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Independent safeguarding audit of Diocese of Motherwell

May 2021





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- identifying and sharing knowledge about what works and what's new
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- informing, influencing and inspiring the direction of future practice and policy.

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CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 The audit.....	1
1.2 The Diocese.....	1
1.3 Description of the safeguarding structure.....	2
1.4 Structure of the report	2
2. FINDINGS	4
2.1 Safeguarding leadership and management	4
2.2 Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor	13
2.3 Diocese Safeguarding Advisory Group (DSAG).....	15
2.4 Diocese risk Assessment Management Team (DRAMT).....	17
2.5 Links with Scottish Catholic Safeguarding Service	20
2.6 Guidance, policies and procedures.....	21
2.7 Complaints and whistleblowing	21
2.8 Case work.....	23
2.9 Supporting survivors	27
2.10 Safe recruitment of clergy, lay officers and volunteers.....	29
2.11 Training.....	31
2.12 How the Diocese provides safeguarding support to parishes	32
2.13 Quality assurance	33
2.14 Culture	35
3. CONCLUSION	37
APPENDIX: REVIEW PROCESS	38

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE AUDIT

- 1.1.1 The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) has been commissioned to undertake an audit of the safeguarding arrangements of the Roman Catholic Dioceses of Aberdeen and Motherwell. Audits for the Diocese of Galloway and the Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh have already been completed.
- 1.1.2 The aim of the audit is to work with the Diocese to support safeguarding improvements by identifying how well safeguarding is working, identifying where there might be weaknesses and exploring the rationale for both strengths and weaknesses found.
- 1.1.3 The audit has used SCIE's established methodology Learning Together which has been used through a three-year programme of Church of England diocesan audits. The methodology remains the same whilst some of the areas to be explored differ slightly. The audit was completed by Jane Scott and Jane Bee in March 2021 with quality assurance provided by SCIE through Sheila Fish, Senior Research Analyst.
- 1.1.4 The audit process involved interviews, written contributions, a survey and documentary analysis. This included:
- seven conversations with key clergy and lay staff involved in safeguarding within the Diocese
 - six written contributions from multi-agency partners
 - 22 survey returns from parishes
 - documentary analysis of eight case files, diocese action plan, policies and procedures for safeguarding, and agendas and minutes of meetings.
- 1.1.5 As part of the audit process, the Diocese of Motherwell sought to involve survivors of abuse who had received a service from the Diocese. The auditors were able to speak with two individuals who came forward, and whilst limited in numbers, their views are a key contribution.
- 1.1.6 The audit was designed to be proportionate. Auditors aimed to cover enough breadth and depth to gain an insight into safeguarding within the Diocese, recognising that within the timescales available that this was not wholly comprehensive.
- 1.1.7 The audit was carried out during the time of the global COVID-19 pandemic, during which the UK was in lockdown. A site visit was not possible and the fieldwork was carried out over three days virtually to comply with Government restrictions. Files were transferred via a secure file-share IT application. The methodology and approach to the audit were amended in advance by SCIE. This report reflects the commitment from the Diocese to ensure smooth running of the audit during difficult circumstances.

1.2 THE DIOCESE

- 1.2.1 The Diocese of Motherwell is within the central belt of Scotland and broadly covers North and South Lanarkshire with a population of 720,000. Sixty parishes are divided into six deaneries ministering to an estimated Catholic population of around 160,000.

The Diocese of Motherwell comes under the Ecclesiastical Province of Glasgow and is led by Bishop Joseph Toal.

1.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE SAFEGUARDING STRUCTURE

- 1.3.1 The Bishop has prime pastoral and canonical responsibility for meeting safeguarding commitments. He is responsible for leading efforts to keep people safe, for dealing with all allegations against Church personnel within his Diocese and for acting in compliance with civil and canonical legislation. Supporting him in this task is a team comprising the Vicar Episcopal (Safeguarding) to whom safeguarding is delegated by the Bishop, the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor (DSA) and Diocesan Safeguarding Administrator. Wider support is provided by a Canonical Advisor and Treasurer for issues in relation to canon law and finance respectively. The remainder of this report refers to this group as the Safeguarding Team.
- 1.3.2 In line with *In God's Image*, the Diocese has also set up a Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Group (DSAG) chaired by the Bishop and a Diocesan Risk Assessment and Management Team (DRAMT). The DSAG membership includes those with safeguarding responsibilities across the Diocese in line with *In God's Image* and DRAMT members are appointed by the Bishop to provide him with advice and recommendations in decisions relating to specific safeguarding issues or allegations made against both clergy and parishioners. The DSAG usually meet four times a year, but has not met as regularly due to the pandemic although the work of the DRAMT has continued.
- 1.3.3 The Diocese has charity status and the trustees have a responsibility towards safeguarding governance. Safeguarding is a standing item on the agenda and the DSA provides an update at each trustee meeting. The Treasurer acts as the safeguarding link between the Diocese and the Catholic Safeguarding Insurance, reporting new allegations raised by the Safeguarding Team and providing updates on matters of compensation.

1.4 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

- 1.4.1 This report is divided into:
- Introduction
 - The findings that the audit presented – by theme
 - Questions for the Diocese to consider, listed where relevant at the end of each finding
 - Conclusions of the auditors' findings: what is working well and areas where future development might be considered.
- 1.4.2 An appendix sets out the audit process and any limitations to this audit. Each substantive section begins with a generic introduction. This is followed by a description of what the auditors learnt about arrangements and practice in the Diocese followed by their analysis of the strengths and systemic vulnerabilities identified. The description is value neutral. In the analysis the auditors make assessments of the safeguarding arrangements and practice they learnt about. SCIE methodology does not conclude findings with recommendations. Instead for each theme, the report provides the Diocese with questions to consider in relation to the findings.

- 1.4.3 This approach is part of the SCIE Learning Together methodology and requires those with local knowledge and responsibility for progressing improvement work to have a key role in deciding what to do in order to address the findings and to be responsible for their decisions. This methodology also helps to encourage local ownership of the work required in order to improve safeguarding.

2. FINDINGS

2.1 SAFEGUARDING LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

2.1.1 Safeguarding Leadership within the Diocese falls ultimately to the Bishop of Motherwell who is responsible for leadership on all aspects of life within the Diocese. Safeguarding leadership takes various forms with different people or groups taking different roles. The key areas considered by the audit were on theological, strategic and operational leadership, and how this was defined and understood as how they fit together can be determinative in how well safeguarding is led.

Theological Leadership for safeguarding

Introduction

2.1.2 McLellan wrote of the need for 'a clear account of the theological principles which underpin safeguarding' (p 215, para 3.24). The Commission emphasised the importance and the urgency of the task in setting out a compelling and coherent theology of safeguarding for the Catholic Church in Scotland. Recommendation 3.110 addressed this specifically: 'The relative absence of theological insight in the "Awareness and Safety" manual must be replaced with a clear explanation of the task of safeguarding as a Christian privilege with a firm theological foundation' (paragraph 3.78). *In God's Image* also sets out a clear theology of safeguarding at 2.1.8.

2.1.3 It is for the Bishop, Vicar General, Vicars Episcopal, Chancellor and Deans to help parish priests, congregations and others around the Diocese to understand that safeguarding is intrinsic to the Catholic faith and therefore a priority. This aspect of the leadership role is the foundation for the culture of the Church and is critical in terms of making it a safer place for children and vulnerable adults.

Description

2.1.4 The Bishop of Motherwell is responsible for the spiritual leadership of the Diocese which includes a responsibility for safeguarding locally and a role nationally on behalf of the Bishop's Conference of Scotland. The Bishop articulated his vision for a theology of safeguarding that is integral to the culture of the Church, which starts with the Lord's teaching and the importance of caring for and providing a safe environment to minister and listen to children and vulnerable people. Integrating this vision into how the young and vulnerable are treated in communities should be a concrete expression of thought or faith. This also includes caring for and listening to those against whom allegations are made.

2.1.5 The Bishop's views on what was understood by a theology of safeguarding was shared by the wider safeguarding team. Views were expressed that safeguarding should permeate across all activity in each parish. The message of the Lord about the intrinsic value of life at all stages and specifically for those who are vulnerable and defenceless, should become the unconscious way in which the Church approaches safeguarding, looks out for people and makes sure all are safe.

2.1.6 The Bishop reflected that generally there is more discussion on safeguarding within Church life and a growing understanding and awareness more recently of the centrality of safeguarding to the Catholic faith. The Bishop sends out the annual statement and further information on safeguarding is sent out with his endorsement. In normal circumstances, the Bishop visits parishes for specific events such as confirmations or for more general visits where he may meet the parish safeguarding coordinators, but this is not specifically in relation to safeguarding. The Bishop spoke

of an increased focus on safeguarding through the Day of Prayer for those suffering from abuse, training for seminarians and those becoming ordained, annual training for parish priests and training for lay faithful active in the church.

- 2.1.7 Survey responses reflected that the Bishop's communication on the importance of safeguarding within the Church is good with only one reflecting it was average¹, but views on the Bishop's visibility was mixed. Ten responses (n=22) thought the Bishop's visibility in local parishes was good, but 12 thought it average or poor. The auditors also heard that understanding of a theology of safeguarding is probably not that well understood across parishes.

Analysis

- 2.1.8 The Bishop's understanding of the need for safeguarding to be core to the Catholic mission and his commitment is clear. The Safeguarding Team is also consistent in describing the need to move from the conscious act of safeguarding to the unconscious act of keeping safe and feel listened to. There was also reflection that the development of the theological understanding of safeguarding is ongoing.
- 2.1.9 How the Bishop's articulation of a theological understanding of safeguarding translates into his leadership is less clear and less developed. More overt leadership is needed across the Diocese to demonstrate visually the importance given to safeguarding by leaders and to develop a more consistent understanding that safeguarding is integral to the mission of the Church. The revisions to *In God's Image* could provide an opportunity to address a theology of safeguarding for each of the eight standards.
- 2.1.10 Audit participants reflected this would need further thought as the Diocese emerges from local and national lockdowns as a result of COVID-19. It may be an opportune time for the Bishop to reinforce the importance of safeguarding and to root this in the Lord's teaching and the gospel. Whilst the auditors heard many good developmental ideas and plans regarding the theology of safeguarding, a practical plan for taking this forward is missing and could be achieved through parish visits and meeting with those involved in parish safeguarding as part of more formal visits, or meeting with particular groups such as parish safeguarding coordinators annually to hear their experiences and pray with them.

Questions for the Diocese to consider

- How could the Bishop's message that safeguarding is part of the Catholic mission and life be overtly articulated across the deaneries and parishes?
- What is needed post-COVID to increase the visibility of theological leadership and what messages are needed to reinforce safeguarding are core to the mission of the Church?
- What are the ways to engage more effectively the parish priests and parish safeguarding coordinators (PSCs) in the theological message of safeguarding?

¹ Choices were poor, average or good.

