

# An Overview of the Past Cases Review 2 in the Diocese of St Albans

**5 October 2022**

## Foreword

The Past Cases Review 2 (PCR2) was launched by the Church of England in 2019, as part of the Church's commitment to improving the way in which we respond to safeguarding allegations and concerns. The aim of this national initiative has been to identify and review all information held by churches about alleged abuse of children or vulnerable adults and to ensure that all allegations have been handled appropriately.

The Diocese of St Albans has been fully committed to this process and, following an extensive study of records and reports, the independent reviewers have submitted a detailed report setting out their findings and recommendations. This Executive Summary explains the way in which the review has been carried out and highlights the main conclusions.

The report concludes that the review has met its objectives and that, as far as practicable, all allegations of abuse of children or adults recorded or identified have been dealt with appropriately. Those cases which required further consideration have been resolved satisfactorily.

The reviewers have commended the diocesan safeguarding team and noted evidence of excellent working practices in the diocese. At the same time, they consider that there are some areas for improvement at local and national level and have made a number of recommendations, particularly on resources and record-keeping.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel and senior clergy have carefully considered the report and action has been taken to address the recommendations. We recognise that we have a continuing responsibility to ensure the safety and well-being of children and vulnerable adults in our churches and the report provides an important resource for the diocese as we strive to maintain and develop best practice.

Finally we wish to express our gratitude to the independent reviewers for their detailed analysis and report and to all those who have contributed to the review for their assistance and support.

**Philip Waller**  
**Independent Chair, Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel**

# Introduction by the Bishop of St Albans

The Diocese of St Albans is committed to offering a warm and safe welcome to everyone who attends our churches, especially to children and vulnerable adults.

This is integral to our vision to be a place where people discover and deepen their sense of God's love for them and are drawn to join in prayer, worship and the life of the church.

The Diocese of St Albans has adopted the national policies and Practice Guidance for Safeguarding within the Church of England and commended them to the deaneries and parishes for adoption and implementation.

This Past Cases Review has been an important step in ensuring that all known cases of concern about the behaviour of clergy and church officers towards children and vulnerable adults have been dealt with appropriately.

Safeguarding is not just a matter of words. Where things go wrong, we put survivors first, strive to care for those who have been harmed and follow best practice, working with all statutory and other authorities to deal effectively with harm and to learn the lessons from every situation that will make our church and our world a safer place for all.

**The Rt Revd Dr Alan Smith**  
**Bishop of St Albans**

# Past Cases Review 2

The Past Cases Review (PCR2) was commissioned by the Archbishops' Council with the support of the National Safeguarding Steering Group. It is the most comprehensive review of personnel files ever undertaken. On 1 September 2019, the PCR2 Management Board published practice guidance and background presentation to assist dioceses in the conduct of this review. All dioceses were committed to completing this review.

The Protocol and Practice Guidance made clear that the wellbeing of victims and survivors must be central to this work and that dioceses would need to ensure their voices can be heard. It was recognised that for some victims and survivors it would be important to speak to people outside the structures of the Church, and an independent helpline was set up, operated by the NSPCC.

This review is part of the Church's overall commitment to improving the way in which we respond to allegations and concerns.

PCR2 came about from the recommendations from the report of the Independent Scrutiny Team and was written to capture the lessons learned across different dioceses during the decade since the Church's original Past Case Review (PCR1).

The overall purpose of the review is to identify both good practice and institutional failings in relation to how allegations of abuse have been handled, and to provide recommendations to the Church of England that will lead to improvements in its response to allegations of abuse and in its overall safeguarding working practices; thereby ensuring a safer environment for all.

In practical terms, PCR2 is a comprehensive audit of all employee and clergy files to ensure that they are independently reviewed and any cases of concern which emerge are dealt with by the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser as if they are new referrals. It also examined cases of concern already known to the Diocese and subsequently reported by parishes requested as part of this review. The examination of files was undertaken by a team of two independent reviewers, who concluded their work in November 2021.

Full information about the history, scope, and national findings of PCR2 is available on the [Church of England website](#).

## Headline information

100% of parishes and church bodies responded to the review. The independent reviewers examined files relating to 1,848 people, including clergy, lay readers, and diocesan and parish employees.

