

Press release 05/10/2022

Publication of Past Cases Review 2

We welcome today's publication of the Church of England's 'Past Cases Review 2' (PCR2) report, and whole-heartedly support its recommendations. <https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/past-cases-review-2>

The purpose of PCR2 was to identify both good practice and institutional failings in relation to how allegations of abuse have been handled, assess any identified risks and respond to these where appropriate, and to provide recommendations to the Church that will lead to improvements in its safeguarding work.

As part of this review, the Diocese of Guildford conducted a comprehensive appraisal of our files by Independent Reviewers and invited the voices of survivors and victims. We welcome all recommendations from this review, and have already begun to implement the actions from it. Please see our [executive summary here](#).

The Right Rev Andrew Watson, Bishop of Guildford reflected on our local diocesan review:

"Any abuse against anyone is one abuse too many. Having met many victims and survivors over the years, I've been reminded time and again of the immense damage such abuse can do to people's lives, even decades after it was first perpetrated. And there is something peculiarly disturbing about abuse taking place in the context of the Christian Church – the polar opposite of Christ's offer of life in all its fullness. I therefore fully endorse the findings of the second independent Past Cases Review (PCR2) in the Diocese of Guildford, and hugely welcome the reviewers' challenge to us to learn from the past and improve our safeguarding practice for the future.

In doing so, I would particularly like to thank victims and survivors who courageously shared their story and reflections, and whose voices added greatly to the content and impact of the review. I would also like to acknowledge safeguarding failures in the diocese in the past and am profoundly sorry for the additional pain that they have caused.

PCR2 in this diocese, has been robust, independent and thorough, and I'm deeply grateful to the reviewers for their perseverance, integrity and honesty throughout the process. The report shows up a number of failings in our past safeguarding practices, most commonly around clear record management, and – whilst recognising too that there have been substantial improvements in recent years – we need to ensure that we are not complacent and continue to review and improve the way things are done. We accept all the report's findings and are already acting on all its recommendations within a carefully drawn-up PCR2 action plan.

Safeguarding must be a priority and focus for everyone at all levels, as together we work towards making the Church a safe and welcoming place for all."

Chris Cloke, Independent Chair, Guildford Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel and Chair, Guildford Past Cases Review Reference Group said:

“The rigorous report from the independent reviewers who looked at all identified past cases makes for sad and sombre reading. We take very seriously and must learn from the poor practices and responses to cases that have been identified. While the reviewers have confirmed significant improvements in current safeguarding practice there is no room for complacency. We must all take responsibility for ensuring that our churches and the cathedral are the safest possible places they can be.”

Notes to editors

Please direct any questions to Interim Head of Communications, Ruth Blanco on comms@cofeguildford.org.uk or on 07552 566953

We know that this may be painful for many people. Resources and listening services are available here: <https://www.cofeguildford.org.uk/about/safeguarding/support-for-survivors-victims>

FAQs on the National Past Cases Review 2 can be found here: <https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/past-cases-review-2/past-cases-review-2-faq>

All queries on the National PCR2 report should be directed to <https://www.churchofengland.org/media-and-news/media-centre>