Strategic leadership for safeguarding

Introduction

- 2.1.11 Strategic and operational leadership are commonly considered essential aspects of the leadership and governance of organisations. Strategic leadership develops the vision and mission, strategies, systems and structures for achieving that vision and overall accountability. Operational leadership delivers that vision and mission on a day-to-day basis. Roles and forums for strategic leadership and governance exist in dioceses to cover a range of areas and activities, e.g. Bishop's /Archbishop's Councils. It is useful therefore to consider how strategic leadership is provided for safeguarding in the context of these fora.
- 2.1.12 *In God's Image* states that safeguarding commitments lie with the Bishop: 'In this responsibility, the Bishop must be supported by those he has appointed to advise him and to manage safeguarding arrangements in the diocese – the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA), the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Group (DSAG) and the Diocesan Risk Assessment Management Team (DRAMT)' (Section A Paragraph 6.2). *In God's Image* does not specify how the Bishop and senior clergy team should provide any strategic leadership and management of these roles and fora.
- 2.1.13 Similarly, the standards do not speak to the need for local strategic plans that capture how *In God's Image* is to be implemented. It is easier for organisations to be clear of progress and improvements if the objectives and actions to take are set out in a strategic plan. For the Diocese, this would be a work plan which sets out how the safeguarding service will be developed and who will lead on the different aspects of achieving the plan. Although not outlined *In God's Image*, governance of the delivery of this plan would logically sit within the local governance arrangements of each diocese. Setting out the goals of the service and tracking progress against them enhances accountability and should assist operational leadership by identifying barriers to development that need to be addressed.

Description

- 2.1.14 The Bishop has a Vicar General and three Episcopal Vicars, one of whom has delegated responsibility for safeguarding. This was in recognition of the importance given to safeguarding by the Bishop and the need to have a strong safeguarding team within the Diocese. Much of the strategic safeguarding work in the Diocese is taken forward by the Safeguarding Team of the Episcopal Vicar, DSA and Diocesan Safeguarding Administrator.
- 2.1.15 The work of the Diocese of Motherwell is overseen by a committee structure. The Bishop is also supported by a Council of Priests chosen to advise him on general issues in the Diocese and the College of Consultors also charged with advising the Bishop on the governance of the Diocese. The Council of Priests is made up of representatives from each of the deaneries in the Diocese and meets quarterly. Minutes of discussions at the Council of Priests meetings reflect both pastoral and administrative business. Safeguarding matters discussed regularly include the annual audit, training for the presbyterate and the introduction of *In God's Image*. The Vicar Episcopal for Safeguarding is an ex officio member of the Council of Priests.
- 2.1.16 The College of Consultors is drawn from members of the Council of Priests and directly nominated by the Bishop. The Bishop consults with this smaller group in some matters as specified by Canon Law such as the closure of parishes, and other important and sensitive matters. As well as the College of Consultors and Council of Priests, there is also a Council of Deans, which the Bishop now meets with in preparation for the deanery meetings, which feed into the Council of Priests meeting.

- 2.1.17 The diocesan trustees have responsibility for the Diocese as a charity and this covers most aspects of diocesan life and activities – thus the report on safeguarding at each trustees' meeting, along with reports from other departments. They also oversee the management of the investments of the Diocese and link with the insurance company with regards to claims being made against the Diocese of Motherwell. Since 2019, safeguarding has been a standing agenda item at each meeting with a report provided by the DSA. The Chancellor also has an important part to play in the day-to-day running of the Diocese and has responsibility for the staff contracts and management of their working arrangements.
- 2.1.18 The auditors heard that the role, remit and membership of the DSAG is currently under review, but progress had faltered due to the pandemic. There is a sense that whilst current DSAG meets the requirements of *In God's Image*, it does not provide the growing need for strategic leadership and oversight (see section 2.3). The auditors heard and saw a proposal for a strategic management team to ensure strategic commitments are taken forward and to progress the operational work of the Diocese.
- 2.1.19 The auditors heard of a commitment to develop a clear strategic framework, but this was yet to be progressed. The Safeguarding Team also reflected that much of this planning had become stuck partly in the response to the huge upheaval as a result of national lockdown and awaiting the appropriate time to re-open as the country emerges from the pandemic. It was also discussed that within this strategic framework, there would be a separate action plan and communications plan, which were still in draft or being discussed.
- 2.1.20 The understanding of why strategic leadership is important and the willingness to take it forward was evident in discussions with all audit participants, but all acknowledged that more work was needed to develop and set up a strategic framework and for consistent support and leadership locally in parishes.
- 2.1.21 Part of this is attributed to legacy issues of how cases were previously handled and a perception that some priests, against whom allegations were made, were treated harshly. There remained negativity across the Diocese that the Safeguarding Team was working to address.

Analysis

- 2.1.22 There is potential for strong strategic leadership and good governance across the Diocese of Motherwell. The foundations are now in place, and developing this should be the priority. Work should begin on this despite the ongoing pandemic. An overarching strategy is needed which sets out the vision and priorities for safeguarding and identifies clear responsibility, accountability and forward planning in all areas.
- 2.1.23 The Safeguarding Team, and wider associated laity and clergy involved with safeguarding are clear about the importance of transparent structures and visible leadership. Safeguarding is now more closely aligned with the core business of the Diocese. The DSA reports directly to the Vicar Episcopal and also provides regular updates to each meeting of trustees. There are clear links with national discussions through the Bishop's national role as the Safeguarding Lead for the Bishop's Conference. Other key developments have included the development of an action plan, consideration of the need for strategic management team, re-thinking the role and remit of the DSAG and discussion of a communications plan.
- 2.1.24 There is recognition within the Safeguarding Team of the need to review current structures as the understanding and work of the safeguarding office develops and

agreement that developments have stalled during the pandemic. The discussions taking place are addressing the key issues and now need to progress.

2.1.25 The proposal for a strategic management team is a welcome development. The current proposal is that this team would report to the trustees and be informed by the work of the DSA, DSAG and DRAMT. It would also provide oversight for the DSAG and DRAMT. The auditors suggested that another approach may be to re-think the role and remit of the DSAG and for this group to provide strategic oversight and for a smaller senior or safeguarding management team to take forward operational case management work and feed broader themes and issues into the DSAG. Consideration should also be given to safeguarding as a standing item on the agendas for the Council of Priests and College of Consultors.

2.1.26 One final consideration is that once decisions have been made about structures and governance processes, the membership of key committees should be reviewed to include more laity with specific experience. The audit identified that it might be helpful to have increased professional input from those with a background in family law and there is also discussion of increasing the representation of women, the perspectives of survivors and perhaps reflect better representation of different communities and ethnicities across the Diocese such as the Polish community, for example.

Questions for the Diocese to consider

- How can the strategic development plans identified be finalised and taken forward in a timely fashion, given the importance of strong strategic leadership and good governance arrangements?
- How best to consider who needs to be involved in decisions about the strategic and governance arrangements, responsibility and accountability for safeguarding?
- Have the benefits been considered of support from someone with expertise and experience in strategic and operational leadership and governance gained for example, from the commercial or other non-faith sectors?
- How will the strategic plan draw on wider strategic issues across the Diocese?
- In what other arenas should safeguarding be a standing agenda item?

Operational leadership of safeguarding

Introduction

2.1.27 Senior clergy leadership and management of the operational work of safeguarding is needed to provide oversight of safeguarding in a diocese including identifying any barriers to implementation that need tackling. It is also needed for accountability purposes, particularly when the safeguarding service is delivered through collaboration between clerics, staff and laity. Operational leadership and management by the clergy can be seen as providing a strong link to the strategic leadership of senior clergy and ultimately the Bishop. It is distinct from an operational decision-making responsibility.

2.1.28 There are inherent challenges to clergy, as non-safeguarding specialists, fulfilling the operational leadership and oversight of safeguarding, given it is a specialist function. However, leaving the centralised operations of safeguarding in a diocese without any

clergy-led governance and oversight would also weaken the safety of safeguarding arrangements

Description

- 2.1.29** Operational leadership for safeguarding is delegated to the Vicar Episcopal (Safeguarding) who has line management responsibility for the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor (DSA). The Vicar Episcopal also works closely with the Safeguarding Administrator. The Bishop is involved in discussions when appropriate and when required. The Bishop explained that operational leadership has been delegated to the Vicar Episcopal rather than Vicar General in recognition that it requires a dedicated post. The Vicar Episcopal line manages and oversees the work of the DSA.
- 2.1.30** The Safeguarding Team is small and provides both operational leadership and delivery of safeguarding. Information, advice and support across a range of issues is provided by both the Vicar Episcopal and DSA. This includes working with partners in the management of offenders, advice to parish priests supporting and working with parishioners and clergy, issues in relation to training and administering PVG enquiries. Almost 80 per cent (n=22) of survey respondents reported they felt the support from the safeguarding office is good and 73 per cent (n=22) thought communication from the safeguarding office is good, but over a quarter felt this could be improved. This is not in relation to operational matters, but to the general operational leadership of safeguarding.
- 2.1.31** The Safeguarding Team has developed a clear and detailed draft Safeguarding Action Plan (2019) setting out some broader priorities with detailed actions for implementing each of the eight standards within *In God's Image*. The auditors also heard of the proposal for a communications plan to help link the Diocese to deaneries and parishes. The proposal is for safeguarding to be a regular agenda item at meetings of the Council of Priests. Information at the Council of Priests would be cascaded through the monthly deanery meetings and onto local parish safeguarding teams and parish safeguarding coordinators. Local issues would then feed through from parishes to deaneries and to the Council of Priests and inform the DSAG and trustees.
- 2.1.32** Those interviewed and multi-agency partners identified good support and improved relations with key partners. Partners reflected that the Safeguarding Team was now more familiar with the process of other agencies and partners had increased understanding of the processes within the Church such as the involvement of support priests with fellow clerics who are registered sex offenders and how this needs to be managed in relation to the Multi Agency Risk Assessment (MAPPA) process. Contact with the Safeguarding Team was thought to have benefited public protection and the management of the individual(s) involved by helping keeping people safe and reducing the risks to all those involved, including the general public. The professionalism of the Safeguarding Team had increased the confidence of partners working with the Church.

Analysis

- 2.1.33** The Vicar Episcopal is visible and proactive and takes his operational leadership seriously. There is a sense of a strong team which operates at a diocesan level and acts as a conduit between the Diocese and parishes to ensure oversight at all operational levels. Whilst the Vicar Episcopal and DSA both provide advice and support to a range of people, their individual roles are clear as is the line of accountability for operational leadership. There are strong respectful relationships within the Safeguarding Team and those involved in the wider team (DRAMT). The

Safeguarding Team works at all levels of safeguarding internally and, whilst the auditors felt there is a gap of the input of multi-agency partners at a strategic level, good partnership working is in evidence at the operational level.

