Catholic **Safeguarding Standards** Agency

Archdiocese of Cardiff-Menevia

Inspection Report
April 2026

Possible Grades

- Exemplary
- Substantial assurance
- Exceeding expectations
- Meeting expectations
- Requires attention
- Significant improvement needed
- Serious concerns

Overall Grading	Meeting expectations
Standard 1 Safeguarding is embedded in the Church body's leadership, governance, ministry and culture	Meeting expectations
Standard 2 Communicating the Church's safeguarding message	Meeting expectations
Standard 3 Engaging with and caring for those who report having been harmed	Meeting expectations
Standard 4 Effective management of allegations and concerns	Requires attention
Standard 5 Management and support of subjects of allegations and concerns (respondents)	Requires attention
Standard 6 Robust human resource management	Exceeding expectations
Standard 7 Training and support for safeguarding	Exceeding expectations
Standard 8 Quality assurance and continuous improvement	Meeting expectations

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Possible Grades

Exemplary

Safeguarding practice is exceptional, innovative, and influential. The organisation demonstrates a deeply embedded safeguarding culture with consistently excellent outcomes. Learning is shared, and the body serves as a model of best practice for others in the Church.

Substantial Assurance

Safeguarding arrangements provide a high level of confidence in both practice and governance. Evidence shows sustained excellence, continuous improvement, and well-coordinated oversight. Policies and culture reinforce safe practice, delivering assurance at a strategic level. There is evidence of continuous improvements and quality assurance activity.

Exceeding Expectations

Safeguarding practice is consistently strong and often goes beyond minimum requirements. There is evidence of positive outcomes, proactive risk management, and well-embedded systems. Leadership demonstrates a strong commitment to safeguarding, and practice is robust and forward-looking.

Meeting Expectations

Safeguarding arrangements are sound, consistent, and compliant with expected standards. Key processes, policies, and oversight mechanisms are in place and functioning effectively. Practice is reliable, and safeguarding responsibilities are understood and fulfilled across the organisation.

Requires Attention

Safeguarding practice is partially effective but contains notable gaps or inconsistencies. Some processes work well, but others need targeted improvement to ensure reliability and compliance. Risks are being managed, but not always proactively or systematically.

Significant Improvement Needed

Core safeguarding structures exist but are not functioning reliably or consistently. Weaknesses in policy, implementation, or oversight significantly undermine safe practice. Improvements are achievable but require substantial effort and focused leadership to reach an acceptable standard.

Serious Concerns

Safeguarding arrangements show serious and immediate failings. Children or adults at risk may be exposed to harm due to significant gaps in practice, governance, or culture. Urgent corrective action is recommended to ensure safety and compliance. Leadership oversight is insufficient or ineffective.

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Contents

1. Summary of Findings

1.1 This is an inspection report of the safeguarding arrangements for the Archdiocese of Cardiff-Menevia, carried out by the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA) as part of its national inspection programme for dioceses in England and Wales. The Archdiocese of Cardiff-Menevia has been graded overall as Meeting Expectations, reflecting clear development following a recent diocesan merger, with further work required to achieve consistency and sustained assurance, particularly in case management and the support of respondents.

1.2 The inspection took place within the context of a significant diocesan merger, which has required substantial organisational, legal and cultural change. The archdiocese has made notable progress in establishing safeguarding structures and stabilising arrangements. Safeguarding is recognised as a priority, supported by visible leadership, clear governance arrangements and the Board of Trustees and safeguarding subcommittee. The integration of the two safeguarding teams into a single team with improved capacity and experienced leadership, enabling progress in previously high-risk areas, including the introduction of electronic case management systems, the digitalisation of historic records and the reduction of a significant DBS backlog. Initial responses to safeguarding concerns are generally timely, empathetic and professional, and preventative initiatives such as the Team Around the Priest (TAP) approach demonstrate a developing safeguarding culture.

1.3 The inspection identified areas where further development is required to ensure consistency and strengthen assurance. There is variability in the quality of case management, particularly in relation to record-keeping, analysis, supervision and the documentation of decision-making. While there is a clear commitment to engaging with and supporting those who report having been harmed, ongoing communication and formal feedback mechanisms are not yet consistently embedded. The management and support of respondents also require further development, with evidence that clergy confidence in safeguarding processes is not yet fully established. Addressing these areas will be essential to embedding and achieving sustained improvement across the archdiocese.

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2. Introduction

2.1 This is an inspection of the safeguarding arrangements for the newly merged archdiocese of Cardiff-Menevia, undertaken as part of the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency's (CSSA) programme of inspections of all 21 dioceses of England and Wales. The inspection was undertaken in accordance with the contractual agreement between the archdiocese of Cardiff-Menevia and the CSSA. Public accountability and transparency are provided by the publication of this full inspection report on the CSSA website.

2.2 The diocesan inspection programme will run from 2025 until 2028 and represents a second phase of CSSA quality assurance of diocesan safeguarding arrangements, following the baseline audit programme that ran from 2022 to 2024. Having primarily focussed on compliance with safeguarding expectations in the baseline audit phase, inspections will concentrate on the quality of safeguarding arrangements and practice, together with the means by which dioceses quality assure and continuously improve their own practice. Inspections are graded according to a new maturity matrix that provides more stringent expectations than during the baseline audit programme and utilises new grade descriptors. There is therefore no equivalence to baseline audit grades.

2.3 It is important to note that for the archdiocese of Cardiff-Menevia, this inspection provides a baseline for the newly merged archdiocese and its safeguarding arrangements. The merger of the archdiocese of Cardiff and the diocese of Menevia was completed in April 2025 and therefore there are many areas of safeguarding practice still under development. The archdiocese of Cardiff was assessed as making early progress against the eight national safeguarding standards[1] in March 2023, whereas the diocese of Menevia had a baseline audit grade of below basic also in March 2023, with areas of risk indicating practice could fall below minimum required standards. A re-audit in June 2024 returned a grade of early progress. A significant amount of work has been undertaken to address

[1] The eight standards lay out what CSSA expects in terms of level of safeguarding practice in church bodies (that is, dioceses and religious life groups) [The Eight National Safeguarding Standards]

these risks and to build a firm foundation for the whole of the newly formed archdiocese. This has distracted the safeguarding team previously from the archdiocese of Cardiff from making progress on many of the recommendations made in their previous audit, while ongoing work to rectify the issues from the diocese of Menevia has had a negative impact in some areas on the gradings that the new archdiocese has achieved at this inspection. The analysts strongly recommend that this report is read within the context of the challenges the archdiocese and its safeguarding team has faced with this merger.

2.4 The archdiocese of Cardiff-Menevia covers Cardiff, the Welsh valleys, Bridgend, Herefordshire, Newport, North Gwent, Pontypridd, Swansea, Carmarthen, Llandrindod Wells, Haverfordwest and Port Talbot. There are two Vicars General each responsible for one of the geographical areas that made up the previous dioceses of Cardiff and Menevia. Within this there are 12 deaneries which contain 74 parishes. There are 150 clergy that include priests, deacons, chaplains and those retired from ministry. Initial steps toward the formation of the archdiocese of Cardiff-Menevia were taken on 27 April 2022 when Pope Francis announced that both dioceses were to be united 'in persona Episcopi' (in the person of the bishop). At the same time, he named the 8th Archbishop of Cardiff who would also be the Bishop of Menevia as being Bishop Mark O'Toole who was at that time the Bishop of Plymouth. The legal merger of the two charitable entities was completed in April 2025.

2.5 Safeguarding governance is provided by the Board of Trustees who delegate some areas of responsibility to their safeguarding subcommittee. The Safeguarding Team consists of a full-time head of safeguarding, a safeguarding coordinator, one safeguarding caseworker, a safeguarding office manager and a DBS administrator.

2.6 Formal notification of the CSSA's intention to inspect was sent to the archdiocese on 29 July 2025, along with the self-assessment document with an agreed completion date of 13 October 2025. A guide for evidence to be provided to support the self-assessment was also shared. A short extension to completion of the self-assessment was requested and agreed. The self-assessment was provided on 22 October 2025 with supporting evidence provided ten days later.

2.7 The inspection was completed between 10-28 November 2025 via a combination of remote inspection, primarily on case audits and focus groups, and in-person interviews and parish visits. Two CSSA quality assurance analysts completed the inspection.

3. Methodology

3.1 This inspection assesses the progress of the archdiocese of Cardiff-Menevia against all eight safeguarding standards of the Catholic church in England and Wales. The archdiocese provided their self-assessment alongside documentary evidence of their adherence to the eight standards. These have been reviewed by the analysts alongside additional evidence provided during the weeks of inspection. A record of evidence provided is included as an appendix to this report. The archdiocesan website was also reviewed as a key source of safeguarding information.

