



# SAFEGUARDING REPORT

2023

DIocese OF PLYMOUTH

## Overview

Safeguarding is a central factor in creating an environment where people can thrive and grow in their faith, with the Church being a place of healing, encounter and growth. The Church leadership, Trustees and professionals employed by the Church work together to create this safe place, supported by volunteers working in every parish across the Diocese.

Central to the coordination of effort are the Diocesan Safeguarding Office and the Trustees of the Diocese. The Safeguarding Office staff treat all individuals with dignity and respect, they ensure all reports are managed in a sensitive and caring manner and that all contact with the Safeguarding Office is dealt with in the strictest confidence.

The Diocese's dedicated team of safeguarding professionals works closely with other agencies both locally and nationally including the Police, Probation and Social Services, and follows the standards that are set out by the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA).

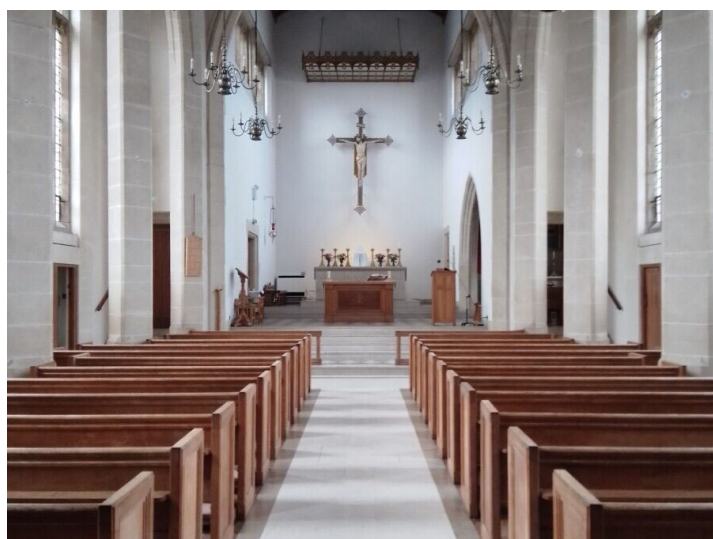
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## Safeguarding Strategy

Our Safeguarding Strategy is based on four key principles

- ✠ Ensuring that safeguarding is everyone's business
- ✠ Having in place appropriate resources and systems to support of effective safeguarding
- ✠ Learning, developing and evolving
- ✠ Victim and survivor centred approaches

We pride ourselves on being a trauma informed organisation.



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## Parish Safeguarding

We currently have **121** Parish Safeguarding Reps (PSRs) covering parishes across Devon, Cornwall and Dorset. During this year we recruited **27** new PSRs.

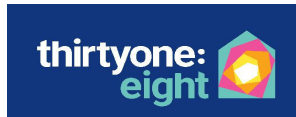
The role of PSR is central to the delivery of safeguarding across the Diocese working with the Safeguarding Office and parish leadership to ensure all events and activities are safe as possible.



## Training

Training is an integral part of creating a safe environment enabling all those who represent the Church to have the knowledge to ensure that the church environment is a safe place and that they can respond appropriately to a safeguarding concern. Training is mandated, and for volunteers this is undertaken 3 yearly. For our priests and deacons training is delivered annually.

We work in partnership with:



In addition we hold an Annual Conference for Parish Safeguarding Reps (PSRs). This was attended by **51** PSRs.

### 2023 Training Records

**402** Online safeguarding training courses completed

**129** Clergy completed annual Safeguarding Training (including clergy from overseas and from the Benedictines of Buckfast and of the Community of St Gregory)

**8** In-person safeguarding training events: **109** attended

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## Administration

During 2023, **387** DBS Checks were undertaken.

All clergy are kept up to date with DBS and training and any priest or deacon who is more than three months out of date (without good reason) is subject to formal action to ensure they are appropriately updated.

The Safeguarding Team oversees the safe recruitment of volunteers, including their DBS checks and mandated training. Volunteers are subject to DBS rechecking and retraining on a three yearly basis. Records of these checks and training are maintained on a central database.



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Further details of our policies , guidance and information can be found on the Diocesan Website  
<https://www.plymouth-diocese.org.uk/the-diocese/how-we-work/vicariate-for-safeguarding-and-pastoral-care/>

## Working with Victims and Survivors of Abuse

An important part of the role of the Safeguarding Office is to protect, support and advocate for those who have been harmed, regardless of where that harm occurred or who was responsible. As part of this work we meet with and support those who seek our help and support. We have a comprehensive Victim Support Strategy which is available on our website.



### CASE STUDY 1—LOUDfence

The Diocese of Plymouth was the first Catholic Diocese to hold a LOUDfence event (15th –17th February 2023).



**LOUDfence** is a visible display of support and solidarity with those affected by abuse. The ribbons tied to each fence represent the voices of those who wish to speak out in support and defence of those affected by abuse.



### CASE STUDY 2 —Modern Day Slavery

#### Feast of St Bakhita Event

Safeguarding is everyone's business and as such the Safeguarding Team work with other members of the curial staff. Caritas Diocese of Plymouth's Refugee and Migration Project Lead organised this event in Torquay to celebrate the Feast of St Josephine Bakhita and to reflect on the issue of modern slavery.

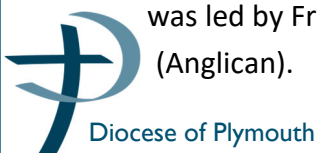
### CASE STUDY 3– Lament and Light Service

In November 2023 The Safeguarding team arranged and held an ecumenical Service in response to the "16 days of action against gender-based violence". This is a campaign for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls. The Service included three Acts of Remembrance for all the women and girls who have experienced or who are experiencing violence.

Rosemary, candles and stones were laid on a cross which had been created from wood and greenery. The Service

was led by Fr Mark Skelton and Rev. Lizzi Green.

(Anglican).



## Safe Spaces

Safe Spaces is available:

Mon-Friday 0900-2100, Sat 0900-1300 and Sun 1300-1700

By phone: 0300 303 1056 Email: [safespaces@firstlight.org.uk](mailto:safespaces@firstlight.org.uk)

Website and Livechat: [www.safespacesenglandandwales.org.uk](http://www.safespacesenglandandwales.org.uk)



Safe Spaces is **open, and there are no waiting lists** for support. You do not need to have reported the incident to the Church authorities or the Police in order to access support.

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Details of the Diocesan Safeguarding Team and Trustees Safeguarding Sub-Committee can be found on the Diocesan Website.

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<https://www.plymouth-diocese.org.uk/the-diocese/how-we-work/vicariate-for-safeguarding-and-pastoral-care/>

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Diocese of Plymouth