- 2.1.34 Formal structures for governance and accountability need to be put in place and currently there is no recourse to independent scrutiny for those who feel they have not been listened to or their case has been mishandled. This could result in situations becoming protracted, difficult to manage and personal. The auditors saw evidence from the case files that the more recent professional approach had not been as apparent historically and processes were now working more effectively.

Questions for the Diocese to consider

- What consideration should be given to more formal resolution of disagreement processes being put in place?
- How might the Diocese put in place more formal processes for independent scrutiny and, if this is a national response, how will this be progressed?

Dealing with the legacy of a high-profile conviction

Introduction

- 2.1.35 Across all settings, dealing with the legacy of a high-profile case of abuse presents opportunities and challenges. In any diocese, assuming leadership of a diocese with a high-profile case of clergy abuse is no different. A change of leadership creates the possibility to focus on restorative practice to:
- help all affected parties come to terms with the facts, the betrayal and the possibility of their own, albeit unwitting, part in allowing abusers to go unchecked; and
 - identify and right any wrongs of the past, working closely and compassionately with survivors to hear and respond to what they need.
- 2.1.36 It is inevitably challenging, however, when the prominent member of senior clergy has formed close working relationships and friendships with many in the Diocese, when survivors' and others' past efforts to bring the abuse to light have not been responded to appropriately and there is inevitable loyalty to your predecessors. The response by Bishops to these issues are key to setting the tone of their leadership and the tenor of the safeguarding culture they are trying to propagate.

Description

- 2.1.37** In the past decade, there have been high-profile cases in the Diocese of Motherwell including individuals who may have caused harm and abuse. There has been much learning in terms of timely responses to those who have abused and also survivors (see section 2.9). Priests have been removed from their ministry which has meant removing them from their role and vocation, their professional and social networks. This has meant a loss of earnings and home although the Church has a duty to provide support and shelter. More recently in the Diocese of Motherwell, this has included priests where the Holy See may not have recommended laicisation, but the Bishop has not allowed the priest to carry out public ministry.
- 2.1.38** Things have improved more recently, but the legacy of high-profile cases has impacted on the Diocese in several ways.
- 2.1.39** First, there appears mixed feelings across the clergy and congregation about the treatment of clergy, and particularly priests, by the Diocese of Motherwell. For those priests, against whom allegations were made, there was a sense from some fellow clergy and parishioners of disbelief initially of the truth of such allegations. This contributed to a sense that the priests involved were treated harshly or unfairly. As more evidence came to light and individuals were charged and convicted, many priests had to think the unthinkable about fellow clergy. For many there was a strong sense of hurt: hurt for those harmed; feeling hurt by the abusive actions of a few individuals; and hurt for the Church. There may be a legacy in some parishes of mixed emotions which remain today.
- 2.1.40** Second, there have been varying safeguarding practices historically in the Diocese, which may have impacted on current levels of trust and confidence of individuals approaching the safeguarding office with allegations of non-recent or current abuse. Without formal routes to raise concerns of abuse and inappropriate use of power, individuals are left with few options of being heard. Without independent scrutiny, it is unlikely such situations will be easily resolved.
- 2.1.41** Third, concern was raised when identified abuse is not addressed publicly. The auditors heard of a case where an allegation had been made against a parish priest who was taken out of ministry and charged for sexual assault. The priest admitted the abuse and was removed from the parish to a residential treatment centre where again he acknowledged that the abuse had taken place. At the time, the level of counselling and spiritual support offered was not felt by the individual to be comparable to that offered to the priest and compounded feelings of a lack of recognition by the Church of the abuse. To date, there has been no a public statement about why the parish priest was removed from his parish and instead the parish was informed he had retired through ill-health. The priest subsequently died and there remains no acknowledgement to date.

Analysis

- 2.1.42** The auditors heard and saw from recent case files more robust challenge and significant improvement in the support offered to individuals wishing to disclose, however, there may still be issues to explore in some parishes.
- 2.1.43** Healing from any high-profile case takes time and there may be parishes torn between belief in the person against whom the allegations were made and anger regarding what might have happened. Those managing such situations require support and there is a need for the Diocese to provide information, which is easily accessible, whilst also leading by example in being transparent and accountable.

- 2.1.44 Despite some cases being outside the timescale of this audit, there is a need for the Diocese to consider how to address publicly cases of abuse by former priests. Whilst these events may have happened several years previously, those involved continue to live every day with the impact of harm. This is difficult and sensitive for all involved.
- 2.1.45 At the time of an original allegation, survivors themselves may not be ready in these early stages for public disclosure even if the Church had wanted to make a public statement. This can change over time, which has been recognised in more recent cases by the Diocese. Whilst the abusive behaviour of an individual priest may have happened in the past, the continued lack of public awareness denies survivors recognition of the truth to them, their family and the wider parish, and denies others, who may also have been abused, that possible first step in coming forward to seek help and support.
- 2.1.46 There can be perceptions by survivors and wider society that the Church has been slow to respond to safeguarding issues locally and nationally, and that providing care and support to priests who are convicted sex offenders is not appropriate. There is a need, therefore, for better communication to improve understanding of the Church processes and that its responses follow the teachings of the gospel to provide care and support to all.
- 2.1.47 For example, some priests, who are registered sex offenders, have remained clerics. In a particular case, a cleric, who is a registered sex offender, was not laicised as the offences happened before he was ordained and the canonical norms in regard to clerics who offend against minors were deemed not to be applicable in this case. He is not permitted though to carry out any priestly ministry. Removing a priest from their ministry is comparable to a GP being struck off or social worker or teacher losing their registration from professional bodies and not allowed to practice.
- 2.1.48 Motherwell's strategic leadership needs to consider how it responds to all these issues including what support is required for those dealing with the legacy of high-profile cases and should ensure the effectiveness and accountability of such support.

Questions for the Diocese to consider

- Where is the best forum to consider whether, and how, past controversies related to safeguarding can be addressed in the present?
- How can the Diocese prepare itself to manage any further non-recent allegations related to these cases, or any future cases?
- What does the Diocese need to consider in situations when abuse has been acknowledged by an individual priest, but the reasons for his removal from ministry have not been made public?
- Should the Diocese consider a plan, both theologically and strategically, for helping to heal a parish and support all those involved and, if so, how will this be taken forward?

2.2 DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING ADVISOR

Introduction

2.2.1 The Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor, along with the DSAG and DRAMT, are key to the infrastructure set out in *In God's Image*, to advise and assist the Bishop to fulfil safeguarding responsibilities. The role is summarised in the Glossary Structures and roles – Section 2 (p76) as follows:

'The role of the DSA is to assist the Bishop with the development and management of Diocesan Safeguarding approaches. Has a central role in providing support and may also chair the DSAG meetings (and any subgroups thereof).'

2.2.2 Elsewhere, the guidance specifies that the DSA roles are to:

- coordinate efforts to raise awareness of safeguarding within parish communities, including the recruiting and training of parish safeguarding coordinators
- recruit diocesan safeguarding trainers and the training of diocesan clergy
- advise the Bishop on good practice in responding to allegations of abuse.

2.2.3 The DSA is described as providing a conduit between concerns/allegations and experts appointed to sit on the DRAMT, assess risk and make recommendations to the Bishop for how concerns or risks might be addressed.

2.2.4 The particular function of being the recipient of allegations and concerns is in paragraph 6.6 of *In God's Image* which deals with parishes and in Standard 3 linked to *'following established protocols for liaising with statutory authorities'*. Here it states that: both allegations and concerns must be referred to the DSA, *'so that the DRAMT can address how they might be addressed'*. i.e. The DSA is described as providing a conduit between concerns or allegations. Experts appointed to sit on the DRAMT, assess risk and make recommendations to the Bishop for how concerns or risks might be addressed.

2.2.5 Paragraph 4.6 of the Glossary Structures and roles states that:

'While investigation is not part of the role, Diocesan Safeguarding Advisors may agree to additional, mutually acceptable functions consistent with the position. Caution should, however, be exercised in extending the activities beyond what is reasonable and practical.'

2.2.6 The guidance recommends that the role is undertaken by a layperson. It makes no specification about the professional expertise required.

Description

Resourcing and relative roles

2.2.7 The Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor (DSA) post in Motherwell is salaried and was originally two days per week, but increased in 2019 to four days.

2.2.8 The role is both operational and strategic. The DSA deals with all queries in relation to safeguarding, has a case load and links with parish safeguarding coordinators when safeguarding issues are raised locally. The DSA organises and attends four DSAT meetings as well as DRAMT meetings. The DSA also has a strategic overview of safeguarding across the Diocese in developing the action and proposed communication plan.

2.2.9 The DSA is supported by, and supervises, the Parish Safeguarding Administrator who works three days per week in a salaried post. In the absence of the DSA, cover is organised between the Diocesan Safeguarding Administrator and the Episcopal Vicar (Safeguarding). The Diocese is also linked or teamed with another to provide and receive advice and support if required.

2.2.10 Interviews and the parish survey results show that the DSA is highly regarded and well respected throughout the Diocese as part of the Safeguarding Team.

Resources

2.2.11 The DSA works either from home or from the Diocesan Office and is provided with the required office resources for the role.

Qualifications

2.2.12 The DSA in Motherwell has a varied background including practice and management in finance, customer services and supporting people with disabilities into mainstream employment. While the DSA may not have a social work or social care background or qualifications, the Diocese has financed and supported the DSA to undertake relevant training and qualifications. This has included, for example, training on trauma awareness and Canon Law. The DSA is part way through a certificate in Safeguarding via the Gregorian University in Rome; a pilot course specifically designed for DSAs and studying a degree in Computing, IT and Forensic Psychology.

Conflicts of interest

2.2.13 There are no known conflicts of interest for the DSA in this role.

Line management and supervision arrangements

2.2.14 In recognition of the role the DSA, the Diocese supports the role in various ways: support is provided by the Vicar Episcopal for matters of safeguarding within the Diocese and he oversees the DSA's annual appraisal; the Chancellor provides support on business matters in relation to safeguarding; and monthly external professional supervision is provided to support complex caseloads and working with survivors. The DSA had also contacted the National Office for support and guidance on specific issues when required before the post was vacated.

Analysis

2.2.15 The DSA brings a high degree of organisation and professionalism to the role. Previous experience of managing services, understanding of customer services, working with vulnerable communities and the need for transparent processes of accountability and governance are clear strengths. It has also shaped the DSA's supportive approach to survivors and working in partnership with external partners.

2.2.16 The DSA works closely with the Bishop, the Vicar Episcopal and Diocesan Safeguarding Administrator. The close teamwork and shared sense of purpose is impressive and there is good challenge provided both within and outwith the Safeguarding Team. All were clear that, if needed, the process for resolving conflicts is with the Bishop. The current arrangement is effective because of good relationships, but the auditors underline that there is need for a formal process to manage disagreements or concerns about performance should the need arise.