3.2 The Safeguarding Coordinator provided the CSSA with a list of all safeguarding cases. Twenty of these cases were chosen to be audited in detail using the CSSA case audit tool, although one was removed from the sample due to being a duplicate. This represented 20% of all cases from the previous 12 months. The cases chosen were a representation of the range of casework activity by the Safeguarding Team and remote access was provided to the case management system to allow this.

3.3 Online surveys were sent to 145 clergy and nearly 70 Parish Safeguarding Representatives (PSRs)[2] across the archdiocese to capture as wide a variety of views as possible. A public call for information was also issued regarding the

[2] Parish Safeguarding Representatives (PSRs) are volunteers who provide assistance and support to their parish in Safeguarding matters.

archdiocesan safeguarding arrangements, with a focus on the last 12 months. All survey responses were received anonymously and any self-identifying information included within free text answers were removed before the clergy and PSR surveys were shared with the archdiocese.

3.4 Surveys for clergy and PSRs were available between 13 October and 14 November 2025. Twenty-seven responses were received from clergy, which is a response rate of 19%, and 24 PSRs, which is a response rate of 34%. These constitute a response rate from which the archdiocese can draw only limited conclusions from the survey data in terms of quantitative data and were lower than we would have expected. The qualitative data was used to inform and triangulate other data within case audits and from focus groups for both PSRs and clergy to identify themes. Eight responses were received from a public call for information about the archdiocese issued by the CSSA. Two focus groups were also run online during the inspection period. One was made up of a small group of clergy, selected by the archdiocese and one was a group of PSRs, who volunteered to support the inspection.

3.5 The archdiocese of Cardiff-Menevia arranged parish visits to two parishes within the former archdiocese of Cardiff. Unfortunately, during the inspection period, a visit to a parish from the former diocese of Menevia was not possible due to clergy annual leave. The parish visits enabled the analysts to speak with the resident clergy, PSRs and parish secretaries and the premises inspected to assess how a safe environment is created.

3.6 Interviews took place with key archdiocesan individuals, including:

- Archbishop Mark O'Toole
- Archdiocesan Archivist
- Chancery
- Chief Operating Officer (COO)
- Clergy Lead for Safeguarding
- Communications Lead
- Episcopal Vicar for Religious
- Head of Buildings

- Head of Safeguarding
- Head of Clergy Welfare Board
- Judicial Vicar
- Lay Trustees
- Safeguarding Coordinator
- Safeguarding Subcommittee Chair
- Safeguarding Subcommittee Vice-Chair
- Safeguarding Office Manager and administrator
- Safeguarding Casework Officer
- One of the two Vicars General
- Vocation Lead
- Youth Service

4. Inspection grading

4.1 Safeguarding practice was assessed against the eight National Safeguarding Standards adopted by the Catholic Church in England and Wales. Evidence gathered during the inspection was evaluated using the CSSA Diocesan Maturity Matrix.

4.2 Each standard is graded on a seven-point scale ranging from Serious Concerns to Exemplary. Individual assessments against the sub-standards are aggregated to determine the overall grade for each standard. These standard grades are then considered collectively to determine the overall inspection grading for the diocese.

4.3 The full set of grading descriptors used by the CSSA inspection framework is set out on the opening pages of this report.

5. Inspection findings against each standard

5.1 Standard 1 Safeguarding is embedded in the Church body's leadership, governance, ministry and culture

Strengths

5.1.1 The Archbishop of Cardiff-Menevia, the Most Reverend Mark O'Toole has shared his vision of a safe community for all and his core belief that every person deserves to feel safe and respected through a safeguarding statement and personal video message on the archdiocesan website[3]. There is a recognition that one aspect towards achieving this is through preventative safeguarding in reporting low-level concerns at the earliest opportunity. To this end, the archdiocese has developed a low-level concerns policy that provides guidance for all those who come into contact with the archdiocese to respond and report what may seem like minor issues at the time but may show a pattern of behaviours or circumstances that create a risk for someone being harmed, either deliberately or inadvertently. This policy and how to report low-level concerns are both available on the archdiocesan website within the safeguarding pages. An increase in cases reported that fit the description of a low-level concern demonstrate that this policy is being used correctly. This is a new policy however and needs to be reviewed and evaluated for effectiveness before it can be considered to be embedded in practice.

5.1.2 As well as stating the importance of preventative safeguarding, the statement by the archbishop is clear that it is the role of all in the Catholic Church to recognise harm done to individuals and to facilitate a journey of recovery for survivors of abuse providing support where it is possible to do so. The archdiocese safeguarding coordinator has been appointed to lead this work on behalf of the archbishop and steps have been taken to work towards a Victims Charter for survivors that sets out the commitment to survivors, what they can expect by way

[3] Safeguarding - Cardiff-Menevia - Archdiocese of Cardiff-Menevia

of support from the archdiocese and includes guidance for all. Trustees, members of the safeguarding subcommittee, safeguarding staff and other professional services staff have all received trauma-informed training to ensure that they are equipped with the knowledge and skills to speak with, respond to and if required meet with survivors of abuse. The archbishop has shown his personal commitment to survivors through a programme of listening events that runs throughout the year where anyone who wishes to speak with him about their experiences can. He is supported in this by the chair of the safeguarding subcommittee. Informal evaluation shows that these events have been very well received. Formal evaluation is to take place which will enable the archdiocese to reflect, learn and develop further this positive strategy.

5.1.3 The archdiocese position on safeguarding is shared through the archbishop's statement which is available to see in church buildings across the archdiocese as well as on the website. The results of the surveys and focus group discussions with the PSRs and the clergy demonstrated that this position was led by the archbishop. The safeguarding team has worked closely with the communications manager to ensure that the right messaging is shared in the right context with the diverse populations that live across the archdiocese. This is evidenced through the availability of resources for each of the parishes that reflect their needs. The use of these resources has been recently audited which showed a high level of compliance. The next step will be to evaluate the effectiveness of sharing these messages and this work is already underway with members of the safeguarding team visiting randomly chosen parishes to speak to parishioners about their understanding of the messages shared. The analysis of the outcomes of these visits will again inform future actions and messaging to the communities in the archdiocese.

5.1.4 A culture of safeguarding is promoted at the highest level with the archbishop and trustees all demonstrating their commitment to the vision set out for the archdiocese. This is achieved and evidenced through their scrutiny of the work of the safeguarding subcommittee, the safeguarding team and the annual safeguarding report. This culture is promoted through the safeguarding team by working to ensure that all staff, clergy and volunteers have access to training resources, policies and guidance that are consistent in their approach and reflect the safeguarding culture of the archdiocese. The archdiocese is newly merged and many of these policies and guidance documents have been updated to ensure standardisation. At inspection, some remain in draft form as they await ratification and implementation in full, however all demonstrated the intention of embedding the culture into everyday practice across the whole archdiocese.

5.1.5 The archbishop and senior curia and professional staff have faced the challenge of merging two dioceses over the past 12 months. This process has forced a review of the governance arrangements as two boards of Trustees are merged to create a new board. This process has considerable legal requirements which have been time consuming and have restricted the ability to formalise subcommittees to support the work of the Trustees. The merger was formalised in civil law on the 1 April 2025, with a newly formed board of Trustees and safeguarding subcommittee in place. There are terms of reference clearly laid out for the board of trustees and the members of the safeguarding subcommittee. Recruitment to the new board came from members of both previous boards of Trustees with some natural wastage as individuals chose to step down for personal reasons. There has not been a need to recruit new Trustees at time of the inspection. The trustees have met quarterly in line with expectations since their formation as well as, when necessary, holding extraordinary meetings. These meetings have formal minutes that show adherence with the expectations laid out in the terms of reference by way of agenda and decision-making.

5.1.6 The archdiocese has clearly defined roles and responsibilities in terms of safeguarding for all, including Trustees, safeguarding subcommittee members, safeguarding staff, professional services and curia staff. Evidence from the formal minutes of meetings held between these groups of people including Trustee board meetings, safeguarding subcommittee meetings, heads of departments meetings and interdepartmental meetings showed that there was an awareness of individual and collective responsibility for safeguarding governance. This awareness has been shown to extend into actions when required. One example of collective safeguarding responsibilities being actioned include the workings of the Team Around the Priest (TAP) initiative that brings all relevant staff together to plan the response to a safeguarding allegation being made against a priest or another serious event that affects a priest directly. Another is the collective action taken by the Trustees to report serious safeguarding events to the Charity Commission[4] and the Catholic Bishop's Conference National Tribunal Service[5].

