



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND

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DIOCESE OF DURHAM

# PAST CASES REVIEW 2

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OCTOBER 2022

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# INTRODUCTION FROM THE INDEPENDENT CHAIR OF THE DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING PANEL

I am pleased to be able to commend to you the Executive Summary of the Report for the Past Cases Review 2 (PCR2) in the Diocese of Durham.

The 'Past Cases Review 2' (PCR2) was a national independent review of the handling of safeguarding cases in the Church of England over many years. The purpose of the PCR2 was to ensure that all known cases of concerns about the behaviour of clergy and church officers towards children and vulnerable adults have been dealt with appropriately.

PCR2 was launched in the summer of 2019 following recommendations in an independent scrutiny report that was commissioned nationally to look at the original PCR across all Dioceses. The report concluded that nationally PCR was not considered to have been carried out thoroughly enough resulting in the recommendation for PCR2. The PCR2 review concluded in April 2022.

This is the most extensive review of files ever conducted in the Church of England. More than 70,000 files, nationally, have been independently reviewed and these include files held by cathedrals, Theological Educational Institutions, religious communities, the National Church Institutions and Provincial Offices. Survivors' voices have been key to the review and as a Diocese we acknowledge the courage of those who felt able to contribute to this process be it at a local or a national level.

Carrying out this review has enabled us in the Diocese of Durham to identify risk and take action where needed. We have seen engagement in the process at every level across the Diocese, from parish churches, to the Cathedral and the Theological Training Institutions based in the region. The aim has been to create a safer environment for survivors to disclose and to build confidence in our safeguarding processes. As a Diocese we are committed to seeing through the recommendations, both local and national. Alongside our Executive Summary, we are pleased to publish the Diocesan Action Plan to address the local recommendations. This will be regularly reviewed through our Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel. As a Diocese we will continually strive to make the Church of England in the Diocese of Durham a safer environment for all.

PCR2 has been an exhaustive project, but with a specific scope. Therefore, if there are any individuals who have been affected by church abuse, whether non-recent or recent, support is available and we, in the Diocese of Durham, remain committed to acting, listening to and supporting survivors who come forward.

If you would like to speak to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, please phone 07968 034 075 or email [beth.miller@durham.anglican.org](mailto:beth.miller@durham.anglican.org).

Safe Spaces is an independent service supporting survivors of church-related abuse.

Phone: 0300 303 1056

Email: [safespaces@splitz.org](mailto:safespaces@splitz.org)

**Mark Gurney**

**Independent Chair of the Durham Diocese Safeguarding Advisory Panel**

## MESSAGE FROM THE BISHOP OF DURHAM

The Past Cases Review 2 Process has been very valuable for us as a Diocese. We were served wonderfully well by our two independent reviewers. We are also grateful to those who sat on the Advisory Panel, in both setting up the process and helping guide us through it.

Having the voice of survivors, the Police and Local Authorities was important to ensure there was constant external input and checking.

The recommendations are all accepted and significant work has already begun to address the issues raised. We will also take careful note of the issues raised by the collated report for the whole Church of England.

**The Right Reverend Paul Butler**  
**Bishop of Durham**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This is the executive summary of report of the Past Cases Review (PCR2) undertaken in the Diocese of Durham between February 2020 and November 2021.

1.2 The review was undertaken to meet the specific objectives of PCR2:

1.3 “To identify all information held within parishes, cathedrals, dioceses or other church bodies, which may contain allegations of abuse or neglect where the alleged perpetrator is a clergy person or other church officers and ensure these cases have been independently reviewed.

1.4 To ensure all allegations of abuse of children, especially those that have been recorded since the original PCR, have been handled appropriately and proportionately to the level of risk identified and with the paramountcy principle evidenced within decision making.

1.5 To ensure that recorded incidents or allegations of abuse of an adult (including domestic abuse) have been handled appropriately demonstrating the principles of adult safeguarding.

1.6 To ensure that the support needs of known survivors have been considered.

1.7 To ensure that all safeguarding allegations have been referred to the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor (DSA) and are being/have been responded to in line with current safeguarding practice guidance.

1.8 To ensure that all safeguarding allegations have been referred to the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor (DSA) and are being/have been responded to in line with current safeguarding practice guidance.

1.9 To ensure that cases meeting the relevant thresholds have been referred to statutory agencies. (Protocol and Practice Guidance Past Cases Review 2 (PCR2) - July 2019 – Page 3)”

## 2.0 Local context

2.1 The Diocese of Durham was founded in 635 AD, thus making it one of the oldest in England. It covers an area of approximately 990 square miles, with a population of approximately 1,468,000 and is therefore geographically large, sitting within the Church of England’s Province of York.