2.2.17 The role of the DSA in Motherwell has developed beyond that described within *In God's Image* illustrated by the increase in hours in 2019. The benefits of the role being a salaried post is that the DSA has been able to take forward key developments such as support to survivors, reinvigorating some of the structures and being able to

provide a momentum for change. The DSA appears to have been very effective in establishing relationships both internally and also with multi-agency partners.

2.2.18 It is difficult to keep the role of the DSA from growing beyond what is described within *In God's Image* because of the nature of the work. In Motherwell, the role works at three distinct levels: strategic in driving change; operational in managing cases and providing advice, support and facilitating responses to those within the Diocese; and administrative through organising meetings and developing processes. The DSA is aware of the size of the role and is concerned that it would become a block or a bottleneck. This questioned whether the DSA's current responsibilities are sustainable within the one role and it might be helpful to reflect how the role will be developed in the future.

2.2.19 The provision of professional supervision to the DSA is positive. One final reflection, however, is that it might also be helpful to have a critical friend or some supervisory input from someone with criminal justice or social work background. This is particularly relevant for cases where there may not be a conviction but the responsibility of keeping parishioners safe is with the Church; abusers are often manipulative. This is in addition to, and not instead of, current supervisory arrangements.

Questions for the Diocese to consider

- Where does responsibility lie for reviewing the role and remit of the DSA role in the future and identifying any additional resource requirements?
- How might the process of escalation be formalised?
- How might the Diocese provide additional professional supervision (or critical friend) for the DSA role and formalise connections with line management?

2.3 DIOCESE SAFEGUARDING ADVISORY GROUP (DSAG)

Introduction

2.3.1 The DSAG along with the DRAMT and the DSA is a core part of the safeguarding infrastructure, whose function it is to support the Bishop in his responsibilities for safeguarding.

2.3.2 Responsibilities are listed in *In God's Image* (para 6.1.3) as including:

- Advising the Bishop on safeguarding matters within the Diocese
- Ensuring compliance with national safeguarding standards within all diocesan groups
- Responding to issues emerging from the safeguarding audit
- Organising training for parish clergy, safeguarding volunteers and parish safeguarding coordinators
- Liaising with the Scottish Catholic Safeguarding Service (SCSS) on national developments, resources, legislative change

2.3.3 Drawing on our understanding of equivalent groups in the Catholic Church in England and the Church of England, we think it is helpful to try to clarify the different functions this list entails.

- 2.3.4 If the DSA is to play a vital operational role, the role of the DSAG can be seen as threefold. First, it is described as having an operational function around the organisation of PVG applications and monitoring of ongoing membership of the scheme across the dioceses (page 2 12, para 6.4) and organising training for parish clergy, safeguarding volunteers and parish safeguarding coordinators (para 6.1.3). Second, it should play an oversight, scrutiny and challenge role in order to ensure compliance with national safeguarding standards across the Diocese and discuss ongoing issues related to safeguarding arrangements in the Diocese:
- ‘8.3.1 In each Diocese, the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Group (DSAG) must meet at least four times per year to discuss ongoing issues relating to safeguarding arrangements in the Diocese. These discussions should consider compliance with safeguarding training and PVG checks across the Diocese. The Bishop must be kept informed of the outcomes of DSAG meetings.’ (*In God’s Image*, p55)
- 2.3.5 Thirdly, it has a strategic leadership role in its responsibilities for responding to issues emerging from the safeguarding audit and liaising with the SCSS on national developments, resources, legislative change
- 2.3.6 Membership is prescribed as follows:
- ‘6.1.3 Membership of DSAG must include the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser and any key individuals charged with Diocesan Safeguarding responsibilities, as well as representatives of relevant Diocesan groups: Pilgrimage leaders, SPRED, Youth Office etc. The National Safeguarding Co-ordinator may be invited to these meetings to share information about national developments and to discuss resource needs and training developments. The Bishop must be kept informed of the outcomes of DSAG meetings.’ (*In God’s Image*, p46)
- 2.3.7 There is no requirement within *In God’s Image* for an independent chair of the DSAG/ASAG or independent membership from statutory agencies. Nor are overt scrutiny and challenge functions specified.

Description

- 2.3.8 Until the COVID-19 lockdown, the DSAG met four times a year and was chaired by the Bishop. Minutes from the DSAG demonstrated that discussions were wide-ranging including updates on safer recruitment, Protection of Vulnerable Groups disclosures (PVGs), local and national updates and sharing information on the activities in relation to safeguarding of all groups represented.
- 2.3.9 Those interviewed reflected that the DSAG is good for collecting information and sharing information to various groups across the Diocese and keeping people up to date, but as the activities in relation to safeguarding grew so the DSAG needed to act as a driving force for change within the Diocese. In 2019, the function of the DSAG was reviewed as there was a growing sense the meetings were not matching the developing safeguarding needs of the Diocese. An open discussion was held to review its purpose, membership and future of the DSAG needed to be reviewed. COVID-19, however, had impeded progress on DSAG progress and relaunch and this is now a priority for April 2021.
- 2.3.10 There was also liaison with the SCSS and with other dioceses and terms of reference were drafted along with proposed terms of reference for a Strategic Management Team. The DSAG met virtually in November 2020 to discuss proposed terms of reference and next steps. It was agreed to recruit an already identified independent chair for the DSAG with a police and prison service background.

Analysis

- 2.3.11** The review of the DSAG was timely, but now needs reinvigorating. The challenge is to develop a DSAG that meets the demands of its strategic function with the greater understanding of what this involves and also the requirements set out within *In God's Image*. This will depend on how the Diocese develops its structures – whether the DSAG reports to a Strategic Management Team or becomes the strategic oversight body with a smaller operational team of the current Safeguarding Team progressing the action plan and reporting to the DSAG.
- 2.3.12** Whichever approach is adopted will influence the final terms of reference and membership of the DSAG. Consideration should also be given to greater representation of laity, representation from those with safeguarding expertise from external agencies and better representation of those from the different cultures across the different communities.
- 2.3.13** As mentioned under strategic leadership, the auditors felt that the Safeguarding Action Plan could be contained within or adapted into a Strategic Diocesan Safeguarding Plan with broader and more long-term strategic objectives.
- 2.3.14** The appointment of a new independent chair onto the DSAG and membership from statutory agencies would bring a strong independent element to the scrutiny and challenge function of the DSAG. In replacing the Bishop as chair, it might be useful to consider how his links to the DSAG will be maintained and an appropriate governance structure.

Questions for the Diocese to consider

- How will decisions be progressed as a matter of urgency about the strategic framework for the Diocese of Motherwell, in what timescales and who should be involved?
- How will links with and accountability to the Bishop be maintained with the DSAG?
- How might the Safeguarding Action Plan and proposed Communications Plan be developed and how does this fit with a broader Strategic Diocesan Safeguarding Plan?
- Where should the governance of a strategic plan sit within the diocesan structures and committees?
- How could the DSAG further develop how it hears the voice of survivors?

2.4 DIOCESE RISK ASSESSMENT MANAGEMENT TEAM (DRAMT)

Introduction

- 2.4.1** *In God's Image* sets out that the DRAMT along with the DSAG and the DSA is a core part of the safeguarding infrastructure, whose function it is to support the Bishop in his responsibilities for safeguarding.
- 2.4.2** The DRAMT is described as follows:

'6.1.4 The main function of the DRAMT is to offer recommendations to the Bishop in relation to situations of risk, convictions on PVGs, allegations or cases in relation to anyone involved in the life and work of the Diocese who has contact with children

and vulnerable adults. The DRAMT must comprise a small number of individuals with relevant expertise, including those with experience of working in the legal profession, healthcare, social work and the Police. Its composition should be balanced, in numbers of both ordained and lay members, and in their gender.

'6.1.5 It is for each Bishop to decide if he wishes to preside at meetings of the DRAMT, or if he wishes to receive its recommendations in writing. The group must discuss each case, agree the recommendations that it has made to the Bishop and record these in writing. It is the ultimate responsibility of the Bishop to decide the action he will take in each case. The Bishop must communicate his decision in writing to the individual concerned.

'6.1.6 The DRAMT must meet as often as is required, as cases are brought to its attention.' (*In God's Image*, p47)

- 2.4.3 The guidance is very clear that a key part of the DSA's role is as a conduit for safeguarding concerns to the DRAMT. It is the DRAMT rather than the DSA that is ascribed responsibility for differentiating between concerns and allegations and deciding when referrals to statutory agencies need to be made:

'Appropriate safeguarding training must ensure that everyone remains vigilant and is able to identify safeguarding concerns. These should be referred to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser so that the DRAMT can address how they might be addressed. While it is important to differentiate between allegations and concerns²⁸, both must be referred to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. If concerns are shared sufficiently early, then it is possible that behaviours or attitudes can be addressed without significant harm developing. The DRAMT may advise that particular concerns need to be reported to statutory services who will consider whether to explore these. Once those concerns are explored further, there might well be evidence of harm. In that case, a concern may lead to an allegation.' (*In God's Image*, p46)

- 2.4.4 The detail of the DRAMT outlined in *In God's Image* creates potential conflicts of interest. These hinge on the advisory nature of the DRAMT. The DRAMT gives advice and recommendations, but decision-making authority lies with the Bishop/Archbishop. This means he is making decisions about the clergy, employees or volunteers for whom he also has pastoral responsibilities. The relationship between a volunteer and bishop may be more distant, but bishops appoint and ordain priests, make decisions about many aspects of their lives and have the responsibility for their pastoral care, including when they have safeguarding allegations made against them (see Standard five). This makes it essential that there are clear processes for identifying and dealing with disagreements where they emerge between the DRAMT and Bishop/Archbishop so they can be resolved swiftly and transparently.

Description

- 2.4.5 The Diocese of Motherwell has a small DRAMT consisting of the DSA, the Vicar Episcopal, Canonical Advisor and representation from education, children's hearing system and social work. The DRAMT has terms of reference which sets out the role of DRAMT members, role of the Bishop and timescales for decision-making. There is also a confidentiality statement for DRAMT members. The DRAMT meets four times a year as a minimum and more frequently if required. The DSA leads meetings with relevant background reading circulated in advance.
- 2.4.6 Each case is considered with recommendations set out in a written report for the Bishop. No formal meeting notes are produced as the report reflects the discussion

and agreed recommendations. Consistent formats are used for diocesan risk assessments and for recording recommendations.

- 2.4.7 Members of the DRAMT felt the process worked effectively in terms of discussion, challenge and recommendations. Members did not feel that the role of the Bishop in relation to the clergy as the provider of pastoral care and enacting on the DRAMT's recommendations is a possible conflict of interest. The Bishop had always enacted on the DRAMT's recommendations no matter how difficult the situation. Members also felt that agencies were represented through the clergy and laity members with experience of education, social work and children's hearings. There is acknowledgement that its membership should be small due to the confidential nature of cases discussed, but that it could perhaps be extended to address a slight gender imbalance and provide wider perspectives, such as someone with knowledge of family law.
- 2.4.8 The DRAMT also links with local MAPPA arrangements. From the outset the diocesan risk assessment template asks if advice is needed from MAPPA partners to inform the risk assessment. The DSA also attends MAPPA meetings with statutory partners in relation to specific cases the Diocese is involved with.
- 2.4.9 From both conversations and case files, there is evidence of challenge within the team in terms of discussion which is open and transparent with good relationships and advice sought from multi-agency partners. A Vicar Episcopal with responsibility for safeguarding working with the DSA had allowed for better case management more recently and clearer processes for decision-making.