5.1.7 The new safeguarding subcommittee came into effect in April 2025. Formalising the subcommittee was delayed until the creation of the new board of Trustees was completed so, at time of inspection, there had only been two subcommittee meetings held. The terms of reference for the safeguarding subcommittee are clearly laid out, and its membership includes individuals from both previously independent dioceses. The subcommittee membership is well balanced with professionals from education, health, lawyers, Cafcass[6], clergy, social services and the police amongst its membership, all with a significant amount of experience working in safeguarding. The head of safeguarding is looking to complete the membership by proposing the addition of a lay non-Catholic member. The subcommittee schedule going forward is to meet quarterly with two of these meetings taking place face-to-face. The subcommittee provides a report to the Trustees for their meeting, which the chair, a lay trustee with a professional background as a General Practitioner, attends. Time in the trustee meeting is allocated for the subcommittee chair to present safeguarding information. The safeguarding subcommittee has oversight of the safeguarding implementation plan and will be monitoring its progress going forward. At time of inspection and due to the merger, the safeguarding implementation plan had been revised, and a new action tracker has been developed to facilitate oversight. The safeguarding subcommittee is respected, and their work is promoted and supported by the archbishop, the Chief Operating Officer (COO) and senior clergy in the archdiocese.

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[4] The Charity Commission for England and Wales register and regulate charities in England and Wales to ensure that the public can support them with confidence. The Charity Commission - GOV.UK

[5] The purpose of the National Tribunal Service is to enhance impartiality, transparency and consistency in the application of canon law across its jurisdiction in penal cases National Tribunal Service (NTS) - Catholic Bishops' Conference

[6] Cafcass advises the family courts about the welfare of children and what is in their best interests Cafcass

5.1.8 The archdiocesan and diocesan safeguarding teams have been merged to create a new safeguarding team. This work had started prior to the formal merger of the archdiocese of Cardiff with the diocese of Menevia as the team from the archdiocese of Cardiff had stepped in to support the team from the diocese of Menevia following concerns raised in the CSSA baseline audits of 2023 and 2024. The newly merged safeguarding team set the template for merging other diocesan services and is considered by all involved to have been a success. The team is led by a head of safeguarding who is focused on strategy and the delivery of the safeguarding implementation plan. The head of safeguarding is supported by a deputy who is in the role of safeguarding coordinator. The team has one caseworker, an office manager, and an administrator. The team works very closely with the COO and other professional services in the archdiocesan offices as well as with senior clergy. The senior leadership in the safeguarding team are experienced safeguarding professionals and have ensured that the other members of their team are trained and supported to fulfil their roles. Results from the clergy and PSR surveys showed that they have a high profile in the archdiocese and have the support of the archbishop and other senior clergy who promote their work. The safeguarding resource extends to a full complement of volunteers in the roles of PSRs in all parishes across the archdiocese who are trained and supported by the safeguarding team.

5.1.9 The archdiocese has an organisational risk register which includes safeguarding risks. The archbishop, COO and head of safeguarding all recognise that this document was a work in progress which is to be expected following a merger. Risks that were associated with the merger will need to be removed and a revised risk register created for the merged archdiocese that reflects current risk. The risk register is managed by the COO and overseen by the Board of Trustees and is a standing agenda item for its meetings. At time of inspection there was no clear policy for the day-to-day management of risk including escalation, de-escalation and retiring risk.

5.1.10 The archdiocese is in the process of revising its policies for safeguarding through the development of a safeguarding handbook which will contain all relevant policies and guidelines for ensuring that there is a safe environment for all.

The document has been seen in draft form and covers all aspects of safe ministry, includes a code of conduct that incorporates the teachings and requirements of Caring Safely for Others[7] and clearly sets out the expectations for good safeguarding practice. This document is due for completion and publication in January 2026. In the intervening time, the archdiocese has been using existing pre-merger documentation from the Archdiocese of Cardiff that includes risk assessment documents, safeguarding plans and has been shown to continue to promote and use Caring Safely for Others since their baseline audit in 2023. Case audit data showed that some of these documents were not used consistently, including completing formal risk assessments prior to the development of safeguarding plans. All clergy spoken to were aware of Caring Safely for Others and were able to articulate the strategies used within their own parishes to maintain safety for all.

5.1.11 The archdiocesan safeguarding team is based in a purpose-built building in Cardiff which is separate from the curia offices although on the same site. This building was commissioned by the current archbishop with the specific intent to have a place where anyone could walk in and speak with the safeguarding team without having to enter church buildings. This has been shown to be a success with evidence of positive feedback from those who have used the building to meet with the safeguarding team. The building has specific quiet rooms for meetings that are welcoming and relaxed. The safeguarding team has a large area to cover and makes every effort to see parish priests and PSRs in person where they can. Individualised parish visits are conducted as need arises. In order to maintain personal contact with the priests and PSRs the safeguarding team has a programme of 'safeguarding cafes' where they set up a base within an area of the archdiocese usually on a Saturday and invite all the local parish priests and PSRs to come to meet with them to discuss any issues and to get help with safer recruitment work. Feedback from the PSR focus group demonstrates that these cafes are valued and help to integrate new PSRs into role. Details on how to contact

[7] Caring Safely for Others provides pastoral standards and safe conduct in ministry for clergy. [Caring-Safely-For-Others.pdf]

the safeguarding team are displayed in all church buildings and the team has a safeguarding page on the website with contact details and information on their services listed. PSRs reported the team to be accessible and helpful when they were contacted. The parish visits completed by the analysts also demonstrated that work was being undertaken to provide a safe environment for parishioners and for clergy with attention being paid to how confessions were managed and the use of volunteers to support the more vulnerable members of the congregation.

5.1.12 The archdiocese operates a duty of candour[8] and there is evidence of openness and transparency in the sharing of the decisions made and actions taken in regard to the management of recent high-profile safeguarding cases. The archdiocese is proactive in contacting external agencies, including the CSSA and the Charity Commission, to share information and to invite scrutiny. The archdiocese has a Confidentiality and Data Handling agreement in place and privacy notices are part of a package of information sent to parishes to be shared on public facing noticeboards.

Areas for development

5.1.13 The newly merged archdiocese has developed a robust governance framework for the management and oversight of safeguarding, and this has been in place since April 2025. As it is still in its infancy, there are a lot of supporting documents that have been created that require completion and sign off that will set the standards and expectations to which the newly merged archdiocese will work. The completion, sign off and distribution of these documents should be prioritised.

5.1.14 The work of the safeguarding subcommittee is at an early stage when it comes to the oversight of case management in the archdiocese. There are plans in place to introduce dip-testing reviews of case management, that have not been finalised or started. These will be completed by assigned members of the safeguarding subcommittee who will follow newly developed guidelines and report their findings

[8] The intention of the duty of candour legislation is to ensure that providers are open and transparent with people who use services. Duty of candour - GOV.UK

to the rest of the subcommittee members. Again, this should be a priority for the subcommittee.

5.1.15 The safeguarding team has established positive working relationships and a positive profile with the PSRs following the merger. There is still some work to do to secure the same collaborative working relationships with some members of the clergy in the new archdiocese as the dust settles on what has been a challenging transition for all in terms of establishing new ways of working.

5.1.16 A comprehensive review of the risk register for the newly formed archdiocese is recommended that will enable the archdiocese to draw out the risks that need to be monitored and mitigated and manage them separately from the issues which are also in the current risk register that can be actioned. The archdiocese might want to consider the introduction of an issues log as well as a risk register that can be reviewed and managed in the same way but will ensure clarity and avoid conflating the two distinctly different things.

Graded: Meeting Expectations

5.2 Standard 2 Communicating the Church's safeguarding message

Strengths

5.2.1 The archdiocese of Cardiff-Menevia has a comprehensive communication plan for safeguarding that is available on the archdiocesan website. The plan sets out the vision for the archdiocese in what should be communicated, the aim of communicating strong safeguarding messages across the whole of the archdiocese and the how of achieving this aim. The plan sets out a clear directive for parishes on how safeguarding messages will be shared and adapted to meet the needs of the local parishioners. Responsibilities are clearly defined for all within the document together with guidance on how these responsibilities should be met. The communication plan defines the key messages from the archbishop that include putting safeguarding at the centre of the collective mission, hearing the voice of the survivor, and promoting best practice with openness and honesty. At present there is no scheduled review of the communication plan and no expectation of formal reporting against its aims. This is recognised by the archdiocese as something that requires action. In addition to the communications plan, the archdiocese has created a crisis communication plan which outlines the steps to be taken in response to adverse publicity or a significant event or allegation that involves the archdiocese. This plan has been implemented in the last 12 months and has been shown to be very effective in managing communications with the media following a high-profile safeguarding case. This is regarded as notable practice by the analysts.

