The Diocesan Safeguarding Oversight Group (DSOG) has oversight of, and scrutinises, safeguarding strategy and arrangements in the Diocese of Leicester. Meeting quarterly, it brings together officers from the diocese with representatives from external agencies, including children & adult services, police, probation and Quetzal, a local charity for survivors of childhood abuse. DSOG is independently chaired by Adrienne Plunkett, a social worker with a background in Children’s Services, as a practitioner and senior manager.

At its meeting on **12 March 2025**, DSOG had discussions around the following matters:

* **Safeguarding Practice Reviews:** Considering the Makin Review (John Smyth) and its impact, and having requested reassurance from Bishops’ Leadership Team, DSOG was updated on progress in the diocese and wider church regarding lessons learnt and recommended actions. DSOG discussed a summary table of Makin recommendations and agreed to prioritise and bring these actions into the overall Safeguarding Strategy Action Plan.
* **Church of England Safeguarding & Charity Commission:** The Charity Commission wrote to all diocesan bishops in January querying whether ‘*there are any remaining structural, procedural or constitutional arrangements under ecclesiastical law that you consider conflict with or prevent you and your co-trustees from fulfilling your safeguarding duties as charity trustees.’* DSOG discussed this, across its complexities, noting the responsibilities of trustees at all levels, e.g. PCC, clergy, diocesan, which will be highlighted when DSOG’s Annual Report is presented to Trustees in April.
* **Update on Regional Model implementation:**DSOG welcomed ***Gemma Barber, the new Regional Safeguarding Lead***, who explained the process that led to the appointment of regional leads by the National Safeguarding Team and outlined her role. Gemma provides professional supervision and support to the DSAs/DSOs in the region, with an emphasis on learning and development and celebrating good practice.

DSOG also discussed the job description for the new post of Diocesan Safeguarding Officer (DSO), as recommended by the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), which is based on the national template. The DSO role comes with greater authority and status and brings the ability to refer matters to the statutory authorities without reference to the bishop, which the DSA in Leicester has already been doing.

* **Whistleblowing:** DSOG approved the Whistleblowing Policy which will now be finalised and distributed in the diocese.
* **Safeguarding Intelligence Pack 2024 (final figures)**: The DSA presented the first full year of qualitative and quantitative data, covering referrals, risk assessments and training, as well as the collated data from Parish Dashboards. DSOG thanked the DST for their work in populating the data and identified areas for further development in this evolving document. It was agreed data from the Parish Dashboards would routinely be shared with the Parish Safeguarding Coordinator, DSOG representatives and the Archdeacons for follow up.
* **INEQE Independent Audits of C of E Dioceses & Cathedrals:** DSOG discussed the first annual report published on 10 February 2025, which “*provides an overview of the themes and good practice evidenced during the 2024 independent safeguarding audit programme”,* of 10 dioceses and cathedrals. Leicester’s audit will take place in Autumn 2026 and the learning from the report will inform preparation.
* **Safeguarding Strategy Action Plan:** This has been updated with both completed and new actions from 2024 and for 2025.