The Church of England
Diocese of Ely

ELY CATHEDRAL

25 November 2026

Independent safeguarding audit of the Diocese of Ely published

We welcome the publication today, Wednesday 25 November, of the Independent Safeguarding Audit of the Ely Diocesan Board of Finance (EDBF) and Ely Cathedral, undertaken by the INEQE Safeguarding Group as part of the Church of England's national programme of independent safeguarding audits.

The audit provides an important independent assessment of our safeguarding arrangements, recognising the progress made in recent years while identifying where further improvements are needed.

We are grateful to INEQE for its comprehensive review and to everyone who contributed to the process, including clergy, Parish Safeguarding Officers, churchwardens, volunteers, diocesan staff and members of our worshipping communities. We are particularly grateful to the victims and survivors who contributed to the audit by sharing their experiences.

What the audit found

We are encouraged that the Report recognises a positive and strengthening safeguarding culture across the diocese, with growing awareness of safeguarding responsibilities and increasing confidence in the arrangements in place to protect children and vulnerable adults.

The Report acknowledges the commitment and professionalism of the Diocesan and Cathedral Safeguarding Teams, the strength of safeguarding training and the positive contribution of parish safeguarding networks and support arrangements.

It also recognises the progress made in responding to previous safeguarding reviews and the Diocese's and Cathedral’s willingness to learn from experience and strengthen its practices.

While these findings are encouraging, the Report also identifies important areas where further improvement is required.

In particular, INEQE highlights the pressures on safeguarding team capacity, the need to strengthen governance and oversight arrangements, and opportunities to improve the consistency of safeguarding practices across parishes. The Report also identifies further work needed to strengthen the involvement of victims and survivors in shaping safeguarding practice.

We recognise these observations and the importance of addressing them, building on the improvements already made.

Responding to the recommendations

We welcome the independent scrutiny provided by this audit and are committed to learning from its findings.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Team and senior colleagues, supported by Bishop's Council and Diocesan Synod colleagues, will carefully consider every recommendation and develop a clear, prioritised action plan setting out the improvements required, together with appropriate responsibilities, resources and timescales.

Our focus will be on ensuring that the recommendations lead to meaningful and sustainable improvements in safeguarding practice, providing the professional support and oversight needed to protect those who participate in the life of our churches and communities.

Action Plans

Draft action plans for all five Safeguarding Standards have been created alongside a 2026–2029 Safeguarding Strategy, incorporating the recommendations made by INEQE relevant to the EDBF. This Strategy will be reviewed by Bishop's Council and published on the Diocese of Ely website in December 2026. Working groups will be established to finalise, scrutinise and monitor each action plan, with oversight provided by the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel (DSAP). All actions will be completed within the strategy period.

Ely Cathedral Chapter will separately publish and implement its own detailed action plan addressing the recommendations relevant to the Cathedral, overseen by the Ely Cathedral Safeguarding Advisory Group and Chapter.

Both organisations are committed to ensuring that the audit's recommendations result in meaningful and lasting improvements to safeguarding practice.

We will provide further updates as this work progresses and ensure that progress against agreed actions is appropriately monitored and reported.

Our continuing commitment

Safeguarding is central to the life and mission of the Church and remains a shared responsibility across the diocese.

We are grateful for the dedication of those who support safeguarding in our parishes and diocesan structures, often alongside many other responsibilities. Their commitment has been instrumental in the progress recognised by this audit.

We also recognise that maintaining a strong safeguarding culture requires us to listen, reflect and respond when improvements are needed, particularly to the experiences of those who have suffered abuse or harm.

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The Rt Rev'd Sarah Clark, Bishop of Ely said: *"I very much welcome our INEQE Audit Report and pay tribute to the leadership of Bishop Dagmar Winter under whose tenure as Acting Diocesan Bishop of Ely this audit took place. As the newly installed Bishop of Ely, I am grateful for the firm foundation we have as a diocese to build steadily upon, as we seek intentionally to move towards the picture of excellence in safeguarding this INEQE audit points us towards".*

George Woods, Diocesan Secretary and CEO said*: "We welcome this independent audit and I'm grateful to everyone who took part, particularly the victims and survivors who shared their experiences. Their courage shapes how we work, and we will continue to listen. The report rightly recognises the dedication of our safeguarding team, our Parish Safeguarding Officers and the many volunteers who keep safeguarding at the heart of parish life. It also gives a clear and fair picture of where we must go further. We will take every recommendation seriously and turn them into a clear plan of action. Our measure of success will be whether people in our churches are safer as a result".*

Canon James Reveley, Interim Dean of Ely Cathedral, said: *"Ely Cathedral Chapter welcomes the INEQE report and the recognition it brings of the positive safeguarding culture that exists at Ely Cathedral. We recognise that safeguarding is an ongoing responsibility and therefore we will continue to listen carefully, to acknowledge where we can develop further, and ensure that recommendations are translated into meaningful action and lasting change. We would like to thank everyone in the Cathedral community whose dedication helps implement safeguarding practice across our worship, our work and our welcome. The Cathedral will reflect on the recommendations and has committed to publishing and implementing a detailed action plan, overseen by the Ely Cathedral Safeguarding Advisory Group and Chapter".*

Read the Report

The full INEQE Independent Safeguarding Audit Report relating to the EDBF and Ely Cathedral, is available on the INEQE website here - https://ineqe.com/churchofengland/ely/

Further information about safeguarding in the Diocese of Ely, including how to raise concerns or seek support, can be found on the Diocesan website - https://www.elydiocese.org/safeguarding.php

Further information about safeguarding in Ely Cathedral can be found on the Cathedral website - https://www.elycathedral.org/about/safeguarding

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