5.2.2 There is evidence from the management of significant cases that the archdiocese collaborates with and seeks external expertise when required. The archdiocese has established positive working relationships and lines of communication with the statutory authorities, survivor organisations such as Safe Spaces[9] and Loud Fence[10], as well as with external training providers, the Lucy Faithfull Foundation[11], that provide guidance, resources and expertise as needed. Internally, the safeguarding team has worked hard to strengthen communication between the different professional services within the archdiocese, proactively seeking regular meetings. An example of this improved communication is the development and implementation of the TAP initiative to manage serious incidents involving clergy. This initiative is yet to be formally evaluated but early informal evaluations show that it has been effective in improving communication.

5.2.3 Safeguarding messages are created by the safeguarding team in collaboration with the communication manager. These messages are then shared

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[9] Safe Spaces is a free and independent support service, providing a confidential, personal, and safe space for anyone who has been abused by someone in the Church or as a result of their relationship with the Church of England, the Catholic Church in England and Wales or the Church in Wales.

[10] LOUDfence is a visible display of support and solidarity with those affected by abuse. LOUDfence - Survivors Voices

[11] The Lucy Faithful Foundation work to prevent child sexual abuse by intervening with people at risk of causing harm. Lucy Faithfull Foundation - Preventing child sexual abuse

throughout the archdiocese through newsletters, the newly updated website and through the online platforms the archdiocese use to reach the public (Facebook and Instagram). The communication manager has a background in digital marketing, and this is used effectively to gather and analyse data about the demographics of the public that engage with the online platforms and the website. This enables the communication team to provide appropriate content to meet the needs of the individuals that visit. The next stage would be to review whether the content and messaging provided is effective in meeting its aims and objectives. The safeguarding team has started to review whether key messages are effective through visits to parish groups to gauge their knowledge on safeguarding through a face-to-face survey and discussions. The results of these will support the review and development of content. At present there is no evidence of involvement of external stakeholders including survivors, participating in the development of safeguarding messages and communications.

5.2.4 The archbishop leads on safeguarding messaging that is shared across the archdiocese. He is active in promoting his vision and expectations that people will be safe and respected in the Catholic church and recognises the importance of sharing this message by reaching out to those that have been harmed by the church. The archbishop's message is seen throughout the archdiocese in church buildings and is widely available on the archdiocesan website and online platforms. There is a consistency in approach to the messaging, and the communication manager and safeguarding team are working to make sure that there is standardised messaging in all areas of the archdiocese and organisation. Evaluation of this remains to be done formally. The analysts found consistent messaging from the church leadership at all interviews undertaken, through the PSR and clergy surveys and during parish visits.

5.2.5 Two visits to parishes were undertaken during this inspection. In both parishes physical safeguarding posters and noticeboards were displayed with contact details for the relevant PSR and Diocesan safeguarding team. All information was available in both English and Welsh. Safe Spaces[12] contact information was also on display which would enable survivors of abuse to access support directly without having to engage with the safeguarding team if they chose not to. One of the parish websites had a dedicated safeguarding section to facilitate effective reporting of safeguarding concerns either to the PSR or directly to the safeguarding team.

Areas for development

5.2.6 The merger has thrown up its own challenges in regard to standardising and the consistency of safeguarding messages and communication across the new archdiocese, and this is still a work in progress. The newly developed website will support this work and should be a priority for the safeguarding and communication team. Some content on the website in the policies area was seen not to be the finalised versions of documents and this needs to be addressed. Bringing in a formal sign-off process prior to publication on the website would prevent this.

5.2.7 The archdiocese should consider how it might bring in additional expertise and experiences when developing safeguarding content. Piloting and peer review of safeguarding messages are two methods that could be considered alongside inviting external stakeholders such as survivors, contacts at statutory agencies and specialist safeguarding organisations to contribute to the creation and review of safeguarding messages.

5.2.8 The safeguarding communication plan is managed by the safeguarding team and overseen by the safeguarding subcommittee. At time of inspection there was no mechanism in place to track or evaluate progress against the actions embedded in the plan nor was there a formal reporting process in place. This should be addressed so that there are clear oversight and scrutiny in place.

5.2.9 One of the parish websites did not have any safeguarding information or links to the safeguarding team on its site. The CSSA were told that there are plans to

[16] Safe Spaces England and Wales are a free and independent support service providing a confidential, personal and safe space for anyone who has been abused by someone in the Church, or as a result of their relationship with the Church of England, the Catholic Church in England and Wales or the Church in Wales. [Home - Safe Spaces England and Wales]

update this parish website with IT support from the archdiocese in the near future. The archdiocese needs to develop a system for reviewing all parish websites to ensure that they conform with the requirements set out in the communication plan.

Graded: Meeting Expectations

5.3 Standard 3 Engaging with and caring for those who report having been harmed

Strengths

5.3.1 All members of the archdiocesan safeguarding team have undertaken trauma-informed training which has provided them with the skills they need to respond to anyone reporting abuse in a sensitive and appropriate way. This training has been extended to other staff in the archdiocesan offices who may be the first point of contact for people reaching out to the archdiocese to report harm. The training has also been completed by members of the safeguarding subcommittee and senior clergy including the archbishop. This breadth of training was considered by the analysts to be best practice. Evidence from the case audits and the public call out indicates that the initial responses from the safeguarding team had been empathetic, sensitive and professional.

5.3.2 The archdiocese has a Victims Charter in development that provides guidance on the services and support that can be offered to those who have been harmed by the church. At present issues are managed on a case-by-case basis, primarily by the safeguarding coordinator, but there is no formal process in place that is followed by the safeguarding team or shared with the survivor. The safeguarding coordinator will discuss options with the survivor and evidence demonstrates that survivors are signposted to external organisations that can provide support and advocacy such as Safe Spaces. Case work shows that counselling and other practical support has been provided by the archdiocese for survivors whose physical and mental health has been affected by their experiences. Decisions about funding for support are made by the safeguarding team, backed by the subcommittee, in liaison with the COO. There is no evidence that these interventions have been evaluated for effectiveness with survivors. Once the Victims Charter has been completed, published and is available via the archdiocesan website, the formal processes will be used, and this will include evaluation of their impact.

5.3.3 The archdiocesan website safeguarding section includes the contact details for several external safeguarding organisations that can be accessed by members of the public who have experienced harm in the church. The safeguarding team has established working relationships with these organisations and casework demonstrated collaboration between them. At the previous baseline audit of the Diocese of Menevia it was recommended that the safeguarding team build positive working relationships with the statutory authorities. Since the merger of the safeguarding teams the whole of the newly formed archdiocese now benefits from the established relationships that were present in the Archdiocese of Cardiff.

5.3.4 Learning from the disclosures made by survivors is achieved through informal one-to-one discussions and this was described as having been extremely helpful. The Victims Charter is an example of how this feedback has informed the work to improve safeguarding practice. There is no formal feedback process in place to gather information as to survivors' perceptions of their dealings with the safeguarding team. Case audits showed that there were sometimes delays in updating and contacting the survivor and in one instance a follow up was promised to a survivor and had not been fulfilled more than two months after the recorded entry citing it as an action. This was supported by some of the feedback from the public call out for information that showed that after the initial very positive experience the survivors had had with the safeguarding team that follow up was inconsistent and there were delays in getting updates on their individual cases.

5.3.5 The archbishop, the Trustees and the safeguarding subcommittee all cite the response and care of survivors as being their highest priority. They are very supportive of the work the safeguarding team are doing in this field and have participated in trauma-informed and restorative action training to enable them to understand the context in which survivor support is required and should be offered (see paragraph 5.7.5 below). They are proactive in supporting the LOUDfence annual event which last took place in Swansea in October 2024, and the chair of the safeguarding subcommittee has joined the archbishop in meetings with survivors to listen to their experiences. In addition, the archdiocese has assigned two priests to work with survivors who wish to reconnect with their faith. The safeguarding team are currently in the process of recruiting a female member of religious to enable those who wish to speak to a female for spiritual support and guidance can do so. The archbishop has a programme of listening events across the year where he makes himself available to speak with survivors about their experiences. A set of guidelines have been created that explain the parameters of these meetings to survivors so that their expectations are managed. There has been very positive feedback from those who have met with the archbishop.

Areas for development

5.3.6 The archdiocese has been shown to respond well to survivors and those reporting harm in the first instance. It is important that this contact is maintained and managed in line with formal guidelines set out in the Victims Charter that ensure regular updates and communications at set points during an investigation and case management as well as a method for seeking feedback. The archdiocese would benefit from the completion of this document to include this and ratification from the safeguarding subcommittee. This document will then when published, provide standards against which survivor support can be audited and improvements monitored.