A small number of files were flagged for further action. All these cases have since been dealt with to a satisfactory conclusion.

The independent reviewers concluded that the Diocese of St Albans has met all the objectives set out in the national PCR2 Protocol and Practice guidance.

Overall, the reviewers concluded that the Diocese of St Albans has demonstrated some excellent working practices, stating that the Safeguarding Team is dedicated, professional and committed to producing a high standard of work with the interests of the victims/survivors uppermost. The reviewers made six recommendations for improving the Diocese's safeguarding practices.

## Review recommendations and resulting action

#	Recommendation	Action taken or planned
1	The Diocese should consider whether there are enough resources dedicated to the diocesan safeguarding role	<p>A further full time assistant safeguarding adviser and part time dedicated safeguarding administrator are now in place</p> <p>Oversight and administration for Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks now sits within the safeguarding team, with a dedicated administrator appointed to improve governance and accountability</p>
2	Consideration should be given to a case management system. (The IRs understand this is currently with the NST to introduce a national case management system and St Albans Diocese intend to adopt this system once Phase 1 piloting is complete)	The Diocese will adopt the National Case Management System in early 2023, along with other dioceses when this project goes to Phase 2
3	The Diocese to review their current procedures in regard to the storage, accessibility and management of essential data including DBS renewal, safeguarding training, CDM or complaint, safeguarding information, date of PTO renewal to ensure they have a robust system that meets all current safeguarding requirements	This is complete, with work already completed around the collation, management and sharing of data after this was identified as a need for review, identified through the PCR2 process and prior to the final report being received
4	The Diocese to consider an agreement with Chaplains and their respective organisations, to whom they are in a regular working arrangement, to disclose to the Diocese any complaints/disciplinary action especially those of a safeguarding nature	Letters from the Bishop of St Albans and the DSA have been sent to each organisation and chaplain
5	The Diocese to consider a triage system for the management of enquiries into the Safeguarding team that do not fit the remit	Enquiries received that are not of a safeguarding nature are always passed on the relevant person or department for action
6	The Diocese to consider a policy for recording complaints of clergy behaviour with specific consideration being given to how the complaint, resolution is recorded in the clergy blue file	Advice has been taken from the Diocesan Registrar and included in an information guidance document. This is on the Bishop's Senior Staff agenda this year

# Survivors

In every case where it is necessary to engage with those with lived experience of abuse, their well-being must be the paramount consideration. In recognition of this, and ahead of PCR2, the Diocese formulated a survivor care strategy, which is available in full on the diocesan website.

A qualified and experienced survivor advocate has been commissioned to act as a liaison between survivors, the independent reviewers, and the Past Cases Review Reference Group.

Should a survivor have any support needs that are not being met, or some unmitigated risk be identified, these will be passed to the DSA to address within best practice and in line with House of Bishops' current practice guidance.

Under the strategy, survivor-focussed plans are put in place whenever contact with survivors is necessary, for example to record incidents of abuse where risk mitigation, statutory reporting, criminal investigation or survivor support has been inadequate.

# Safeguarding in the Diocese of St Albans

The Diocese of St Albans has adopted the National Policy 'Promoting a Safer Church' and is guided by its foundations.

Building on those foundations we endeavour to:

- Promote a safer environment and culture
- Safely recruit and support all those with any responsibility related to children and vulnerable adults within the Church
- Respond promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation
- Care pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons
- Care pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons
- Respond to those that may pose a present risk to others.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) is responsible for the day-to-day management of any concerns raised and supports the Diocese in the development of its safeguarding arrangements, good practice, policy and training. The DSA also ensures that allegations of abuse are referred to the statutory authorities. He is responsible for providing advice and support to survivors and victims of abuse, and for ensuring that people who pose a risk are appropriately supported and managed.

The DSA is supported by a well-qualified and dedicated team. The team's work is overseen by the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel, chaired by HHJ Phil Waller, who is independent and has brought a wealth of safeguarding knowledge and experience to the panel.

[www.stalbans.anglican.org/safeguarding](http://www.stalbans.anglican.org/safeguarding).