim for a balanced membership, with representation from the diocese's senior staff team, other church officers, other Church Bodies and voluntary and statutory partners.² External members should have sufficient recent/current safeguarding expertise and experience. As a minimum, there should be representation from at least three of the following statutory agencies – Social Services, Police, NHS, Education and relevant charity.³

The appointment of panel members is the responsibility of the diocesan bishop, in consultation with chair and the DSA.

All appointments to the group should follow the House of Bishops' safer recruitment practice guidance. It is recommended that the initial appointments should be for a term of 3 years with an additional term of appointment possible for a further 3 years after the initial term, following a review of commitment and contribution.

All members should have an induction which includes purpose and function of the group, their role and responsibilities and an introduction to safeguarding in the diocese and the Church of England, as required.

² It is noted that engaging statutory partners in the DSAP is currently a challenge but all efforts should be made to continue to achieve this.

³ Report of A Review of Kendall House, Gravesend 1967-1986 – S Proctor, S Cohen and R Galloway (June 2016) – P. 119 Recommendation 6 (Considerations for other dioceses and national church bodies).