5.3.7 There is currently no formal process by which feedback is gathered from survivors. The archdiocesan safeguarding team has a generalised survey for those who contact the service but would benefit from a more bespoke survey to gather feedback on the outcomes of the more complex interventions that are often required for survivors. Feedback and check ins with those in receipt of external services such as counselling should be introduced to ensure that the provision is meeting the needs and expectations of the individual survivor.

5.3.8 The archdiocese should consider reviewing their experiences with working with external organisations and seek feedback from these organisations to identify any areas for development.

Graded: Meeting Expectations

5.4 Standard 4 Effective management of allegations and concerns

Strengths

5.4.1 The newly merged archdiocese has used the opportunity of the merger to review and update policies and procedures, and this includes the 'Managing and responding to safeguarding allegations and concerns' policy. In the intervening time the previous policy of the archdiocese of Cardiff is in use. This policy sets out the expectations of actions to be taken on the receipt of a safeguarding concern or allegation. In order to understand the effectiveness of this policy in practice the analysts reviewed 20% of the caseload from the past 12 months which amounted to 19 individual cases. These cases ranged from low-level concerns to serious incidents and included past case reviews, DBS blemishes, boundary issues and the management of those wishing to practice their faith who were considered to be a risk for others. All were chosen as a representative sample of the work undertaken by the safeguarding team in terms of type and range of concerns they receive. The new policy is currently in draft form and is awaiting completion once learning from a recent case has been added. Once completed this will be published, shared, trained to and evaluated. In addition to the new policy, a process has been developed for quarterly oversight of randomly selected cases by allocated members of the safeguarding subcommittee who will review this and report their findings and recommendations to the subcommittee when they meet.

5.4.2 Concerns and allegations reported to the safeguarding team are now fully managed on My Concern case management system. Prior to the merger the archdiocese of Cardiff used the PAMIS system and the Diocese of Menevia did not use an electronic case management system. This has resulted in a significant amount of work for the team over the past two years as it digitalises and uploads paper files. There were issues with the diocese of Menevia processes for case management at a pilot baseline audit in March 2023 and the full diocesan re-audit completed in 2024 by the CSSA showed only minimal improvement. By merging with the archdiocese of Cardiff, the safeguarding team had access to the expertise and resources they needed to improve this situation, and this inspection found that a significant amount of work has resulted in all files having been reviewed and digitalised, work that has included reviews of and actions requiring completion on some cases. The only remaining piece of work is to sort through the remaining papers that have not been allocated to uploaded cases. This will be undertaken in January 2026 and will bring to an end this extensive and time-consuming work. The following feedback on the management of the case audits needs to be seen in this context in that improvements in the implementation of processes found at both previous baseline audits have not yet been possible to embed in practice so standards are variable and there remains work to be done to improve case management.

5.4.3 The archdiocese has a safeguarding coordinator whose role it is to triage and allocate new safeguarding cases and concerns. New safeguarding allegations against a member of the clergy are managed by the head of safeguarding and others are currently shared between the safeguarding coordinator and the safeguarding caseworker. The safeguarding coordinator leads on work with survivors, and the safeguarding caseworker focuses on the management of safeguarding plans and low-level concerns. All staff are experienced in the management of safeguarding cases and casework evidence showed that they were mindful of not impeding or compromising the investigations of any statutory agencies involved. The cases reviewed involving victims had received a timely and appropriate response from the safeguarding team in the initial phase of case management. Responses to those reporting harm was seen to be professional, empathetic and clearly set out the expectations for the individual in terms of what support could be offered and the archdiocesan policy of reporting all potentially criminal acts to the statutory authorities, albeit anonymously in those instances where an adult has not given consent to share. The response to those triaged as low-level concerns was inconsistent and although most were responded to in a timely manner, there were some where delays were found in the timing and sufficiency of the initial response.

5.4.4 The archdiocese has had three significant safeguarding cases in the past 12 months that have required safeguarding subcommittee and Trustees oversight. Two of these cases have been referred to the National Tribunal Service and are in this process at time of inspection. All three cases were appropriately referred to the Charity Commission and the reports seen from them showed that the Charity Commission were content that all appropriate actions had been completed to the required standard and that the archdiocese were managing the cases in line with their expectations. The internal processes for referral to the Charity Commission and National Tribunal Service are robust and have been used effectively and appropriately in the past 12 months. All records pertaining to this for these individual cases were seen within the case files.

5.4.5 The archdiocese has created a low-level concerns policy that has been ratified, shared and training has taken place to enable those in the parishes to understand the value of reporting what can seem like minor concerns. The case audits showed that this was being used to identify and record areas of concern and these were managed proactively either by the safeguarding team or were referred to the Vicars General for follow-up if they were deemed to be conduct issues. The PSRs spoken to were confident that they would know how and who to report a safeguarding concern to and their role in this. Clergy spoken to were in general aware of the processes to be followed, however one case audit showed that a priest had not followed the process and had failed to report a concern. This had been swiftly recognised and managed by the safeguarding team. Once the new 'Managing and responding to safeguarding concerns' policy has been completed, ratified and shared, it will offer the safeguarding team the opportunity to refresh and remind all of their responsibilities through training.

Areas for development

5.4.6 The standards seen in case recording were inconsistent across the case audits reviewed. It is accepted that this could be due in part to the complexities encountered during the merger of the records and the digitalisation of the records to My Concern, as already noted in 5.4.2. In complex cases the completion and management of the case records was as expected. In other cases, the records lacked the detail required to be able to understand how analysis had led to decision-making and subsequent actions. The chronology in some cases was not in the correct order which made it difficult for the analysts to understand the rationale behind the actions taken and their outcomes. It was clear from the records that conversations and contacts had been made with both external agencies and internal staff but there were no records of the contents and outcomes of these discussions included. The case files lacked any meaningful case oversight and supervision from the head of safeguarding or safeguarding coordinator as, although this was recorded as having taken place, there were no additional details provided that showed the outcomes of discussions and any actions that might have come from them. The team holds weekly case management discussions but again there were no record of the outcomes of these discussions in the individual case records. This incompleteness of records and poor case file quality was identified at the previous pilot and subsequent case audit review at full inspection for the diocese of Menevia and improving this needs to be a priority for the safeguarding team. Currently the archdiocese would be vulnerable if records required scrutiny by external parties following a subject access request for example, or if members of the safeguarding team needed to review the actions taken in the future.

5.4.7 Information from survivors from the public call out and from the case records showed that at times there were significant gaps between contact from the safeguarding team with some survivors reporting to the analysts that, after a very promising start, contact with the safeguarding team was often very sporadic and left them feeling ‘abandoned’ and ‘out of the loop’. By standardising the process for contacting and updating survivors, expectations will be clear and can be managed. Any process involving survivors will need a degree of flexibility but any decision to opt out of being contacted should be discussed and noted in the records to provide an audit trail of activity and a rationale for gaps in contacts.

5.4.8 Although learning from case work was recorded in some of the case records audited, it was unclear what if any outcomes or changes in practice were taken from this. In some case records the learning was the self-reflection of the caseworker. The archdiocese would benefit from reviewing their work in this area and the recommendation of the previous CSSA baseline audit of the Archdiocese of Cardiff in the development of 'a local process to extract and disseminate learning from concerns and allegations'. It is noted that a self-audit tool has been developed that will enable this process to begin.

Graded: Requires Attention

5.5 Standard 5 Management and support of subjects of allegations and concerns (respondents)

Strengths

5.5.1 The archdiocese has developed and implemented an initiative called Team Around the Priest (TAP), used to manage the initial actions following an allegation or in the instance of a serious issue affecting a priest. This initiative brings together the heads of departments of education, buildings and finance, the COO, and representation from the Vicars General for a meeting which is chaired by the safeguarding coordinator. These meetings take place within 24 hours of an event or allegation and cover all aspects of the priest's ministerial responsibilities as well as their accommodation, financial allowance and support. At the time of inspection this initiative had been used on three occasions and had been found to be a successful way of working collaboratively and ensuring that all aspects of the priests' functions had been addressed and lessons were identified from conversations that might otherwise not have been had. There was however little awareness of the TAP initiative in the archdiocese amongst the clergy, and this should be recognised and addressed to inform and reassure them that they would be supported if they were the subject of an allegation.

5.5.2 The need to appoint a person to provide spiritual, practical and emotional support to a respondent is recognised in the draft policy on the management of allegations. The reviewed case audits showed that the respondent can nominate a support person and discussions with a Vicar General confirmed that this support person is able to act as an advocate as required. One case audit demonstrated excellent practice by the diocese in supporting a respondent. Practical and pastoral matters were considered and addressed by the safeguarding team, senior clergy and latterly, as the process was still in its infancy, a Team Around the Priest meeting.

