

HEXHAM AND NEWCASTLE SAFEGUARDING COMMISSION



Minutes of the Safeguarding Commission of the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle

Teams Video Conference Call (Covid-19 Restrictions)
on Wednesday 8 September 2021 at 15.30

Members Anne O'Brien (Chair)
Attendance: Jane Hedley (Vice Chair)

Fr Peter Leighton (Trustee / Vicar General)
Fr Bill Agley (Diocesan Chancellor / Clergy Adviser)
Fr Bernard Fox (Religious Orders)
Angie Richardson (Safeguarding Coordinator)
Meriel Anderson (Safeguarding Adviser)
Gail McGregor (Consultant Psychologist)
Paul Weatherstone (Probation Services)

Apologies: Simone Common (Service Manager, Early Help)

In Attendance:

Note Taker Karen Brown (Safeguarding Administrator)
Yvonne Brown (Safeguarding Administrator)

1. Welcome and introductions

AoB welcomed everyone to the meeting and a special welcome to Paul Weatherstone, (Senior Probation Officer, National Probation Service – North East) who has resumed his attendance at the Safeguarding Commission.

Documents circulated / tabled:

- Minutes of the previous meeting 16.6.21
- Safeguarding Risk Register
- Key Performance Indicators (update)
- Case Management Report (Sept 2021)
- Objectives (update)

2. Apologies (received and noted)

3. Minutes of previous meeting: 16 June 2021

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record.

Action Points update

- (1) **AoB** explained there had been a slight delay in circulating documents due to priorities relating to the new structure and taking the commission forward in line with the changes. In terms of timescales, the Diocese was up to speed, although **AoB** thought that the next Commission meeting would probably be the last one prior to the inception of the Safeguarding Sub-Committee to Hexham and Newcastle (H&N) Diocese Board.
- (2) **AR and Fr BF** have been working closely together with historical Mill Hill Missionaries (MHM) records in preparation for the realignment to Religious Life Safeguarding Service (RLSS).
- (3) New standards have been introduced and we are waiting on those standards being made public. The final structural arrangements may result in a revamp of the Risk

Register that we currently have to bring this in line with the changes nationally.

AoB/AR will make arrangements to provide **PW** with an official update on the newly established structure.

4. Safeguarding Risk Register

AR explained that the trend is stable at present and highlighted the end column on the report as the risk is described as being 'continuous' which reflects that these areas are on-going. Code Sa10 will be reviewed in January 2021 and following a change to the Committee, the register format may be modified slightly. On-going risks will be monitored and managed effectively.

5. Objectives and KPIs

AR attends a monthly departmental assurance meeting and reported that every objective was met and assessed as green, apart from the Diocesan Independent Safeguarding Commission This simply reflect the change from commission to committee which is imminent and will bring restructure.

6. Implementation Report/Transition from Commission to Committee

AoB briefly explained the background to the organisational restructure and review of the Catholic church (for the benefit of **PW**) and the establishment of the three newly constituted entities:

- The Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA) A new organisational body with national functions and central guidance.
- Religious Life Safeguarding Service, covering religious orders and congregations.
- The National Tribunal Service, addressing clergy allegations, misconduct and overarching welfare.

AoB explained that safeguarding will be audited by CSSA and the national bodies no longer exist under CSAS and NCSC. The RLSS will provide support to the religious community, such as the Benedictines and The Congregation of Christian Brothers, for example. The RLSS will give congregations support and case management advice. The RLSS was reported as being behind in terms of overall planning. A new RLSS Commission Board is being formed and AoB informed that she is the new chair of the Board. Members congratulated AoB on her new appointment.

7. IICSA (Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse)

AR informed that the Inquiry released their report and findings on the Catholic Church last October. **AR** explained that IICSA had now reported on all other religious organisations this month and found that there was sexual abuse present in all religious settings. IICSA was not fully concluded and the Truth Project still had a live function.

<https://www.truthproject.org.uk/conclusion-truth-project>

AoB suggested that the Safeguarding Commission look at the other religious community recommendations following the third and final report (3.9.21) and to look at learning and review as an opportunity to pick up on outcomes from a broader aspect.

For information, **AR** agreed to email **PW** copies of the transition newsletters from CSSA.

8. Case Management Report (update)

- **Refer to report: (strictly private and confidential – not for onward distribution)**

AR reported no new cases, no new serious incident reports and no new referrals to the Charity Commission.

