



# Westminster Safeguarding Service

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## **Summary of the Trustee's Safeguarding Committee on Thursday 9 March 2023**

### **World Day of Prayer for Victims and Survivors**

It was noted that the Safeguarding Service was to circulate a resource for use by parishes for the forthcoming World Day of Prayer for Victims and Survivors (Tuesday 17 May 2022).

### **Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA)**

The Committee noted that [Steve Ashley](#) (formerly Deputy Chair of CSSA) had been confirmed as the CSSA's new CEO on 23 February 2023. Negotiations between the Diocese and the CSSA on the form of the contract between them were ongoing, and it was expected that the CSSA's Training Strategy would be available in April 2023.

### **Ending of alignment agreements with Religious Orders and the transfer of responsibility from the Diocese to the Religious Life Safeguarding Service RLSS**

The Committee received an update on the ongoing work with respect to the transfer of responsibility from the Diocese to the RLSS. The work included: ongoing negotiations to agree the form of the contract between RLSS and the dioceses, development of a new Information Sharing Agreement, the production of case closure summaries for cases to be transferred to the RLSS and termination of alignment agreements.

### **Audit**

The Committee received two important pieces of work:

- (1) Audit Sub-Committee report on parish safeguarding: the audit was based on visits made by Committee members/Safeguarding Service staff to a 5% sample of parishes and interactions had been structured around five key areas:
  - (i) DBS and safer recruitment
  - (ii) Training
  - (iii) Celebrets
  - (iv) Risk assessments
  - (v) Communicating safeguarding

Each of the individual parish reports commented that the audit visit was welcomed by priests and PSR's. The importance of safeguarding was clearly understood and recognised, and there was a clear grasp of the issues and principles. However, two parish priests reported disquiet at the delays in DBS clearances whilst one reflected that whilst child protection issues were understood, vulnerable adult work needed more input. It was agreed that the immense amount of work being undertaken in parishes was welcome and reassuring.

(2) External Audit Report of the Governance of Safeguarding Arrangements in the Archdiocese of Westminster: The Committee received a report on governance arrangements commissioned from external auditors. Overall, the findings illustrated that the Diocese was well on the way to putting in place the structural recommendations of the 2020 [Elliot Review](#). In concert with the Trust Board, the Committee is now considering its response to report's recommendations.

### **Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults**

It was agreed that the Safeguarding Service should develop guidance on safeguarding vulnerable adults, to sit with the Manual for the Management of Allegations, Information and Concerns about Child Abuse.

### **'Zero Tolerance Approach'**

There was agreement that the Diocesan approach to safeguarding should be underlined by inclusion of its statement on ['Zero Tolerance'](#) in a prominent location on the Diocesan Safeguarding web pages.

### **Safeguarding Service**

The Safeguarding Service was congratulated on its closure of 465 cases during the year.

### **Safeguarding Committee Training Day, Friday 10 March 2023**

The Committee met for a whole day on Friday 10 March for its first training day. Amongst other things the programme included:

- (1) A thought-provoking presentation from Baroness Hollins on vulnerable adults/adults at risk, followed by a discussion about how the Diocese might better incorporate the views and experiences of complainants/victims/survivors in its work of governance of the Safeguarding Service.
- (2) A presentation from Geraldine Allen on moving the Diocesan Safeguarding Services towards being a trauma informed organization. As a result of this, it was agreed that consideration should be given to the possibility of revising the ['Diocese of Westminster – Commitment to Survivors'](#) document to reflect trauma-informed practice (i.e.: practice which seeks to avoid re-traumatisation).
- (3) Further discussion of the External Governance Audit and approaches to the implementation of recommendations.
- (4) Discussion of Committee training need, as a result of which it was identified that supplementary training on Canon Law would be helpful.