5.5.3 The archdiocese has also recognised the need to provide pastoral support for the clergy as a result of learning from a recent safeguarding case in which one of the contributory factors was identified as isolation. It is currently looking to appoint lay persons to provide support in general day-to-day life for the clergy in terms of wellbeing. A Clergy Welfare Board is in place and is driving this work. At the time of audit, the terms of reference for this role had been developed and the archdiocese were actively recruiting, although the response to this had been muted. The archdiocese has established and experienced personnel in place for the clergy to be directed to for canon law advice, as required. The Judicial Vicar plays a pivotal role in this and has been directly involved in three recent safeguarding allegations against members of the clergy.

5.5.4 The archdiocesan safeguarding team has experienced leadership and a caseworker who are all able to complete risk assessments. The recently appointed caseworker takes the lead on these. Case audit reviews however showed several safeguarding plans in place that were not accompanied by a completed risk assessment. In one instance an organisational risk assessment was included from an NHS mental health team, but this was not supplemented with a church attendance specific risk assessment that assessed the risks for the priest and congregation. Safeguarding plans were seen to be used appropriately and there were steps in place to monitor and review these.

5.5.5 The archdiocese has an established data handling and confidentiality agreement in place to ensure that all relevant information is protected in line with the Data Protection Act 2018[13]. Documents shared were seen to be redacted to ensure confidentiality and correspondences seen in the case records and emails were also managed in line with the expectations set out in the archdiocesan policy.

Areas for development

5.5.6 There are significant areas for development in terms of the management and support of respondents to allegations. The TAP initiative has been shown from a Curia perspective to facilitate the immediate practical archdiocesan response to an allegation against or significant event involving a member of the clergy, however there are gaps when it comes to providing support for the person implicated. Consideration needs to be given as to how individualised wellbeing support for the respondent can be either brought into this meeting or facilitated through it so that it is not forgotten. For example, developing a network of trained priests who can act as support persons/ advocates for respondents would allow the archdiocese to allocate someone mutually acceptable to the respondent to attend these meetings and act as a conduit for information sharing with them. Work also needs to be completed to ensure that all clergy are aware of the existence of this initiative.

5.5.7 The archdiocese has a new draft policy in place for the management of an allegation that sets out the process to be followed and provides guidance on the information to be shared with a respondent and the actions that will be taken in the initial stages of managing the allegation. This document is awaiting the addition of learning from recent safeguarding allegations before it is finalised, ratified and shared within the archdiocese. This should be a priority for the archdiocese as it has left a void of information for the clergy into which uncertainty and concern have gained a foothold. Consideration should be given to developing an information pack for respondents as part of the roll out of the management of allegations

[13] Regulates the processing of information relating to individuals, sets out the Information Commissioner's functions and sets out a direct marketing code of practice Data Protection Act 2018

policy. In addition, work needs to be done to review and adapt how messages are shared with clergy who are colleagues of the respondent but not directly involved in the event, to provide reassurance without compromising the confidentiality of any investigations being undertaken. The focus group, clergy survey and individual clergy feedback showed that there was a high level of concern amongst a few of how their fellow clergy were supported and treated during these processes.

5.5.8 The analysts used focus groups, surveys, parish visits and interviews with individual priests to gather evidence on the current management and support of allegations. The response rate from the surveys was low and the following should be read within this context. Some of those spoken to had been the subject of low-level concerns and others had seen the impact of allegations made against colleagues. The overriding feeling was one of uncertainty and a lack of trust that their wellbeing would be provided for and that they would be supported were they to become the subject of an allegation. Communication between a number of the clergy in the archdiocese and the safeguarding team has been negatively affected by a variety of issues and this needs to be addressed so that both parties can move forward feeling mutually respected and supported in their roles. Consideration should be given as to how this might be achieved, potentially with input from external facilitators. The safeguarding team and clergy need to work together to consider strategies that would prevent a 'blame culture' from taking a foothold and promoting a 'just culture' as an alternative. Evidence from other organisations and sectors shows that by doing so they can avoid the risk of underreporting due to a fear of blame or recriminations and instead promote a safe space for open discussion and learning[14].

5.5.9 There is currently no specific training provided for clergy that adopt the role as a supporter, and this is something that should be considered. There is recognition by the Vicar General interviewed that learning from the impact of extended investigations is still going on and the effect can be significant. The archdiocese, to date, has not sought formal feedback on whether the support currently provided is

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[14] [Creating a Just Culture, Moving Away from a Blame Culture]

adequate or effective for the priests affected and this would help to inform the development of support services going forward.

5.5.10 The use of risk assessments needs to be consistent as part of the assessment prior to the instigation of safeguarding plans. These should be scrutinised and signed off by the senior leadership of the safeguarding team and should be a dynamic document that is periodically reviewed as circumstances change to inform alterations to the safeguarding plans. The use of external risk assessment from partner organisations should only be as an adjunct to the completion of a specific church led risk assessment to ensure that consideration has been given to the safety of the congregation and parish priest.

Graded: Requires Attention

5.6 Standard 6 Robust human resource management

Strengths

5.6.1 One of the recommendations from the baseline audits of both the archdiocese of Cardiff and the diocese of Menevia was the requirement for the safeguarding team to address the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)[15] checks backlog and roll out a more effective digital renewal system. Significant progress has been made with the backlog being reduced by 83% and plans and timelines in place to eliminate this entirely. Moreover all clergy are in possession of a current DBS certificate. The office manager and DBS administrator have a system in place that enables current DBS completion to be managed in a timely and effective way whilst at the same time reducing the backlog, which at the time of merger was in excess of 750 checks. The office manager met with the diocesan team at Plymouth to learn about its safer recruitment systems. The systems were adapted in the archdiocese of Cardiff-Menevia to reflect the success of the Plymouth methodology. The

[15] The Disclosure and Barring Service processes and issues criminal record checks on individuals applying for employment or a voluntary role for employers.[Disclosure and Barring Service - GOV.UK]

Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency

archdiocese uses the Safesys element of PAMIS to record DBS status, references and checks required. This system has been in place for six months and is shown to be very effective. The two independent Safesys databases pre-merger have now been merged into one. At the time of inspection this process had only happened seven days previously and therefore the DBS administrator was in the process of cleansing any duplicate records and ironing out any inconsistencies from the two previous databases.

5.6.2 The archdiocese has a safer recruitment policy and processes in place. These include a staff handbook which sets out the expectations for those employed by the archdiocese in paid roles as well as those in voluntary roles. Documents that support safer recruitment and seen as evidence included application forms, reference requests, risk assessments following a blemished DBS and a new document on the checks required for those wishing to play the church organ. A safer recruitment checklist has been created that allows for those at parish level involved in the recruitment of staff and volunteers to ensure that the policy has been followed correctly. Guidance and advice on safer recruitment is available from the office manager and the DBS administrator. Blemished DBSs are managed in line with policy as is evidenced within the case audit review.

5.6.3 Safer recruitment is supported by the provision of the previously mentioned safeguarding cafes. There is a programme of these events in place that takes the safeguarding team, including the office manager and DBS administrator, across the whole archdiocese. Events are held on a Saturday and the safeguarding team set up their safeguarding café in a building in the centre of a specific area of the archdiocese. PSRs, priests and volunteers are invited to come and meet the team, who are there to offer safeguarding advice as well as support the PSRs with safer recruitment processes including the management of DBSs in their parish. The team have received excellent feedback from these events which continue to be well attended. Going forward, the safeguarding cafes will also include members of teams from other professional services within the archdiocese including the communications manager and the head of buildings. parish lists are sent to PSRs on a quarterly basis to ask them to update their list of volunteers to ensure that accurate records are held and vetting checks can be made on the correct individuals. Both parishes that were visited knew how many DBS eligible volunteers they had and all were within the expected three-year recheck period.

5.6.4 The recruitment and management of overseas clergy has been a challenge for the archdiocese in terms of inheriting a backlog of DBS and safer recruitment checks from the diocese of Menevia as part of the merger. This backlog has been addressed and at the time of inspection there were no outstanding DBS checks needed for overseas priests in the archdiocese. The office manager is responsible for the issuing of celebrets on behalf of the archbishop and will not issue these without confirmation that the priest has a current DBS check, a letter of suitability and has completed their safeguarding training. This is the case for all priests with celebrets being withheld until these strict criteria have been met.

