

SAFEGUARDING AUDIT

January 2026

November Briefing

Project Update

On 12th November, we reached a major milestone in our audit schedule with the successful submission of our safeguarding evidence to INEQE via the 360° Audit tool. This was a huge team effort: over the past few months we have been gathering, checking, and organising evidence from multiple systems and sources. Thanks to everyone's hard work, over 600 pieces of evidence were pulled together in time for this important deadline—a real achievement for the whole team!

This submission marks a significant step forward and reflects the scale, complexity, and importance of the safeguarding responsibilities we all share.

Thank you to all involved!

Audit Readiness

As we move steadily towards the January 2026 audit (6–9 January), work across both the cathedral and diocesan safeguarding teams continues at pace. The Diocesan INEQE Project Board meets regularly to coordinate activity and track progress, with the next meeting on 1st December focusing on identifying any remaining gaps in our evidence.

Our SPOCs, Julian Hodgson and Phil Morris, remain in close contact with INEQE through biweekly Keeping-in-Touch (KIT) meetings. These discussions are helping shape the detailed schedule for the onsite visit in January, which will be finalised by 8th December.

Preparing for the Audit

As part of the audit process, the INEQE Safeguarding Group team engaged with a wide range of individuals across dioceses, parishes, and cathedral communities through online surveys which closed on 5th November. These surveys provided an important opportunity for people to share their experiences and perspectives on key safeguarding matters aligned to the audit's focus.

The survey response across our communities has been fantastic, giving the audit team a rich and diverse set of insights. **In total, we received over 1,000 completed surveys across all categories**, including parish and cathedral staff, worshipping communities, children and young people, and survivors of church-related abuse.

The Parish Workforce Survey had the largest response with 450 completions, while our Minster Workforce Survey and DBF/DBE/Office of the Bishop Survey also contributed strong participation. Contributions from worshipping communities, children and young people, and survivors of church-related abuse provide additional perspectives that are essential to the depth and breadth of the audit. This wide engagement will be invaluable as INEQE examines our safeguarding strengths and areas for development.

Survey Category	Result
CoE Southwell Minster Workforce Survey	129
CoE Southwell DBF, DBE and Office of the Bishop Workforce Survey	60
CoE Southwell Parish Workforce Survey	450

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Survey Category	Result
CoE Southwell Minster Worshipping Community Survey	73
CoE Southwell Parish Community Survey	244
CoE Southwell Children and Young People Survey	45
CoE Southwell Victims and Survivors of Church-Related Abuse Survey	14

Message from Julian:

“A huge thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the surveys. The response has been fantastic, and we’re incredibly grateful for the level of engagement across our communities”.

Regards,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julian Hodgson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name and last name clearly distinguishable.

Julian Hodgson, Diocese Safeguarding Officer (DSO) and Project Single Point of Contact (SPOC)

Safeguarding Dashboard

- Over 91% of parishes now have active dashboards, although some figures may include closed or non-Anglican churches.
- Archdeacons are contacting remaining parishes to ensure they are supported in using the system.
- Safeguarding Hubs currently stand at 35% of parish usage, however this is understandably lower than the dashboards because the hubs were developed a number of years after the dashboards, and some parishes use ChurchSuite to record their HR data.

Parishes continue to join the dashboards which is very encouraging.

NEXT MONTH: *December & January Focus*

As we move into December and January (our last audit briefing), our attention shifts to the next key phase of the audit. INEQE may request additional evidence, or clarification of some of our processes, and we'll be ready to respond promptly. As they process the evidence we have submitted, this will inform the themes of the audit visit discussions in January.

This stage is crucial: the audit is designed not just to test what we currently have in place, but to help us understand our strengths and identify any gaps so we can continue improving our safeguarding practice.

In the December briefing, we will share the final audit schedule with you, along with details of the planned focus groups, 1:1 conversations, semi-structured discussions, and other audit activities so that everyone knows what to expect. If you are involved in a pre-audit discussion, we will contact you individually ahead of the briefing release date with further information.

Semi-structured discussions and focus groups:

To build a full and balanced picture before the site visit, INEQE will run a series of semi-structured discussions and focus groups - some in person, some virtual. These conversations involve individuals in key roles across parishes, the diocese, and the cathedral, giving auditors an opportunity to hear real experiences of safeguarding in practice. They will also review certain come of our records that can't be accessed digitally.

Focus groups are intentionally designed to be large enough to represent our communities, yet small enough to allow meaningful, in-depth discussion. They're an essential part of ensuring the audit captures both the breadth and depth of safeguarding experience across our context.

1-1 Discussions:

Listening to staff and volunteers within the Diocese and Cathedral workforce is a fundamental element of the Audit. These informal but structured 1:1 discussions will explore people's roles, their day-to-day safeguarding responsibilities, and their understanding of safe practice. They may also touch on involvement in recent or ongoing safeguarding matters.

Everyone invited will receive a briefing note in advance, outlining what to expect, helping to ensure people feel informed and at ease before taking part.

Preliminary Briefings:

At the end of the audit visit in January, the INEQE audit team will share preliminary findings on 9th January 2026 with our single points of contact and other key individuals, including the Bishop, the Dean and other senior members of staff. This early feedback offers a helpful first look at emerging strengths and areas for development ahead of the full written report.

Anyone who has been involved in a 1:1 discussion is invited to join the team at Jubilee House between 12 and 2 at which will hear the preliminary findings presented by the two independent, the DSAP Chair and the Cathedral safeguarding management group.

THANK YOU

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who has contributed their time, shared information, and supported this important audit so far. Every survey completed, discussion attended, and piece of evidence submitted helps to strengthen our safeguarding culture across the Diocese and Cathedral.

By working together, we are ensuring that our communities continue to be safe, welcoming, and supportive spaces for all. Your participation and commitment make a real difference, and it's this collective effort that will help the audit truly reflect the care and vigilance embedded in our Church.