Analysis

- 2.4.10 The DRAMT is effective; its remit and role in decision-making is clear. The role of the DSA has developed from the 'conduit' originally set out within *In God's Image* to a more active member. Three issues emerged for further consideration.
- 2.4.11 First, the auditors agreed with comments about widening the DRAMT's membership in terms of family law. The auditors understood that the Deacon is a member of DRAMT because of his extensive social work experience. If he moves roles then this role will be replaced with an individual with a social work background so that this experience is not lost. In addition to family law, it is suggested that the DRAMT's membership could be extended where identified individuals with relevant experience are not part of the core DRAMT, but co-opted on to advise on specific issues as and when required.
- 2.4.12 Second, there could be stronger links with developing governance arrangements and strategic oversight. This would ensure that the messages or issues arising from cases inform the Diocese's strategy, policy and practice. Third, there is a need for independent scrutiny. It is noted the revised terms of reference for the DRAMT states the 'Bishop may decide to preside at meetings of the DRAMT'. This should be reconsidered as this further blurs the lines of accountability and possible conflicts of interest. Independent scrutiny or recourse is a core part of a safe system which allows challenge.

Questions for the Diocese to consider

- What needs to happen to progress plans for the current DRAMT to draw on wider professional skills and knowledge?
- How should plans for any disagreement between the DRAMT and the Bishop be put in place as a contingency including plans for escalation if required?

2.5 LINKS WITH SCOTTISH CATHOLIC SAFEGUARDING SERVICE

Introduction

2.5.1 The role of the Scottish Catholic Safeguarding Service (SCSS), led by the National Safeguarding Coordinator, is limited within *In Gods Image* to the provision of advice on good practice in safeguarding and provision of training materials, as well as being the point of contact for external bodies and agencies. It has no case work role ascribed to it for diocese:

'The NCSS offers support through the collation of PVG applications, the design and provision of training, the development of guidance and the facilitation of an annual audit to check compliance with national safeguarding standards. The National Safeguarding Coordinator is also expected to offer advice and counsel to safeguarding staff in dioceses and Religious Institutes as required by the Bishops' Conference of Scotland.' (para 6.4.2)

2.5.2 It is not given any authority in terms of quality assurance or deemed a point of escalation if conflict or disagreement arises within or between dioceses.

Description

2.5.3 The Bishop, DSA, Vicar Episcopal and training lead all reported previous good links with the SCSS. The National Safeguarding Coordinator attended meetings of the DSAG to report on national developments and the DSA would approach the National Coordinator for advice and support when required. Those interviewed reflected that for some aspects of safeguarding there could be a centralised approach and a national office could fulfil that role.

2.5.4 The Vicar Episcopal and DSA advised that the SCSS had been a good source of advice and support. The National Safeguarding Advisor post is currently vacant which is thought a significant gap. The Bishop advised that Bishops' Conference of Scotland was currently considering the future role of the coordinator and the national office, particularly possible roles in providing a route for complaints and independent scrutiny.

Analysis

2.5.5 The Diocese had good relationships with the SCSS which has informed the strategic discussions which had been undertaken prior to national lockdown.

Questions for the Diocese to consider

- How might the Diocese take forward ideas for a different model and structure for the national office being discussed within BCOS?
- Should the diocese escalate to BCOS the need for interim arrangements while the post remains vacant?

2.6 GUIDANCE, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

2.6.1 The SCSS provides support and advice to the Catholic Church including the Diocese of Motherwell. The service is developing a manual of procedures and policy/process exemplars, templates, forms and information sheets which are supported more recently by each of the eight DSAs across Scotland who are meeting together regularly.

Description

2.6.2 The Diocese of Motherwell has a website with a page dedicated to safeguarding which has an online link to *In God's Image* and details of whom to contact with a concern.

2.6.3 Since March 2020, there has been much work by DSAs across all dioceses of Scotland to contribute to the revision of *In God's Image*. The DSAs have been involved in drafting guidance and protocols for each of the elements of the eight standards.

Analysis

2.6.4 The Diocese of Motherwell has policies in line with *In God's Image* and see those as central to their safeguarding work. Part of the national revisions to *In God's Image* include the development of templates for a range of procedures which can be adapted to reflect each diocese. There may also be a need to develop policies and procedures which are not currently explicit within *In God's Image* such as online safety and social media especially given its pertinence during COVID.

2.6.5 The diocesan website could be used more effectively with links to key policies and procedures. The main policies of whistleblowing and complaints are in place, but this could be used more effectively and include information on safeguarding, policy for recruitment of volunteers, information for survivors and the diocesan policy for GDPR.

Questions for the Diocese to consider

- What other policies are needed in addition to those already available and how could these be made more accessible on the diocesan website?

2.7 COMPLAINTS AND WHISTLEBLOWING

Introduction

2.7.1 A complaints process is required so that anyone who has contact with the Diocese about safeguarding knows how to complain should they feel that they need to. A strong policy is clear about who complaints should be made to, and how they can be escalated if necessary. Positive features include an independent element, and clarity that raising a safeguarding concern, and making a complaint about a safeguarding service, are two distinct things. The outcome of complaints enables an organisation to learn from those who have had to use their service, enabling them to make any necessary changes or improvements.

2.7.2 Whistleblowing and complaints procedures can be part of a general complaints procedure, but it is important that the process for making a complaint about the safeguarding response or service is clear and is different from sharing safeguarding concerns or allegations.

- 2.7.3 A search on ‘complaints’ or ‘whistleblowing’ within *In God’s Image*, however, does not elicit results. And the index does not reference either term. Where policies and procedures do exist, it is important that the culture of an organisation supports their implementation which means people must be able to access them without having to contact the Church.
- 2.7.4 Without a clear procedure, individuals are left to seek advice and support through a variety of means including: the Apostolic Nuncio, who represents the Holy See in the Church in Britain; or through the Bishop who has a lead for safeguarding on behalf of the Bishop’s Conference; or the SCSS which leads the development of effective safeguarding arrangements.
- 2.7.5 None of the individuals or services has a defined role in responding to escalation of concerns or complaints and within the culture of the Catholic Church it would be unusual and difficult for the lead safeguarding bishop to comment on the decisions within another diocese without a clear remit for doing so.

Description

- 2.7.6 The Diocese of Motherwell has both whistleblowing and complaints policies in place. The whistleblowing policy is available on its website and this covers whistleblowing across all areas of the diocesan policy.
- 2.7.7 Similarly, the complaints procedure concerns all complaints including safeguarding concerns. Complaints often go to the Chancellor first, as per website directions and complaints policy. There will be times when complaints come via the Safeguarding Team or the Bishop.
- 2.7.8 Some of those interviewed, including the Bishop, acknowledged that the lack of an independent route to escalate concerns is a weakness in the system. There is discussion that complaints and whistleblowing policies might benefit from a national approach.
- 2.7.9 The Bishop shared that there is an ongoing discussion at the Bishops’ Conference of Scotland about the possible need for independent scrutiny. There is recognition this needs to be linked into national structures and a working group has been set up to examine this. One possible option is that a revised SCSS in the future could provide independent scrutiny and a process for complaints to provide an additional level of safety in the system for all concerned.

Analysis

- 2.7.10 Whilst procedures exist, it is important that the culture of an organisation supports their implementation. The whistleblowing policy outlines the process for making disclosures and how concerns would be investigated internally and with impartiality. In some cases, this may be entirely appropriate, but within the context of how safeguarding concerns have been managed previously, and the complexity of some cases, it would be helpful to consider how people can escalate concerns to independent scrutiny.

Questions for the Diocese to consider

- How can the Diocese make the whistleblowing and complaints procedures more visible across parishes?
- How can some independent scrutiny be brought into local systems while national discussions are underway?

2.8 CASEWORK

Introduction

- 2.8.1 In order to manage concerns well and respond to allegations there must be a system in place which clearly defines escalation for seeking advice regarding concerns and reports of abuse. There should be effective and clear recording of issues and incidents which are kept securely and are compliant with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018. Integral to managing concerns well is the requirement to work jointly with statutory agencies and to debrief and reflect on any areas of weakness in order to improve practice.
- 2.8.2 The auditors looked at a range of case work material that was identified by the Diocese as related to safeguarding. These included general enquiries dealt with by the DSA.
- 2.8.3 The auditors focused on recording systems, quality of response to allegations, information sharing, risk assessments and safeguarding agreements. For this section, description and analysis are presented together for each sub-section.

Recording systems

Description

- 2.8.4 All case files are stored in lockable filing cabinets within a locked storage room in the safeguarding office. The keys are stored in a key cabinet with a code to access and access to the code is limited.

Analysis

- 2.8.5 The auditors did not observe a summary front sheet on all case files during the virtual audit, but were reassured that a standardised summary sheet has been produced and the case files are in the process of being updated.
- 2.8.6 The case files were well organised, but two issues emerged:
- occasionally dates and signatures were missing from key documents
 - all advice and support given by the safeguarding office should be followed up in writing. Occasionally this did not happen and it is felt important when it concerns matters of safeguarding.

Questions for the Diocese to consider

- Does the current diocesan case file database system provide the ability to track cases over time and, if not, how can this be developed?
- If not in place, could the Diocese consider adding a case summary sheet to all files to assist new staff?

Quality of response to concerns and allegations and information sharing

Description

- 2.8.7 In 2013, the Bishop's Conference of Scotland committed to publish allegation statistics on an annual basis. Motherwell continues to contribute to the annual audit. Key messages from the audit are fed back to deaneries and parishes, and information on individuals or cases is fed back to parish priests and parish safeguarding coordinators as necessary. The Safeguarding Team reflected that more effective use could be made of the information collected and this was being considered within the

development of the strategic framework as some members of the DSAG did not see this as their role, and felt they may not have skills or capacity for developing themes and issues to emerge from the audit.

- 2.8.8 Auditors saw evidence of how allegations are managed by the Diocese Safeguarding Office, heard about the support sometimes needed by parish priests in responding to initial concerns and how individual cases are then discussed at the DRAMT process and followed through. The auditors also heard members of the DRAMT are encouraged to have robust conversations and space is allowed in discussions for challenge.
- 2.8.9 All disclosures of harm or abuse, past or present, are reported in line with the Church's mandatory reporting policy. Whilst this is important as it reflects a practice response by the Church, some concerns were raised about how the process of reporting to Police Scotland is managed with the survivor in relation to non-recent abuse and where there is no immediate risk to children or vulnerable adults. Adult survivors often need time to speak with family and friends and wish to be part of decision-making in relation to reporting. More recently, the Safeguarding Team has been working to address this (see section 2.9).