5.6.5 The archdiocese has a single complaints policy that is used for all complaints and concerns. This is supported by a whistleblowing policy which has been extended to include clergy and volunteers. The complaints are overseen and managed by the head of HR who assigns them to the relevant person to investigate and respond depending on their origin. Evidence showed that complaints received that might have a safeguarding connection were shared with and discussed with the safeguarding team to ensure that any issues were dealt with. The complaints policy is explicit about the process and the timelines to which certain actions will take place. It is also clear that there is a process by which findings can be challenged within the archdiocese. It is not explicit that unresolved safeguarding complaints can be taken to the CSSA following the exhaustion of archdiocesan processes and this should be included in the policy. Complaints are shared with the Trustees when it is deemed that their oversight and involvement is required. No complaints have reached this stage within the past 12 months, and the whistleblowing policy has not been used in the past 12 months.

5.6.6 Safer recruitment data is shared with the safeguarding subcommittee and the Trustees by way of reporting against a suite of KPIs. These were developed following the previous baseline audits and have been refined to meet the needs of the newly merged archdiocese. The KPIs are reviewed quarterly at the safeguarding subcommittee and should be used to inform priorities and the newly revised safeguarding implementation plan. An annual report to the Trustees gives a summary of the KPIs for the year and is provided at the end of each calendar year.

Areas for development

5.6.7 The safeguarding cafes have done a great deal to clarify and simplify the safer recruitment processes for PSRs and the support from the safeguarding team in particular the office manager and DBS administrator has been very well received. There is still some confusion amongst the clergy on the need for basic or enhanced DBS checks and this should be addressed to avoid individuals not being DBS checked when required. The Safesys system is working well in managing the currency of those with DBS checks and its effectiveness should be evaluated once it has been used consistently for 12 months to identify any gaps in the process.

5.6.8 The whistleblowing policy, although in place was not seen to be widely known about. The archdiocese should consider sharing the policy at the next training session to ensure that everyone is aware of its purpose and can access it if required.

5.6.9 Evidence showed that the KPIs for safer recruitment were shared with, scrutinised and reported up to the Trustees by the safeguarding subcommittee. As yet it is unclear whether these have impacted the priorities of the newly revised safeguarding implementation plan as the minutes do not demonstrate any discussion following their reporting. More challenge and discussion would demonstrate better oversight and a purpose and an outcome from gathering in this data.

Graded: Exceeding Expectations

5.7 Standard 7 Training and support for safeguarding

Strengths

5.7.1 A recommendation from the baseline audits of both the archdiocese of Cardiff and the diocese of Menevia was for a training database to be created to monitor compliance with national and local training provisions and expectations. This database is now in place and at the time of the inspection all clergy had completed their mandatory annual safeguarding training. There is at this time no such database for the recording of PSR and volunteer training and this should be rectified going forward to ensure training compliance is monitored robustly for all groups. Attendance at training is mandatory for clergy and those who do not attend their annual safeguarding training will not receive their celebret. The archbishop has a zero-tolerance approach to non-attendance at safeguarding training. Mop up sessions are offered and non-attendance at these has resulted in an email from the archbishop and the withdrawal of the celebret until training was completed. Barriers to attendance have not been evaluated and these should be considered going forward. Training attendance is a KPI, reported on and overseen by the safeguarding subcommittee and reported in the annual safeguarding report to the Trustees.

5.7.2 The safeguarding coordinator is the archdiocesan safeguarding training lead and is responsible for delivering local training and the annual mandatory training for the clergy and PSRs. All clergy and PSRs are expected to have completed basic online safeguarding training and to attend annual face to face training with the safeguarding team. Other volunteers are signposted to the appropriate level of online safeguarding training required for them in their role. In addition, the safeguarding coordinator has proactively sought out and engaged with external training providers to enable access to specialised training for staff and clergy including trauma-informed training, child abuse awareness and restorative action. This additional training needs to be added to the current database to provide a list of those with additional training who may be able to act as an additional resource for the safeguarding team and share the benefit and value of additional training with others. Training is provided face-to face in several locations across the archdiocese that takes into account its large geographical area and the challenges this creates in terms of accessibility. Training is advertised through the parish newsletters and through Ad Clerum[16] and is promoted by the archbishop and senior clergy. The archbishop attends the clergy training sessions personally to further his support for this.

5.7.3 Clergy safeguarding knowledge and skills were evaluated with a one-off survey to identify areas of need in terms of training. This data was used in addition to training needs identified as lessons learned from safeguarding cases and learning requirements for new policies to develop the learning programme for the past year. To this end, training on the identification of low-level concerns and Prevent[17] training was provided to all clergy and PSRs during 2025, another example of notable practice. There was no formal training needs analysis for clergy, PSRs and volunteers in place at time of inspection and this together with a training plan for 2026 will need to be developed and should be done so using the same strategy as that seen above

5.7.4 Overseas priests are required to complete safeguarding training before being transferred to a parish to begin their ministry. The archdiocese has begun work to formalise the training and induction for overseas priests, which was a recommendation from the previous baseline audit, following learning from low-level concerns and an awareness of the challenges faced by overseas priests working within a very different culture from the one they are used to. The archdiocese has set up a presbytery under the oversight of the Chancellor, who is an experienced priest from overseas, to provide a base for priests during their induction to the archdiocese. Overseas priests will remain in the house for the first six months of their time in the archdiocese during which they will complete their safeguarding training along with other training that will support their enculturation into working in Cardiff-Menevia. Following this their induction will continue for a further six months as they work alongside an experienced parish priest as an

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[16] An *'ad clerum'* (literally meaning 'to the clergy') is a letter or announcement primarily addressed to ordained ministers in the diocese but are usually available for all to read.

[17] Prevent is one part of the government's overall counter-terrorism strategy; the aim of Prevent is to tackle the ideological causes of terrorism. intervene early to support people susceptible to radicalisation and enable people who have already engaged in terrorism to disengage and rehabilitate. [Prevent duty training - GOV.UK]

assistant priest. This formal induction programme is yet to be piloted and will be started when the next cohort of overseas priests are recruited. It will require evaluation to ensure that it meets the needs identified and could provide a safe and effective process for the enculturation of overseas priests within the Catholic church in England and Wales as a whole.

5.7.5 The archbishop, Trustees and members of the safeguarding subcommittee demonstrate their support for training through proactive oversight and agreement of resources to facilitate additional training from external providers together with leading through example by their attendance at safeguarding training. All have undertaken trauma-informed training, and many have also participated in the recent restorative circle training. The archbishop has committed to further discussions on the rolling out of the restorative action training across the archdiocese which will be used to support both individual survivors as well as communities affected by safeguarding allegations.[18]

Areas for development

5.7.6 A training needs analysis for all should be developed to identify the requirement for PSRs and volunteers as well as those for the clergy. This could then be used alongside other identifiers to plan a training strategy for the longer term. The archdiocese should consider how feedback following all forms of training, including that provided by external organisations, can be more formally evaluated for effectiveness and used to inform future training provision. At time of inspection post training forms were used for gathering feedback for mandatory training but there was no evidence of analysis and learning from these.

5.7.7 More formal recording of the training undertaken by PSRs and other volunteers should be introduced so that the Trustees and members of the safeguarding subcommittee can be assured that those who require training are able to access and complete it. Training KPIs should include the training data for those in positions of responsibility including PSRs and archdiocesan staff whose roles require

[18] Wales Restorative Approaches Partnership training provide training to organisations which aims to reduce unhealthy conflicts and promote more honest and open conversations Training

safeguarding training. The safeguarding subcommittee should drive this agenda forward and ensure that they scrutinise training data in the same way as they scrutinise other aspects of safeguarding practice.

5.7.8 Parish visits demonstrated that additional clarity may be needed for PSRs around what safeguarding training is expected from them and for volunteers in the parishes.

Graded: Exceeding Expectations

5.8 Standard 8 Quality assurance and continuous improvement

Strengths

5.8.1 There is evidence cited throughout this report that demonstrates that the archdiocese has acted on some of the recommendations made from the previous CSSA baseline audits for both individual pre-merger dioceses with positive effects. It needs to be recognised that since the previous baseline audits and the re-audit of the diocese of Menevia that there has been a very significant change in the formal merger into one archdiocese of Cardiff-Menevia. This has brought substantial change that has required efforts and focus to be on joining two autonomous entities into one, so it is understandable that some of the recommendations from CSSA audits have not been addressed or are in their infancy. To expect otherwise would be unrealistic. The diocese of Menevia was found to be below basic at previous audits in many areas. By merging with the archdiocese of Cardiff, safeguarding systems, processes and policies that had been lacking have been put in place across the entire archdiocese which has provided stability and a platform on which to build. That journey of continuous improvement and implementation of past recommendations will form the basis of the work for the archdiocese for the coming period.

