

Diocese of Sodor and Man and St German's Cathedral Safeguarding Strategy

A safer church is a more Christ-like church

Local context

Safeguarding is rooted in the gospel. It is a Christian imperative to take care of the young, the vulnerable and those most in need. As every person is made in the image of God, this begins with valuing all God's people.

At a recent safeguarding training for senior leaders (2025), the following five statements were agreed as the diocese vision for safeguarding:

- Safeguarding flows from our faith in Jesus Christ - it's part of who we are.
- We long for a day when safeguarding is second nature - woven into Island life, simple, trusted, and instinctive.
- We celebrate a culture of 'safe caring' - done well, embraced by all, and part of our shared identity.
- Our safeguarding aims to be clear and compassionate - guided by relationships, not bureaucracy.
- We want every church and ministry to be a place of sanctuary and welcome - for all ages, at all times.

Note: As this strategy applies to both St German's Cathedral and the Diocese of Sodor and Man, references to the *Parish Safeguarding Officer* should be read as referring to the *Cathedral Safeguarding Officer*, and references to the *Diocesan Safeguarding Officer* should be read as referring to the *Cathedral Safeguarding Officer*, where applicable.

Organisational safeguarding activity

At the time of writing the diocese and Cathedral are embarking upon a period of transition from an ecumenical safeguarding arrangement, to safeguarding provision being brought back 'in house' under the Church of England. We expect to see the results/impact of a number of other significant safeguarding initiatives, driven by wider Church activity:

- The Future of Church Safeguarding review: in July 2023, the Archbishops commissioned Professor Alexis Jay to develop proposals for a fully independent structure for safeguarding scrutiny in the Church of England. Professor Jay reported in February 2024.
- Independent Safeguarding Audit: in August 2023, INEQE Safeguarding Group was appointed by the Archbishops' Council to carry out independent external audits of Church of England dioceses and cathedrals. The independent audit programme will run from 2023- 2028, with the Diocese of Sodor and Man due to be audited in September 2026.

The diocesan safeguarding strategy will be reviewed and updated as required, in response to these initiatives and their findings. Where necessary, operational priorities will be identified; this may occur outside the normal strategic review cycle (usually annually) and will require continuing consultation with Diocese of Sodor and Man, the Cathedral and the

Safeguarding Development Group and other stakeholders.

Shaping good practice

In setting out our strategic ambitions, it is important to recognise that there are behavioural and cultural practice changes that must be realised in order to achieve our goals.

Our safeguarding strategy not only sets out to implement the necessary activity from the safeguarding function, but also covers the necessary process, behaviour and cultural changes required to ensure that safeguarding practice develops in a cohesive, sustainable and effective way across the diocese.

St German's Cathedral and the Diocese of Sodor and Man Strategic Safeguarding Objectives

The approach aims to make churches safe for all and aligns to the Church of England's National Safeguarding Standards. There are five strategic objectives:

- 1) Culture, Leadership and Capacity
- 2) Prevention
- 3) Recognising, Assessing and Managing Risk
- 4) Victims and Survivors
- 5) Learning, Supervision and Support

Objective 1 Culture, Leadership, and Capacity

High quality safeguarding practices and outcomes are achieved across the diocese through safe and healthy cultures, effective leadership, sufficient resourcing and robust scrutiny.

Culture

- Safeguarding element present in Ministerial Development Reviews(MDRs).
- Awareness raising at a parish level of the need for culture change where safeguarding is seen as everyone's responsibility.

Leadership

- Safeguarding staff have a high level of visibility and priority at a senior level across the diocese.
- Senior leaders in the diocese demonstrate commitment to and prioritise safeguarding.

Capacity

- Annual review of safeguarding resources by the diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Group.

Indicators of success

- Evidence of inter role/function working.
- Evidence that safeguarding is able to influence at a senior level within the diocese, such as regular inclusion of safeguarding as an agenda item in Bishop's leadership meetings.
- Better understanding at a parish level of positive safeguarding cultures.

Objective 2 Prevention

The Diocese effectively enables preventative safeguarding alongside reacting to safeguarding situations.

Recruitment and People Management

- Continue to encourage and support parishes to use the Safeguarding Dashboard and continue to promote safer recruitment.

Messaging

- Raise the profile of PSOs and safeguarding within parishes.

Activities

- Make sure all activities are safely carried out.
- PSOs are supported and feel valued within their role.
- Effective preventive work in parishes
- A resource pack in relation to safer recruitment is provided and actively used by parishes

Indicators of success

- Preventative safeguarding activity is adequately resourced.
- Survey data from PSOs demonstrates they are feeling supported.
- Parishes have effective safeguarding measures in place.
- Higher take up of Safeguarding Hub and Dashboard.
- A PSO covering every parish at any one time

Objective 3 Recognising, Assessing and Managing Risk

Risk assessments, safeguarding agreements and associated processes are of a high quality and are underpinned by effective partnership working.

Recognising Risk

GDPR

- Parishes understand compliance with data protection and GDPR

Risk Assessments

- Best practice risk assessment and safeguarding processes are maintained

Safeguarding Agreements

- Safeguarding agreements are in place as required which effectively manage risk and are regularly reviewed.
- Parishes receive support to actively manage the risk of offenders who are classed as a risk

Partnership Working

- Strong links with statutory authorities are maintained

Indicators of success

- Number of safeguarding 'incidents' where the case was, or should have been, managed by safeguarding staff

Objective 4 Victims and Survivors

Victims and survivors experience a positive and timely response to disclosures and their subsequent support needs are met.

Engagement

- Support parishes to create environments conducive to reporting harm.

Support

- Victims and survivors are able to work with the church to decide what support they need.

Indicators of success

- Feedback from victims/survivors

Objective 5 Learning, Supervision and Support

All those engaged in safeguarding engage with appropriate learning, professional development, support and supervision to respond to safeguarding situations, victims and survivors, and respondents effectively.

Safeguarding Learning

- Safeguarding training is undertaken by all church officers, ordained and lay.

Supervision and Support of clergy

- Clergy are provided with the any support they need in relation to responding to safeguarding incidents or situations
- Ministerial Development Reviews take place regularly and explore safeguarding and identify areas for growth and development.

Supervision and support of safeguarding staff

- Staff in the safeguarding team receive effective supervision and development

Indicators of success

- Safeguarding staff understand the wider safeguarding context in the Church
- Safeguarding staff feel supported and valued for the work that they undertake
- All clergy undertake regular safeguarding training as required
- Safeguarding element is present in Ministerial Development Reviews (MDRs).
- Through the MDR process clergy are encouraged to develop positive safeguarding cultures within their parishes

Conclusion

In summary, St German's Cathedral and the Diocese of Sodor and Man safeguarding strategy commits to the measures our diocese takes to ensure the safety and well-being of all individuals, particularly children, young people, and vulnerable adults, within its community. It emphasises creating a culture of respect and accountability, where safeguarding responsibilities are clearly defined and upheld by all members, including leaders, staff, and volunteers.

The strategy includes robust policies and procedures for identifying and responding to concerns, rigorous recruitment and training practices and reviews to ensure compliance with

ethical and practice standards. By fostering a safe and welcoming culture the diocese aims to protect individuals from harm and promote their spiritual and personal growth within our safe worshiping environments.

Written by: Tony Connell. Diocesan Secretary

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