Analysis

- 2.8.10 It is evident from all four case files that, more recently, responses to concerns and allegations were timely, supportive and helpful. From all case files examined, processes and responses were appropriate, well managed, empathetic and timely. Cases included examples of non-recent allegations against and convictions of abuse of children by priests, allegations of abuse within a religious community and child protection concerns relating to parishioners.
- 2.8.11 There is evidence of good working, professional relationships with multi-agency partners and thoughtful consideration of the impact on survivors and possible others within the parish who had also experienced abuse. There is also regular ongoing reflection within case files on how cases were managed and on the wider issues for learning that emerged. One comment to emerge was that the ongoing communication when there are both legal and canonical procedures could be more effective. Better communication in terms of process and timescales especially if processes are subject to delay.
- 2.8.12 There is supportive and sensitive handling of a range of allegations and working with partners. This ranged from situations where Police Scotland was involved to the management of contracts to situations that needed careful and sensitive management. There is good evidence that the DRAMT processes are used effectively, appropriately and in line with *In God's Image*. There is also evidence of a better response to blemished PVGs with appropriate and timely responses to individuals, the parish priest and parish safeguarding coordinators. From discussions, there is also evidence of appropriate and helpful challenge from lay members of DRAMT to advise on individual cases.
- 2.8.13 The focus on developing safeguarding processes has been developing since the McLellan Commission and *In God's Image*. Previously, challenge was less robust. For example, requests from individuals convicted of abuse and harm to be more involved in church activities were not sufficiently challenged and parishioners making disclosures were often re-directed by their parish priest to Police Scotland or to the safeguarding office without full appreciation of their trauma and the emotional impact of talking about their experiences.

- 2.8.14 More recently, the Diocese has responded more quickly as cases emerge. In the past five years, individuals have been listened to and the Bishop with the Vicar Episcopal have attended parishes and spoken with congregations if a parish priest needs to be removed as an investigation is undertaken. For non-recent cases of abuse which have come to light more recently, the Diocese has asked through local parishes and local media for those affected to come forward if they want support and help from the Church. There is further work required, however, about the public messages in relation to priests who have abused their positions.
- 2.8.15 This, however, is not without challenge for those involved. As was reflected during the audit, it can be difficult for members of the clergy when they need to confront their peers on sensitive and challenging issues. It may also be challenging to support both those who have been accused or convicted of abuse in respect of risk assessments and the management of covenants of care and also those harmed by the individual. These are difficult relationships to manage highlighting the importance of supervision.

Questions for the Diocese to consider

- What more could be done to disseminate the message regarding the need to report concerns within the deaneries and parishes, including to the congregations?
- What support could be put in place for parish priests to reinforce confidence to challenge where appropriate?

Risk assessments and safeguarding agreements

Introduction

- 2.8.16 *In God's Image* states that: 'Every Catholic in Scotland has the obligation and the right to attend the public celebration of the Liturgy on Sundays and holy days of obligation. Where a registered sex offender (RSO) expresses a wish to participate in a religious service in a parish, an assessment of potential risk of harm must be made by the statutory authorities. Police Scotland has agreed with each diocese in Scotland an Information Sharing Protocol which is governed by the system known as the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) which the police service, local authority, prison service, health service and others are statutorily obliged to operate on a multiagency basis, with the objective of protecting the public from the risks that may be posed by sex offenders'. It further specifies that:
- When a convicted RSO expresses a wish to worship in a Catholic Church in Scotland, the relevant personnel from Offender Management or Criminal Justice will discuss with the DSA if appropriate safe arrangements can be made. Each request for such a contract must be considered by the DRAMT who will make an informed recommendation about the best place to worship, how and when. Currently, there is knowledge and experience of the criminal justice system within the DRAMT.
 - Each contract should be reviewed every six months. Contacts between the statutory authorities, the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser and parish priest must be maintained if there are any changes in circumstances either for the RSO or in the parish. The Parish Safeguarding Coordinator must also be made aware that a sex offender is attending Church and has signed a contract.

2.8.17 Good practice (not specified within *In God's Image*) is that such RSO contracts should be underpinned by a risk assessment that details the risks posed by a worshipper, the measures in place to manage those risks, and therefore the reasons for the safeguarding agreement. Having a clear rationale for any restrictions helps people enforce the agreements with the level of diligence appropriate. Clarity about the risks that a safeguarding agreement is intended to address, also allows for a robust reviewing process, which allows safeguarding agreements to be strengthened where needed, or indeed terminated if appropriate.

Description

- 2.8.18 Processes of assessment have been developed and include the offer of an external psychological assessment to all individuals referred to the DRAMT and consistent formats for assessing and identifying risk and recording recommendations.
- 2.8.19 Auditors saw a small number of cases involving the management of covenants of care and agreements for those within the Diocese about whom there were concerns. Through the conversations, participants raised two areas for possible further discussion: the role, training and support for priests in a support role; and the review of covenants of care. In terms of the former, priests had undertaken a support role with little training or support. There was rarely a clear plan in place which was reviewed regularly. Individuals who abuse can be manipulative and support priests often find themselves without the right structures and support in place, can feel manipulated by their colleague, are unclear of their role and how it links to wider statutory agencies, particularly local MAPPA arrangements.
- 2.8.20 The auditors heard, however, that contracts of care are reviewed regularly through local MAPPA arrangements although discussed at the DRAMT to provide general updates or a DRAMT is called to discuss and advise on specific issues. Contract of care reviews are tailored to the individual, parish, and situation. Their risk level is assigned by statutory partners, their risk assessment will inform the basis of the agreement. The parish will review Mass availability, where risk to children and young people and or vulnerable adults is assessed and, usually, the quietest masses will be offered.
- 2.8.21 Following this a face-to-face meeting is arranged involving the parish priest, Parish Safeguarding Coordinator, (if available to attend) Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA), the parishioner (offender), Criminal Justice and Offender Management which identifies the plan. The contract is agreed and signed by relevant individuals. The DSA acts as the link between the parish and statutory authorities. Should the person depart from their plan or fail to turn up, this is reported to the DSA, who informs the statutory authorities.
- 2.8.22 Depending on levels of risk, the contracts are reviewed quarterly, six monthly or annually. Monitoring takes the form of telephone calls or face-to-face meetings at a frequency agreed between statutory agencies, the Diocese, and the parish.

Analysis

2.8.23 The process for risk assessment including the external psychological assessment and consistent formats for assessing risk and recording recommendations is excellent in terms of transparency in the decision-making which sits behind risk assessments. DRAMT meetings are called appropriately to assess and manage risk and to support any ongoing covenants of care and agreements. Where the parish has concerns, these are referred back to the DRAMT for further risk assessment. The auditors agree that whilst not all were aware, there are clear processes for reviewing contracts of care. It would be helpful to ensure that all are aware.

2.8.24 The role of the support priest needs further consideration with clearly identified support and guidance in terms of the role with the member of clergy who is being supported, the safeguarding office and wider multi-agency partners.

Questions for the Diocese to consider

- How can support priests be better trained and supported in their role?
- What further work is needed with statutory partners in the areas of risk assessments and managing registered sex offenders?
- Where might the Diocese seek support for thinking about processes for the routine review of covenants of care and their underpinning risk assessments?

2.9 SUPPORTING SURVIVORS

Introduction

2.9.1 Standard 4 of *In God's Image* relates to providing care and support for survivors:

'We provide a compassionate response to survivors of abuse when they disclose their experiences and we offer them support, advice, care and compassion.'

2.9.2 An important part of the audit is to seek the views of survivors, as well as those working in the Diocese.

Description

2.9.3 Much work has been undertaken by the Safeguarding Team, and the DSA in particular, to develop the approach to working with survivors. Reflecting on past cases, the Diocese has made a public commitment to putting the survivor central to safeguarding processes and functions, and adopting a holistic approach to support offered.

2.9.4 At the core of the approach is a recognition of the hurt and harm caused, a commitment to listening without judgement, and acknowledging that whilst past events or actions cannot be erased, the support offered should be flexible to allow people to move on informed by their current circumstances, goals and aims.

2.9.5 The DSA is the key contact for all survivors and secondary survivors. As mentioned previously, all disclosures of harm or abuse, past or present, are reported in line with the Church's mandatory reporting policy, and the aim is that the DSA works with the survivor to give them choice and control over how and when allegations are reported and disclosures made. The auditors heard that, in some cases, discussion with the individual about when Police Scotland is informed did not always happen. The consequences are that in following up reported allegations, Police Scotland can visit an individual's home before that individual has had the opportunity to discuss this with family members, who may be unaware of the disclosure.

2.9.6 In Motherwell, support can include arranging for survivors to meet with a psychologist to explore the right type of therapy and ongoing support rather than adopting a one-size-fits-all approach. Support can also be practical and financial such as helping someone to secure a driving licence to allow them to move from temporary to permanent work or gaining access to courses for others. Support is also offered to

secondary survivors, parents of survivors, extended family members and to the accused's family members, as necessary.

- 2.9.7 In light of the reflections on past experiences and input from the survivors, the Safeguarding Team is actively exploring the longer-term structures needed and have identified common stages in the journey following a diocesan disclosure: thinking about and then the process of disclosing abuse; the support required following a disclosure; the outcome of investigation by both Police Scotland and through canon law; and recognition that some people may require long-term support.
- 2.9.8 The DSA is also a member of the Catholic Religious Scottish Safeguarding Commission and informing the survivor journey aspect to that work. The DSA is also provided with external professional supervision paid by the Diocese to support her work in this area.
- 2.9.9 Survivors do come forward and make themselves known usually in a parish setting. All are offered a conversation with the DSA and offers are made to meet with the Bishop in more relaxed environments, which has been important for some. All participants were clear that survivors should be listened to and supported in line with *In God's Image* and the McLellan report. In parishes where there have been allegations, offers of support from the safeguarding office are issued through the parish posters and newsletters, and in local media. Survivors themselves reported that contrary to their expectations, they had been listened to with empathy and respect when approaching the Diocese more recently.

Analysis

- 2.9.10 The approach being developed towards working with survivors is progressive with a clear understanding that disclosing abuse is the start of a process. The need for good professional supervision is also recognised. The importance of the Bishop meeting survivors is clear from all conversations. Responding quickly, being listened to, being believed, an apology and support moving on have been well received by survivors.
- 2.9.11 There were several reflections in relation to this work of the Diocese. First, welcoming, compassionate, trauma-informed responses to survivors is a recent development in Motherwell and has not always been the case, so more work is needed to reach out to parishes and wider communities to build trust to support individuals in coming forward. The Safeguarding Team is aware that trust is not built overnight and that perhaps the streaming of Mass and services, in response to COVID, had also allowed people to engage with the Church again without committing to entering Church premises; people had been able to '*dip their toes in the water*'. Second, confidence is not mirrored in all parishes. Priests may need support to be more confident in responding to those who wish to disclose and in managing and challenging parishioners who may have had historical or current convictions.
- 2.9.12 Third, the offer of a range of support to help people move on is excellent, but it might be helpful to develop a written package of measures or options. It is hard for those reaching out to the Church to articulate what help and support they may require so a written menu of options may be a helpful first step. It is also important that this includes a timeframe so that individuals are clear about what support to expect and progress moving forward. The trustees provide some checks and balances when the support has a financial component. More generally, however, it is important that a range of support is offered verbally, emotionally, practically and financially and reviewed regularly.

