



Diocese of Westminster Strategic Safeguarding Plan 2025-2028

FOREWORD BY CARDINAL VINCENT NICHOLS



I welcome the opportunity to present the 2025 - 2028 Strategic Safeguarding Plan for the Diocese of Westminster, which will set out the direction of travel of safeguarding for the Diocese over the next three years.

Our vision is for the Diocese to be a safe place for all, and this is underpinned by our mission to integrate a culture and practice of safeguarding into all Diocesan activity, including ensuring a safer environment for all children and adults at risk and seeking to repair the damage of the past by responding compassionately, fairly, and robustly to all matters involving safeguarding concerns.

During my time as the Archbishop of Westminster, I have been able to reflect on the many positive changes that have taken place across the Diocese to ensure that safeguarding is front and centre in our work. I have seen how our safeguarding values of being Compassionate, Candid, Collaborative and Committed are the golden threads woven into how we deliver our work and how we engage with those who have been hurt or affected by abuse.

- **COMPASSIONATE:** We honour the dignity of all and work with understanding, respect and care.
- **CANDID:** We embrace openness and transparency, and act with integrity, probity, fairness and consistency. We are both encouraging and honest.
- **COLLABORATIVE:** We work with others to ensure that there is a shared recognition that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that everyone understands the role that they need to play.
- **COMMITTED:** We are committed to delivering high standards across safeguarding at all times. We are committed to ensuring that there is zero tolerance of abuse and that there is an effective response where there are allegations, information or concerns relating to the safeguarding of children or adults at risk.

We know there is still more that can be done, and our Strategic Safeguarding Plan will outline the objectives and priorities that will help us all achieve this. Many across the Diocese including our Safeguarding Committee and our external partners with whom we engage with across safeguarding have contributed to the development of this plan.

+ Vincent Nichols

H.E. Cardinal Vincent Nichols
Archbishop of Westminster



Diocese of Westminster

Diocese of Westminster

The Diocese of Westminster is one of the smallest dioceses in England and Wales in geographical area but the largest in terms of Catholic population and priests. The Diocese comprises 207 parishes and 202 schools located in the London boroughs north of the River Thames, west of the River Lee, in the county of Hertfordshire and the Borough of Spelthorne in Surrey.

Safeguarding across the Diocese of Westminster refers to the wide range of services, plans and activities that are put in place to protect children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable to abuse from being harmed or exploited.

The Diocese is directed by best safeguarding practice and by statutory and legal requirements. Likewise, the Diocese must also demonstrate its safeguarding compliance with the guidelines, policies and standards set by the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA).

The Trustee's Safeguarding Committee advises the Cardinal on the creation and maintenance of safe environments in the parishes and diocesan groups. The Committee has oversight for case management, through the case work sub-committee. It also promotes continuous improvement through the quality enhancement and assurance sub-committee. The Safeguarding Committee consists of lay members and clerics, and has a particular focus on ensuring that the Catholic church policy and standards are implemented across all the parishes within the diocese



Parishes

207

Mass attendance **111,130**



Schools

202

92,102 students



Social Action

50,750 people supported by **500+** social action projects across parishes and schools



Safeguarding

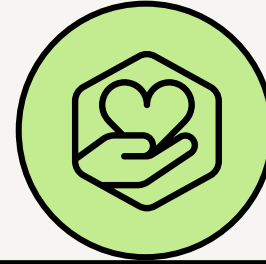
1408 DBS certificates issued 2024
126 cases and consultations

Key Challenges for Safeguarding



Resourcing the work of Safeguarding

The unpredictable economic environment and increased costs have impacted on the financial sustainability of the Diocese. Going forward the Safeguarding Committee will need to secure the resources required to deliver against the commitments in the next 3 years.



Supporting and caring for those who have been hurt and / or effected by abuse

The Diocese is committed to supporting those who have been hurt and / or affected by abuse. The development of trauma informed practice, improved signposting to support and the creation of our annual Hope and Healing Service for Victims and Survivors are important contributions to this commitment.



Embedding Safeguarding across our parishes

Embedding a culture of safeguarding is a key priority for the Diocese. The introduction of new software and training platforms demonstrate our commitment to safe recruitment practices and training. We recognise the important role that parish volunteers and parish administrators play, and their vital role in delivering safeguarding at parish level.

The Strategic Plan 2025-2028

There are 3 overarching outcomes for the Strategic plan:

We care for those who have been hurt and/or affected by abuse

We are accountable, open and transparent in our work, open to scrutiny and willing to learn to improve

We have a safe and welcoming church where safeguarding is embedded across parishes

Our strategic objectives:

Objective 1

To better understand the experience of abuse, using this to drive practice improvement through training and compliance with all laws and guidance.

Objective 2

Within our Church community we will create and maintain safe and welcoming places for children, young people, adults at risk and those that work with them, where safeguarding is embedded and integral to what we do.

Objective 3

To further develop the structure for scrutinising and evaluating performance, including learning from casework, identifying outcomes and developing means of measuring and driving quality of service.