9. Religious Safeguarding Matters

AR explained that Religious Matters often overlap in case management, which will require some work when the Religious are being re-structured under the RLSS system and are not

in our control.

AR reported that in preparation for realignment, all 6 orders aligned to H&N had been contacted and all the relevant documentation had been completed and submitted as per Phase 1. All Safety Plans and live cases had been discussed and agreements will be signed in the final phase when orders officially transfer.

AR added this had created some extra work and liaison due to the location and dimension of some of the religious orders. **AR** and **Fr BF** agreed that they had formed an excellent working relationship, which was mutually appreciated. **Fr BF** said he may not receive the same level of support going forward, as not all commissions understood religious life.

Fr BF reported that he will be handing over his role to Fr Christopher Hancock. **AR** has met with **Fr CH** and has been exploring with him the possibility of joining the Safeguarding Commission/Committee moving forward. **Fr BF** felt he would be a great addition given his canon law experience. **AR** assured **Fr CH** that H&N Diocese will work through the transition processes and fully support him.

JH also holds a voluntary role as Parish Safeguarding Representative, said that she would be available and willing to assist with support to **Fr CH**.

AR added that some religious orders had chosen not to join RLSS and they would have to make their own arrangements and demonstrate that they were meeting the required standards. The majority have, however, joined RLSS.

10. Any Other Business

- (a) **Fr BF** explained it was worth noting that MHM sits under the Societies of Apostolic Life and not Religious Life.
- (b) **AoB** reported she had received a copy of the report from Catherine Dyer of the review around Case CM 1/21. There were three minor learning outcomes 2 for the Diocese and one for CSSA/CSAS to consider. A further and broader review was now ongoing.
- (c) **AR** informed of the new system called SafeSys Light, which is now going live in the Department. This has been rolled out nationally to all Dioceses in England and Wales as the new online client management system for processing DBS checks. The system will cut down processing and assist the team by avoiding duplication and doubling up tasks. **AR** and **MA** have had an overview of the system and staff will be trained, starting next week.
- (d) **AR** informed of an Extra Ordinary meeting that will be arranged for members to discuss 2 cases that were currently going through the psychological risk assessment stage. Members will review the conclusions from the assessments and make recommendations to the Bishop. There will be at least one other case file that requires exploration at that meeting.
- (e) **AR** explained that CSSA will issue new national training standards, and guidance which are yet to be clarified. Currently H&N Diocese use Educare <https://www.educare.co.uk/> and also mandatory safeguarding training for Clergy and PSR's. The Educare modules required by Clergy and PSR's are child and adult safeguarding training, which has been a three yearly requirement in line with the three yearly DBS recheck policy. All Clergy have now completed this training and **MA** is at the final stage of delivering training to the Parish Safeguarding Representatives (PSR). Any Clergy or PSR who could not attend the online training will be sent an agreed training DVD. Until CSSA produce the final safeguarding training package, **AR** asked members to consider the recommendation of continuing to utilise Educare as a 3 yearly recheck basis. This recommendation would be presented to Trustees for the Diocese at the next Board meeting.

GMcG thought this was good practice as an ongoing training initiative and was favourable of what had been achieved so far.

JH attended the training in her role as PSR and felt it was not too onerous and observed everyone seemed to cope with Zoom and technology overall, which worked well with a wider audience.

Fr WA felt that the training schedule was helpful, in terms of accepting celebrants and clergy outside the Diocese, including retired supply priests. He added that the training avoided extra work and it was a good monitoring exercise to ensure clergy are adequately trained.

Fr PL felt that the training seemed to be accepted overall, which was positive.

AoB concluded that the Safeguarding Department should continue using Educare as their main online safeguarding training package on a 3 yearly rolling basis until the national perspective is outlined and a robust system is in place.

(f) **AR** discussed briefly with members the case to be discussed at the next Extra Ordinary Meeting. It is a historic file that she has reviewed and requires further consideration.

(g) **MA** gave a synopsis of a current management case, with a view to gaining members recommendations and final action.

AoB outlined the final decision as follows:

- Not recommended as an active volunteer
- Safety Plan to remain in place if person wishes to worship/attend mass

Next meeting: 8th December 2021

No	Summary of Action Points	Initials/All
1	AR will make arrangements to provide PW with an official update on the newly established structure.	AR
2	AR will suggest some dates to hold the Extra Ordinary meeting and liaise with members.	AR
3	AoB will continue to update members on relevant restructuring information	AoB

AoB thanked everyone for attending the video conference and their contribution.
Meeting closed at 16:40