Questions for the Diocese to consider

- How might the Diocese, perhaps through theological leadership and dissemination of this through the deaneries and parishes, more proactively reach out to survivors?
- How can the Diocese include survivors who do not wish to have contact with the Church?
- What are barriers to creating links with 'Safer Spaces' or other support mechanisms for survivors?
- How can the Diocese work with survivors to inform policy and practice more generally across safeguarding?

2.10 SAFE RECRUITMENT OF CLERGY, LAY OFFICERS AND VOLUNTEERS

Introduction

2.10.1 The mandatory safe recruitment process in the Catholic Church in Scotland is central to ensuring that everyone, including volunteers, is safe to work with children and vulnerable adults. *In Gods Image* specifies the DSAG as having an operational function around the organisation of PVG applications and monitoring of ongoing membership of the scheme across the dioceses.

2.10.2 Standard 2 of *In God's Image* states that: 'Vetting the appointment of clergy, religious, lay employees and volunteers set out in *In God's Image* states that: 'When admitting men to seminary, appointing clergy and religious and recruiting lay employees and volunteers, we require PVG checks on their suitability for working with vulnerable groups.' (2018 p15).

Description

2.10.3 In Motherwell, the management of the safer recruitment process is with the Diocesan Safeguarding Administrator. The Diocesan Safeguarding Administrator was furloughed during the diocesan audit and responsibility for managing safe recruitment was with the DSA during the pandemic. There had been little activity in 2020 and early 2021, but the DSA is confident that all clergy, members of staff and volunteers had an up-to-date PVG entered on the database, which had been designed centrally and can be interrogated to extract relevant data crosscut in various ways. Previously, the DSA and Administrator checked parish information with the annual audit.

2.10.4 In March 2021, the PVG application process moved online, which has changed how the Diocesan Office engage with parishes to support and manage the safe recruitment process. In addition, *Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020* changed definitions from regulated work to a list of recognised regulated roles. Following meetings between the Diocesan Advisors and Volunteer Scotland Disclosure Service, a full review of the recruitment process is underway as volunteer positions previously accepted as regulated work are no longer within the current scope of regulated roles. This has led to a significant piece of collaborative work across the Diocese to map out the roles in parishes, update or introduce job descriptions, and revise risk assessments for roles and groups to ensure the Church can evidence the criteria for a regulated role.

- 2.10.5 In addition, the Bishop's Conference of Scotland is in the process of agreeing to a tiered safe recruitment process, where level 1 and 2 of Disclosure Scotland's vetting processes can be introduced. Ensuring roles that no longer meet the requirement for PVG membership have a vetting element built into the process, like basic or enhanced background checks, this change will enhance the recruitment process for all volunteer roles in parishes.
- 2.10.6 The Act also clarified the definition of protected adults, which has also resulted in discussion of roles working specifically with vulnerable persons such as elderly, refugees. Although their circumstances make them more vulnerable, these groups do not fall within the Scottish Government definition of protected adult. Work is also ongoing to redefine or update the job descriptions along with risk assessments, which is supported by Volunteer Scotland Disclosure Service.
- 2.10.7 In terms of the process, there is a clear flowchart setting out the steps for safe recruitment. The Administrator is the link to parish safeguarding coordinators (PSCs) and oversees the safe recruitment process. Details from application forms are added to the diocesan database held by the Administrator and once selected for a post all staff and volunteers complete a PVG application form and the Administrator verifies the checks for all PVG applications. There are currently over 3,000 volunteers and all are checked and cross-referenced with the data from the annual audits.
- 2.10.8 At quarterly DSAG meetings, the safe recruitment process, number of new volunteers, existing renewals, seminarian, clergy and visiting priests are reviewed and the revised DSAG will maintain this process. Safe recruitment is also reported on monthly to the trustees, and quarterly at the national safeguarding leads meetings.
- 2.10.9 During the process of a PVG application, there is ongoing communication with the parish, which is informed of progress. Once cleared, a letter signed by the Bishop is sent to the volunteer or staff enabling them to start in post. All blemished PVGs are sent directly to the DSA from the National Office and the documents are reviewed to understand the nature of the blemish. Low level issues are signed off by the DSA with a note added to the file and the recruitment process continues. Issues potentially impacting on the volunteer's role are raised with the DRAMT for review and recommendation. The individual may be written to in order to provide more information and offered an interview with the DSA and Episcopal Vicar for Safeguarding. Following a risk assessment, the individual is either approved, approved on restriction or declined. The applicant, parish priest and PSC are informed, but details of the blemish are not shared. The individual has the right to appeal the decision of the DRAMT.
- 2.10.10 There have been changes to the *Management of Offenders 2019 Part 2* and *Criminal Age of Responsibility (Scotland) 2019* which affect what information about prior convictions can be asked at application stage. Following guidance from Volunteer Scotland and in consultation with dioceses, the National Office issued instruction to remove the self-declaration form from the recruitment process. This means the only information from the PVG will be considered when making decisions on approval, where blemishes are present on PVGs.

Analysis

- 2.10.11 There is evidence that the policies within *In God's Image* for safer recruitment were being applied. All new staff and volunteers receive a letter from the Bishop and do not start in post until this time. The procedures and case files demonstrated that recruitment of PVGs is managed effectively with good communication between the Diocesan Safeguarding Administrator, DSA and PSCs with oversight provided by the DSAG. Those in post prior to the requirements have also been asked to complete a

PVG application and undergo training and, where individuals have refused or this has taken too long, they are no longer able to undertake their duties.

2.10.12 The Safeguarding Team is clear that some revisions have simplified the recruitment application stage making it easier for parish safeguarding coordinators. Sensitive conversations about offences and convictions are only carried out by a member of the Safeguarding Team. The changes also place the ownership of applying with the volunteer; previously it was an offence for the Diocese to present an application for a volunteer who was prohibited from working with children or protected adults, which required honesty from the person completing the form at time of recruitment.

2.10.13 Whilst the changes in legislation created significant work, the Safeguarding Team thought the changes would help to strengthen and clarify the safeguarding recruitment process, making it fairer for all applications and create a robust and more effective process. It was also good to hear of the close working relationships with Volunteer Scotland and the Diocese.

Questions for the Diocese to consider

- How best can the Diocese cross check information regarding staff and volunteers at parish level with the information held on the database to ensure parity?
- What thought is needed to how PVG processes are managed post-COVID?

2.11 TRAINING

Introduction

2.11.1 Safeguarding training is important within the Diocese in order to establish a baseline of safeguarding awareness; signs and symptoms, reporting etc. and to instil confidence in recognising and passing on safeguarding issues in those working and volunteering in the Diocese.

2.11.2 Prior to the introduction of *In God's Image*, training was not mandatory before volunteering or taking up a role within the parish. *In God's Image* has clarified the importance of training. The DSAG is ascribed the key role of organising training for parish clergy, safeguarding volunteers and parish safeguarding coordinators (para 6.1.3).

Description

2.11.3 The Diocese of Motherwell has six lead trainers providing training to staff and almost 3,000 volunteers as required. Parish safeguarding coordinators contact the lead trainers on behalf of the parish when a new volunteer is ready to start in post. Once the training has taken place the trainers advise the Diocesan Safeguarding Administrator to update the database. The Safeguarding Team ensures that the volunteer has completed an application, has two references, a PVG and has completed Induction Training Part 1 before a volunteer starts regulated work. Parish priests and PSCs are aware that the volunteer must not be employed in any regulated activity until they are issued with their approval letter from the Bishop.

2.11.4 Trainers had attended the annual training events provided by the SCSS in order to ensure their skills and information remain current and to challenge thinking. These events had been well received by trainers within Motherwell.

2.11.5 Auditors heard that volunteers were not approved to start in their post until they have completed the relevant training which completes the three-part safer recruitment process of PVG, references and training. The pandemic has made this more difficult and the plan was to deliver training online in the first quarter of 2021 and to link with training offered by other organisations, particularly in the absence of a National Coordinator. The Action Plan also recognised the need for specific training for visiting priests

Analysis

- 2.11.6** Quality and timeliness of training is good across the Diocese. Volunteers undertake their first safeguarding training before they are approved to start in post. Where training is offered and not taken up, trainers advise the Diocese and the chair of DSAG has offered support and robust challenge to ensure this is rectified. The Diocese adapts well to changing needs, but the Safeguarding Team recognised that the number of volunteers who required training with capacity available is likely to be unsustainable long term. Discussion had started with the SCSS, but stalled following the National Coordinator's departure from the role.
- 2.11.7** Training requirements for the future were explored in interviews and auditors heard that there is need for a level of knowledge regarding working with trauma and consideration of how new and refresher training will be developed and delivered in light of COVID-19 and social distancing.
- 2.11.8** Some described challenges in re-establishing training post-COVID. There will be a backlog in training and volunteers may not want to train in large groups. This may also apply to PVG checks as individuals would usually be brought together to get their applications signed.

Questions for the Diocese to consider

- What needs to be in place to provide training in the ways the volunteers are comfortable post-COVID and ensure all are trained?
- How might the Diocese disseminate the importance of a trauma-based approach where this is most needed?
- Should there be a training needs analysis undertaken to identifying the training needs of all involved with safeguarding?

2.12 HOW THE DIOCESE PROVIDES SAFEGUARDING SUPPORT TO PARISHES

Introduction

2.12.1 In a centralised diocesan structure of safeguarding, support from the Diocese to parishes is key to safe and reliable safeguarding. Diocesan safeguarding is, in significant ways, only as good as its weakest parish.

Description

2.12.2 The DSA and Vicar Episcopal are both available to provide safeguarding support to parishes, and with practical matters such as recruitment, completion of the parish audit and support with managing covenants and agreements, involving the Bishop where required. The DSA provides more individualised support regarding parish issues and support for survivors. Seventeen (n=22) survey respondents replied that

support from the safeguarding office is good, four replied average and only one thought it poor.

2.12.3 The Safeguarding Team agreed more work is needed to improve communication with local parishes. Some parishes had several PSCs and the team is keen to support the development of local safeguarding teams of PSCs and the parish priest. This would provide a support network for PSCs locally and through quarterly meetings, issues raised should inform deanery meetings, Council of Priests and DSAG as well as with more regular meeting with the DSA and Administrator. The DSA is also keen to improve links with PSCs as there is awareness that those who had met the DSA were more likely to contact the safeguarding office for advice and support.