2.2 It is the Bishop of Durham who is responsible for the Diocese. The current incumbent is the Right Reverend Paul Butler, the 74th Diocesan Bishop, who was, until July 2016, chairman of the Church of England’s National Safeguarding Committee.

2.3 The Bishop currently (as of June 2021) holds responsibility for:

- 127 full-time stipendiary parochial clergy
- 159 benefices
- 188 clergy with permission to officiate
- 37 non-stipendiary clergy
- 6 part-time clergy
- 249 parishes
- 292 churches

## 3.0 DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING STRUCTURES

3.1 The first Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor (DSA) was appointed in Durham in November 1997.

3.2 The Diocese of Durham set up the Child Protection Reference Group in the 1990s, initially with responsibility for child protection and, later, all safeguarding matters initially with responsibility for child protection and, later, all safeguarding matters including vulnerable adults. This was a multi-agency group with an independent chair. The group is now referred to as the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel (DSAP).

## 4.0 THE PCR2 REVIEW IN DURHAM

4.1 The DSA and the Independent Chair of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel agreed with the Diocesan Bishop and the Diocesan Lead for safeguarding in the Bishop's senior leadership team an initial implementation plan for PCR2 in the Diocese of Durham.

4.2 A diocesan PCR2 Reference Group was established and is Chaired by the Independent Chair of DSAP. The Terms of Reference are consistent with the national PCR2 Protocol and Practice Guidance.

4.3 The Reference Group Membership included:

- The DSA - who was also the PCR2 project officer.
- The Bishop of Durham.
- The Archdeacon of Auckland - the Bishop's nominated lead for safeguarding.
- The Diocesan Communications Officer
- The Independent Reviewers
- A person with lived experience of clerical abuse
- An advocate and advisor for survivor support and engagement
- A local authority designated officer (LADO)
- A local authority representative
- A representative of the police

4.3 The PCR2 Reference group met regularly throughout the period of the review, initially in person and later, when Covid restrictions were in place, via Zoom. Attendance was consistently good. The group was effective, approached its task with due diligence and fully completed its terms of reference.

4.4 An Independent Reviewer (IR), who was fully compliant with the specification outlined in Appendix C of the national guidance, was appointed and commenced work in February 2020. The restrictions resulting from the Covid pandemic disrupted and slowed the progress of the review in the diocese - the IR lived outside of the region.

4.5 In Autumn 2020 an additional Independent Reviewer was recruited and commenced work in January 2021. This IR met all of the specifications outlined in Appendix C. Both IRs continued to work together on the completion of the PCR2 in the Diocese of Durham. Regular communication took place throughout the period of the review and regular meetings with the DSA took place via Zoom.

4.6 To facilitate the involvement of survivors the Diocesan website contained a statement from the Independent Reviewer inviting contact from those with a lived experience of abuse in the Church of England who wished to comment on how they had been responded to by the church, how helpful they had found the response, and what could have been done differently to assist them more.

4.7 To provide a confidential means of contact with the IR a dedicated email address was established from November 2020. This information was published on the diocesan website and the email account was checked for responses every 24 hours.

4.8 The Diocesan Communications Officer made use of major national and local safeguarding events (e.g. the publication of the IICSA report regarding the Church of England) to publicize PCR2 and encourage contact from survivors.

## 5.0 FILES REVIEWED

5.1 Total number of files reviewed - 776 - including 57 cases which were previously known to the diocese and where the concerns had been previously considered and addressed.

5.2 Nine examples of very good practice were identified by the independent reviewers.

## 6.0 LOCAL THEMES

6.1 Safeguarding appears to be taken seriously in the diocese.

6.2 The PCR2 process was accorded suitable priority and any issues raised were usually addressed in a very timely manner.

6.3 The current Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser is well qualified, experienced and a full review of all her cases evidenced work of a high standard. Her work with survivors appeared to be of sensitive and high standard.

6.4 The PCR2 Reference Group worked well and effectively.

6.5 Efforts were made to try and engage with survivors but with limited success.

6.6 The overall response to safeguarding issues within the diocese appeared to be robust.

## 7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Twenty-seven (27) recommendations were made by the independent reviewers of which 20 related to local issues (Four (4) national issues and three (3) local and national issues).

7.2 All of the recommendations were accepted by the Diocese of Durham. The Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel has the lead responsibility in ensuring that all recommendations are appropriately addressed. An action plan has been commissioned by the DSAP to ensure that all the recommendations within the control of the diocese are addressed in a timely manner.

7.3 While current responses and services to survivors were judged by the independent reviewers to be generally very good, they did recommend that a written survivors Strategy should be developed by the diocese. In spring 2022 the DSAP commissioned a written Survivor Strategy which should be in place in the near future.

**Frank Whitelock and Karen M Robb**

**Independent Reviewers**