The Diocesan Safeguarding Oversight Group (DSOG) has oversight of, and scrutinises, safeguarding strategy and arrangements in the Diocese of Leicester. It meets quarterly and brings together people from the Diocese with representatives from external agencies, including children & adult services, the police, the probation service, and Quetzal, a local charity for survivors of childhood abuse. DSOG is chaired by Adrienne Plunkett. a social work with a background in Children’s Services, as a practitioner and manager, and experience of conducting Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews with Safeguarding Partnerships across the country.

At its meeting on March 20, 2024, DSOG welcomed a second Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator representative, Pete Coopey, to join the group alongside Julie Croysdale.

DSOG heard from Revd Barry Hill, the Diocese’s Strategy Development Enabler, about how safeguarding will be embedded in the development of the diocese’s strategy and potential areas of risk for DSOG to remain attentive to. There was a discussion about how Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinators might work most effectively in Minster Communities, and DSOG was informed of how safeguarding is incorporated in the Minster Community proposals which are received by the Joint Archdeaconry Mission Committee (JAMC).

DSOG had discussions about the following matters:

* Professor Alexis Jay’s report on the Future of Safeguarding, and DSOG’s continued role in supporting the Safeguarding Team and Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinators to ensure safeguarding has an appropriate focus during this time of change while we await further news about how the recommendations will be implemented. DSOG heard that Bishop Martyn had written to all ministers in the diocese about the publication of the report, noting his continued confidence in the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.
* The response to DSOG’s Annual Report, presented at Bishop’s Council in January.
* What the Diocesan Governance Review, which comes into force in August 2024, means for safeguarding in terms of where DSOG reports into and where the Annual Report should be presented.
* The Working Well guidance which is being taken up by a number of parishes, accompanied by a Code of Conduct, to provide positive support and resources to help address bullying and other unacceptable behaviours within parishes.
* The nature of the different types of authorised lay ministry in the diocese, and how DSOG can be assured that they are up-to-date with the necessary checks and safeguarding training.

DSOG also received reports from the Cathedral, the Executive the Quality and Improvement and the Training Subgroups, as well as an update on the focus group work to develop a survivor care strategy.