5.8.2 Prior to the merger, the archdiocese of Cardiff had provided the CSSA with an annual internal self-assessment against the recommendations of the previous baseline audit that demonstrated a recognition of the actions required and progress against them. The merger has put much of this work on hold as the focus of the safeguarding team has been on rectifying those areas of the safeguarding work in Menevia that had been below basic standard and presented the greatest risk. It should be noted that one of the effects of merging two teams and systems, is the risk that although the overall grading of some standards will be affected positively, others will be affected negatively. Positives seen in this inspection include the digitalisation and introduction of an electronic case management system, the review of overarching policies and procedures for the whole archdiocese, the standardisation of expectations in terms of communication and training and the strengthening of the DBS process that has led to effective management of the DBS backlog. Other areas remain unresolved and these include the development of standards for record keeping in case management, the creation of a system by which learning from casework can be extracted and disseminated and the development of a training needs analysis as part of the training strategy.

5.8.3 The archdiocesan safeguarding team has developed new strategies and policies with the aim of improving the quality and effectiveness of the service they provide. At time of inspection many of these new developments were still either in draft format in terms of documentation or had only been trialled on a few occasions. The new policies including the Safeguarding Handbook, the Victims Charter and the Management of allegations and concerns policies that remain in draft form should be finalised and shared as a matter of priority as these will provide the guidance needed to improve practice against the eight national safeguarding standards.

5.8.4 The most recent safeguarding implementation plan was developed for the period 2024-2027 following the previous baseline audit of the archdiocese of Cardiff. There was no such equivalent in the diocese of Menevia. The progression and oversight of this document had to put on hold whilst the process of the merger was undertaken, and urgent work was completed to ensure that standards for safer recruitment and a review of historical and current casework was completed. At the time of the inspection a revised version of the safeguarding implementation plan had been created alongside a tracker that will be used to monitor progress against the allocated actions. This will be implemented in January 2026, and the safeguarding subcommittee will resume its monitoring of the plan at its quarterly meetings. The revised safeguarding implementation plan is built around self-identified areas for improvement and will also reflect learning from this CSSA inspection. The head of safeguarding will continue to produce an annual safeguarding report which once ratified by the safeguarding subcommittee is presented to the Trustees and shared with the public via the website. The 2024 report demonstrated analysis and learning from the previous year's data and included actions taken and actions to be taken during 2025. The 2025 report will be completed at the end of 2025 and will be presented to the safeguarding subcommittee at their first quarterly meeting of 2026.

Areas for Development

5.8.5 The archdiocese does not appear to follow any particular quality improvement model which would enable them to: analyse and evidence why a change/ development is required in the first place, to plan the change, to implement the change, and then to evaluate the change in a continuous loop of improvement. Because of this, although learning is cited as a driving force behind a development there is no baseline evidence in place against which to evaluate the value and impact of the development that have been made.

5.8.6 The archdiocese should ensure that it reflects on the outstanding recommendations made in the previous CSSA audit reports alongside those from this inspection of the newly merged archdiocese to ensure that all previous recommendations have been included in the safeguarding implementation plan. It is vital that the policies and guidance that support those actions required to maintain safe levels of practice are completed as a matter of priority and shared with all stakeholders within the archdiocese.

Graded: Meeting Expectations

6. Recommendations

To support improvement, the following recommendations are made:

Within 3 months

- The archdiocese should complete, ratify, distribute and implement those policies that remain in draft form that will clearly set out the updated standardised management of safeguarding practices. These are the Safeguarding Handbook, the Victims Charter and the guidance for the Management of allegations and safeguarding concerns.
- The archdiocese should reflect on how it can improve communication and relationships with those members of the clergy who currently report feeling unsupported and disenfranchised regarding safeguarding. Consideration could be given to using an outside facilitator to support this work.
- The archdiocese must urgently review their case management processes and develop standards for record keeping that ensure that case files are managed in line with good practice. This should include the need for internal risk assessments to be completed and recorded.

Within 6 months

- The planned case management oversight process developed by the safeguarding team for members of the safeguarding subcommittee should be initiated. Their oversight and recommendations will support the required improvements in this area.
- The development of a standardised process and timelines for contacting all those involved in safeguarding cases to ensure that survivors, respondents and other stakeholders are kept informed on the progression of the case.
- Ensure that all information on the website is current and has been uploaded only after a formal sign off process has been followed. This

should include a review of the information on individual parish websites to ensure standardisation.

- Complete a comprehensive review of the risk management process and risk register to ensure that all issues are removed and that there is a process in place for the escalation of risk from parish level to archdiocese level.
- Develop feedback mechanisms for all aspects of safeguarding practice to include training, people subject to safeguarding cases and the experiences of external agencies and stakeholders that work with the safeguarding team. These mechanisms should include the extraction and dissemination of learning.
- Development of the current processes for the support of clergy respondents who are subject to allegations to ensure that their personal as well as professional needs are considered and met.
- Review and development of more robust methods for the recording of training for PSRs and volunteers so that it aligns with the recording of clergy training. The completion of a training needs analysis for PSRs and volunteers should be prioritised as part of this work.
- Develop a methodology for reviewing the communication plan to ensure that progress is being made. Creation of a formal reporting process and oversight for the communication plan should be included.

Within 12 months

- Formally review the outcomes of the newly developed safeguarding implementation plan to ensure that progress is being made against the aspirations set out within it.
- Formally review the communication plan and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies implemented over the previous twelve months.
- Review the progress made on the recommendations made by the CSSA against the Level 3 diocesan maturity matrix over the twelve months since inspection and evaluate the effectiveness of the actions taken.

7. Arrangements for follow-up

7.1 In line with an overall rating of Meeting Expectations, the earliest potential date of re-inspection of the archdiocese of Cardiff-Menevia is in two years. In the intervening period there will be check in meetings every six months and the archdiocese will be asked to complete an annual self-assessment. If the CSSA becomes aware of a significant safeguarding concern or allegation before the anticipated next inspection, then an earlier inspection will be required.

8. Appendix

Evidence Provided

1. Ad Clerum
2. Minutes from Safeguarding Subcommittee
3. Minutes from Trustees meetings
4. Minutes from Health and Safety meetings
5. Listening exercise poster
6. Procedural guidance for reading case files
7. Safeguarding roles and responsibilities document
8. Public poster for safeguarding
9. Safeguarding statement
10. Safeguarding Subcommittee terms of reference
11. Youth Council Review minutes
12. Minutes from safeguarding and communication team meeting
13. Minutes from RLSS networking meeting
14. Crisis communication plan
15. Parish audit examples
16. Safeguarding communication plan
17. Safeguarding engagement feedback form
18. Safeguarding handbook
19. Safeguarding office communication policy

20. Safeguarding risk register
21. Safeguarding wellbeing calendar 2025
22. Social media policy
23. Email sharing new email details for all.
24. Loud fence invitation letter
25. Letter to clergy about Day of Prayer for Victims
26. Diocesan consent sheet
27. Correspondence between Safeguarding Team and victim/survivors
28. Guidelines for meetings between survivors and the archbishop
29. Proposals for Circles of Support
30. Restorative practice draft guidance
31. Victim Charter, short version
32. Victim Charter for the Archdiocese of Cardiff-Menevia
33. Responding to complaints guidance
34. Caring Safely for Others agreement
35. Case allocation and My concern management guidelines
36. Meeting minutes from extraordinary meetings of the safeguarding subcommittee
37. Safeguarding and Chief Operating Officer briefing sheets
38. Role descriptor for Parish Safeguarding Representatives
39. Clergy counselling invoices
40. Minutes from Team Around the Priest meetings
41. Support person role outline
42. Support person advert
43. Team Around the Priest meeting guidelines
44. Safeguarding Implementation Plan and three-year strategy
45. Case audit sheet
46. Coping with trauma leaflet
47. Key Performance indicators for safer recruitment
48. Key Performance Indicators for training
49. Policy and procedure for Quality Assurance
50. Safeguarding annual report
51. Service user evaluation document

52. Parish audit letters
53. Parish audit outcomes
54. Training needs analysis
55. Training records
56. DBS compliance records
57. Training slides
58. E-mails between Safeguarding Coordinator and interfaith group
59. Safeguarding Implementation and Action plan
60. E-mails to evidence engagement with CSSA thematic audit
61. Minutes from Clergy Welfare Team meetings
62. Minutes from Interfaith meetings
63. Safeguarding posters and information criteria
64. Audit of safeguarding communication
65. Strategy for the induction of overseas clergy
66. Clergy and PSR training agenda
67. Clergy Conference training agenda
68. Volunteers code of conduct
69. PSR information pack
70. Safeguarding Café guidelines
71. Safeguarding Café feedback.