2.12.4 One further idea is to identify a lead PSC who would link with local parish coordinators. This approach was piloted in 2019 in one area with some success, but halted at the start of national lockdown. The intention is that the lead PSC would also represent PSCs on the DSAG.

Analysis

2.12.5 More development work is needed in terms of communication with, and support of, parishes. This includes training needs, support with challenge and a greater confidence in reporting. The Safeguarding Team is aware of this, however, and had also identified several ways for improving communication and support which links with the discussions on the Diocesan Safeguarding Action and Communication Plans.

Questions for the Diocese to consider

- How might the Diocese identify and prioritise safeguarding support to PSCs who might be finding the role challenging?
- Should more consideration be given to how might the Diocese establish and promote local safeguarding teams?
- How can adequate capacity be found to progress this work?

2.13 QUALITY ASSURANCE

Introduction

2.13.1 A safe organisation needs constant feedback loops about what is going well and where there are difficulties in relation to safeguarding, and this should drive ongoing cycles of learning and improvement. Robust quality assurance enables an organisation to understand its strengths and weaknesses. Potential sources of data are numerous, including independent scrutiny. Quality assurance needs to be strategic and systematic to support accountability and shed light on how well things are working and where there are gaps or concerns.

2.13.2 There are a range of mechanisms that can support this:

- Professional supervision of the DSA (see DSA section)
- Scrutiny by the DSAG (see DSAG section)
- Independent audit of non-recent cases
- Routine benchmarking of the Diocese against other dioceses within and out with Scotland

- Identifying lessons learnt from other dioceses and feeding these into planning the work of the Diocese
- Abuse survivor 'customer' feedback
- Routine PSC 'customer' feedback
- Complaints procedure about the safeguarding service (see Complaints section)
- Independent 'lessons learnt' reviews of cases where things seem to have gone wrong or there are concerns that they have

2.13.3 Standard 8 of *In God's Image* sets out an expectation that each diocese will oversee effective planning processes to monitor, review, self-evaluate and report on local safeguarding practices. Compliance with these safeguarding standards is to be monitored externally by the Independent Review Group (IRG). In particular, there are expectations that:

- parishes monitor and review their safeguarding arrangements and to self-evaluate their safeguarding practice by completing an annual audit and devise a safeguarding action plan
- dioceses regularly monitor and review their safeguarding arrangements and to self-evaluate their safeguarding practice by completing an annual audit and devising a safeguarding action plan.

Description

2.13.4 The Diocese requests safeguarding audit responses from the parishes annually. For all audits to date, there has been 100 per cent return rate. There is evidence that evaluation and auditing work of the Diocese as well as reviews, reports and published audit reports from dioceses elsewhere in the UK inform the development of local policy and practice.

2.13.5 More critically, the Safeguarding Team identified the need for a quality assurance framework to identify the strengths and weaknesses within the systems. This could include regular internal audit of case files, feedback from survivors and parishes and the annual audits. This would inform revisions to the diocesan strategic action and communication plans.

2.13.6 Quality assurance within the Diocese has focused mainly on parish audits which have been helpful and there is evidence that themes from the audits are fed into the DSAG for consideration. Some of those interviewed reflected that the extent of the information required through the annual audits could perhaps be revised so there is a more direct link with parishes, deaneries and the Diocese.

Analysis

2.13.7 The Safeguarding Action Plan is a good foundation, however, there is no quality assurance framework beyond this. The auditors agreed that this would usefully form part of strategic planning and feedback loops.

Questions for the Diocese to consider

- What are the timescales for developing a quality assurance framework and who needs to be involved?
- How satisfied is the Diocese that the current model of parish audits elicits the most effective return of information?
- How might learning and knowledge of other dioceses within Scotland be incorporated into wider quality assurance activity?
- How might the views and perspectives of survivors and parishes be sought and incorporated into quality assurance?

2.14 CULTURE

Introduction

- 2.14.1** The most critical aspect of safeguarding relates to the culture within any organisation. In a diocesan context, that can mean, for example, the extent to which priority is placed on safeguarding individuals as opposed to the reputation of the Church, or the ability of all members of the Church to think the unthinkable about friends and colleagues. Any diocese should strive for an open, learning culture where safeguarding is ‘everybody’s business’ and a shared responsibility, albeit supported by experts, and which encourages people to highlight any concerns about how things are working so that they can be addressed.
- 2.14.2** An open learning culture starts from the assumption that maintaining adequate vigilance is difficult and proactively seeks feedback on how safeguarding is operating and encourages people to highlight any concerns about how things are working so that they can be addressed.
- 2.14.3** Culture within a diocese is crucial to effective safeguarding as is the priority given to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults over the protection of the reputation of the Church. A safe culture also relies on the knowledge and understanding of all within the diocese to react to allegations and disclosures of abuse even when these might be about those they know and admire. Crucially, a safe culture requires trust in the organisation’s leadership and in fair and transparent systems and processes.

Description

- 2.14.4** As mentioned, there have been challenges historically in relation to safeguarding for the Diocese of Motherwell which have impacted on the current culture and trust in safeguarding processes: historical responses to high-profile cases and responses to those seen as whistleblowing; the initial hesitation or perceptions that allegations made against priests were not believed; responses to disclosures which focus on process rather than the trauma of the individual and the lack of a timely response by the Bishop and church. How the Diocese publicly acknowledges the past will inform how genuine the Church’s commitment to change is viewed by survivors and society in the future.
- 2.14.5** There was reflection that the Church had been in denial, but that attitudes have changed significantly through the evidence of the abusive actions of a few, hearing the individual experiences and stories of the hurt caused and impact of harm on someone’s life and greater understanding within society more generally of the importance of safeguarding.

2.14.6 There is confidence that those seeking advice and support or making disclosures or allegations would now be listened to and supported. The Safeguarding Team is clear that the Diocese cannot afford to be complacent and this message continues to be reinforced through training, PSCs, Council of Priests, the annual statement and parish notices.

Analysis

2.14.7 The Diocese knows itself well and has identified that there are strengths and weaknesses within the safeguarding culture. There is an evident willingness and commitment from those who took part in this audit to improve safeguarding within all aspects of diocesan life.

2.14.8 There is a variety of views across the Diocese. Some described safeguarding as a 'bolt on' to usual Church life and others described it as completely integral. There is a consistent expression, however, within the Safeguarding Team of both the theological importance of safeguarding and what this means in practice. This now needs to be voiced more explicitly across the Diocese to challenge perspectives, thinking and inconsistencies across parishes.

2.14.9 Improvements in safeguarding practice by the Safeguarding Team and the Bishop are clear with improved communication and better support to parishes. There is also an awareness that this is work in progress. The messages of openness and listening need to be matched with the experiences of those coming forward and disclosing abuse. There is evidence that this is beginning to happen.

2.14.10 The discussions on developing strategic thinking and quality assurance frameworks now need to put in place as a priority to provide robust oversight of safeguarding across the Diocese and further embed a safeguarding culture in all areas. Operational leadership and delivery of the safeguarding service within Motherwell is seen to be driven by the safeguarding office. This proactive approach is also now needed in the strategic and theological leadership, otherwise there is a risk that progress to date is seen as too slow and gaps in expertise such as strategic leadership and governance are not addressed leaving too much to the role of the DSA.

Questions for the Diocese to consider

- How might the Diocese identify areas where safeguarding culture is less well embedded and spread good practice where it is?
- What proactive measures could the Diocese implement to bring those who might be more reluctant, into a broader safeguarding culture?
- How can progress in the development of culture be quality assured and how will the Diocese be confident that things are improving?
- In what ways could survivors of abuse be invited to support the development of safeguarding culture?

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1.1 The Safeguarding Team brings together the Bishop, DSA, the Vicar Episcopal, the Safeguarding Administrator and, at the times, the Canonical Advisor, Bishop, which has the potential for providing strong leadership for safeguarding. The Safeguarding Team, and wider clergy and laity are involved in delivering safe processes and systems. There is a strong sense of unity within the team and with external agencies providing robust challenge. The developments in working with individuals who have experienced trauma and abuse are positive and multi-agency relationships have improved. There is an open commitment to constructive challenge within a strong desire for improvement and an emerging learning culture.
- 3.1.2 Whilst there are significant improvements, there are also clear areas of policy and practice identified through this audit for development and these were also recognised by the Safeguarding Team.
- 3.1.3 This includes the need to: increase the visibility of leadership and theology of safeguarding; develop strategic governance structures; develop a strategic safeguarding plan supported by a detailed action plan for implementing *In God's Image* and a communications plan facilitating effective information sharing; develop greater support for working with parishes; continue developing its approach to working with survivors to continue to develop the good practice achieved to date and embedded in the culture of the Church; and consideration given to independent scrutiny and for managing disagreements or conflicts of interests is required, including escalation where the conflict cannot be resolved.
- 3.1.4 The Diocese should also consider how best to reach out to survivors of abuse who might not have come forward and also to ensure that the voice and views of survivors are heard within policy and strategic planning to also assist with developing practice, and importantly, wider healing.
- 3.1.5 The Safeguarding Team has undertaken thoughtful planning as mentioned, but the focus going forward should now be on prioritising and implementing plans into action. The commitment to safeguarding needs reinforced through considered recognition of those who have experienced hurt and abuse, and more visible theological and strategic leadership with clear structures for strategic oversight and governance.

APPENDIX: REVIEW PROCESS

DATA COLLECTION

Information provided to auditors

In advance of and during the site visit, the Diocese of Motherwell provided auditors with the following:

- A self-assessment of Safeguarding
- DSAG minutes
- The Safeguarding Action Plan
- Training Overview
- Diocesan context and local safeguarding structure and arrangements
- Safeguarding Management Team minutes
- PVG database information
- Safe recruitment procedures and forms
- 2020 Parish safeguarding audit
- Safeguarding report form
- Access to the website
- Invitation to survivors

Participation of members of the Diocese

On 26 January to 28 January the auditors conducted the audit virtually and had conversations with:

- Bishop of Motherwell
- Vicar Episcopal (Safeguarding)
- Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor
- Diocesan Treasurer
- A lay member representing DRAMT, Parish Safeguarding Coordinators and training
- A member of DRAMT and Canonical Advisor
- Representatives from the parishes (via the survey)

The audit: records / files

Auditors looked at:

- Four selected case files
- Safer recruitment files

- Examples of enquiries handled within the Diocese from 2016
- Stories of the journey of survivors

LIMITATIONS OF AUDIT

It is possible that some survivors of abuse who have no further contact with the Church and who have not approached survivor support organisations would not have been made aware of the audit. We also recognise that those with strongly negative or positive views are more likely to come forward than those with broadly neutral views.

This audit was completed virtually in line with the Government restrictions on travel during the COVID-19 pandemic. Limitations of not seeing members of the Diocese or parishes in person may have limited communications.

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