



INVITATION TO PARENTS TO ATTEND SAFEGUARDING AUDIT FOCUS GROUPS

1. The Church of England has commissioned an independent audit of cathedral arrangements for keeping people safe from harm and abuse. We realise there is a risk that the occurrence of audits is mistakenly taken up on social media or in the press as indicating the revelation of an abuse scandal in a particular cathedral. We want to provide clarity and reassurance that every cathedral in England will engage in this audit process. Bringing in “fresh eyes” and safeguarding expertise in this way is standard good practice across all sectors. Its purpose is to enable learning proactively and improvement in how cathedrals individually and collectively keep people safe; it is not a response to something bad having happened here or elsewhere. Cathedrals nationally are taking part in this.
2. The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE), a leading improvement agency, is conducting these audits. Two SCIE auditors will be visiting Guildford Cathedral, for a visit between 5 and 7 February 2019. As well as looking at Safeguarding files, policies and training, they will meet with safeguarding professionals and key members of Chapter, including the Dean.
3. In addition, they are keen to hear from parents of children who have prominent roles in the Cathedral, such as choristers or servers, or who use Cathedral facilities events such as Sunday School. Clearly, one important test of the arrangements for protecting people from harm and abuse is how safe children feel in the Cathedral, and how comfortable parents are about their children’s wellbeing when in care of the Cathedral.
4. The auditors are interested in issues such as:
 - The general culture of the Cathedral; are people treated with respect and care. Are there clear messages that bullying, mistreatment, abuse, and misuse of power are not tolerated?
 - How the Cathedral makes it known that they are here to help anyone who is being mistreated or abused in anyway, or has been in the past.
 - Parents’ and children’s awareness of the measures in place to make sure that people who pose a risk aren’t in roles they shouldn’t be.
 - Do parents and children know who to go to if they had concerns that someone was being hurt in some way, or that someone was behaving inappropriately?
 - Do parents and children know what the process would be? How confident do they feel that their concerns would be taken seriously?

- What helps and what gets in the way of the Cathedral supporting children's welfare, preventing abuse and harm, and responding promptly and efficiently to concerns?

5. There will be a focus group for parents of children in the Cathedral, and a chaperoned focus group for children themselves. Both focus group discussions will be combined with other sources of information to help shape a report on each cathedral, which will be published on the Cathedral website, once it has been approved by Chapter. Focus group members will not be identified by name, so can speak freely about their experiences and opinions.

6. If you would like to be included in the focus group, please contact Matt O'Grady on 01483 547864 or dops@guildford-cathedral.org.