



SAFEGUARDING AUDIT

January 2026

July Briefing



Welcome to our Monthly Safeguarding Briefing.

As part of our ongoing preparation for the INEQE Safeguarding Audit, we are continuing to make good progress to ensure that our Diocese and Cathedral are ready to demonstrate best safeguarding practice and identify areas where we can strengthen our culture and processes further. The audit will take place from **7–9 January 2026** as part of the national Church of England review following the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA).

A Message from Hazel McKibbin, Project Chair:

“Safeguarding is such an important responsibility for all working and volunteering with children and adults, and every effort needs to be made to ensure all involved have a clear understanding and know what to do, why and when. An external audit is part of checking on the Diocese and Cathedral’s safeguarding practice and while it may feel uncomfortable it’s a good opportunity to recognise and show the good work that is taking place, to identify those areas that need more work and to agree plans to address these. The Project Board is working to gather the information for the INEQE audit and will be in touch to let you know how you can support this work - it is important that everyone plays their part to keep everyone from the youngest to the oldest safe”.

The INEQE Project Board

The INEQE project board are meeting monthly to oversee all preparation work and to coordinate activity and monitor progress. The Board members are:

Project Chair:

Hazel McKibbin



Diocese Single Point of Contact:

Julian Hodgson (DSO)



Project Assistant:

Julie King

Cathedral Single Point of Contact:

To be appointed on 1st September 2025



Comms Representative:

Laura Frank (Communications & Resources Manager)

HR Representative:

As required

2025 Safeguarding Conference: An Inspiring Day

On 5th July, over 100 parish safeguarding officers, volunteers and Clergy gathered at The Minster School in Southwell for the 2025 Safeguarding Conference. Julian Hodgson, our Safeguarding Officer and Diocesan Lead for the INEQE audit, provided an update highlighting how parish dashboards and the Safeguarding Hub can evidence progress and strengthen safeguarding engagement across the Diocese.



Miles Dent, Cathedral Safeguarding Officer, shares about his role in the INEQE Audit:

“Since starting my role in early June, my focus has been preparing for the INEQE safeguarding audit. I have met with staff, volunteers, and choristers, reviewed existing policies and procedures, and begun identifying areas for improvement. Work has centred around the five standards: ensuring safeguarding is embedded in cathedral culture and leadership; reviewing prevention measures and identifying any gaps; assessing and managing risk through updated policies and staff discussions; building on existing good practice for victims and survivors; and supporting staff learning and supervision to maintain high standards. I am also involved in the data collection for the 360 audit, attended the 2025 Safeguarding Conference, and remain available for advice on low-level concerns and conduct issues. I will continue working closely with staff to strengthen safeguarding across all areas of cathedral life. Thank you to everyone for your support and engagement during this important work.”

Audit Readiness Overview

We are currently developing and adapting INEQE materials to help raise awareness of the audit across the Diocese and Cathedral. Look out for our new posters appearing soon on the website which you can download, print, and put up.

A 7-minute briefing and supporting presentation has also been prepared. We will be scheduling online INEQE briefing sessions for Area Deans, Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSOs) and Churchwardens—one evening each week starting in August and throughout September. This is likely to be on a Tuesday evening. You only need to attend one of the briefings.

Julian is also finalising questionnaire analysis and collecting data to help measure compliance i.e. other departments at Jubilee House. Preparation is underway for local authority partners organisations, which is likely to be held in early September.

INEQE will be conducting interviews, reviewing documents, and consulting with a wide range of stakeholders – including Parishes and Cathedrals. Key audit dates and times will be shared on the diocesan website when available.

Preparing Audit Material:

A key focus now is to identify, collate and upload all relevant evidence to the INEQE Audit Dashboard when it goes live on 1 August 2025.

We have set up a system to collate the parish and cathedral information and we will transfer that information to INEQE's system in stages starting on 1 September. What this means for you is that you may have different deadlines for various bits of information that we will request from you.

Questionnaires will be distributed after August to all stakeholders and groups of service users who have agreed to participate. In addition to providing Information, **the main way in which you can participate in the audit is to complete any questionnaires, or if you wish to participate in a focus group of PSO's please let us know!**

Self-Assessments:

As noted in last month's briefing, both the Cathedral and Diocesan Safeguarding Teams have completed detailed self-assessments using the National Safeguarding Standards. Work continues on gap analyses which support the Cathedral's National Standards Audit and aligns with the master Cathedral Workbook created by the National Safeguarding Team (NST).

Safeguarding Dashboard:

87% of Parishes are now operational with the safeguarding dashboard which is great! We are encouraging those parishes who have not yet engaged in the dashboard to do so as this is what INEQE will look at to ensure our parishes are compliant with the national standards.

If any parish has not yet signed up to the Safeguarding Dashboard or Hub, there's still time to get started. This is the most effective way to demonstrate your compliance with national safeguarding standards. Please contact safeguarding@southwell.anglican.org — we are here and happy to help.

Parish Demographic Survey - Deadline 31st August:

The Parish Demographic Survey is essential for understanding the make-up of each parish and informing future safeguarding planning. Thank you to all parishes who have already completed it. If you have not yet done so, please ensure it is returned by the deadline of 31 August.

Please remember there is no requirement to gather personal data retrospectively beyond what is reasonably accessible. **We are very grateful for your feedback so far, please return a nil response if you cannot gather or do not hold the information.**

[Click here to access the survey](#)

If you need any help with the survey or have concerns about how to complete it, please contact Julie King, Project Assistant:

julie.king@southwell.anglican.org / 01636 817216.

NEXT MONTH

We will be familiarising ourselves with the different forms and preparing to submit the demographic data, which is essential for building a clearer picture of the makeup of our workforce and volunteers across the Diocese. This information is vital for safeguarding planning, effective resourcing, and ensuring we meet national audit requirements.

THANK YOU

Thank you to everyone contributing their time, information, and commitment to this important work. Every form completed, briefing attended, and piece of evidence gathered strengthens our shared safeguarding culture.

Together, we are ensuring our Diocese and Cathedral remain safe, supportive communities for everyone.



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