

- 8.3.2 The lack of any explanation of when to undertake investigations and what should be involved in internal (as opposed to independent) investigations within the procedures, undermines the important role of such work in safeguarding. The detail in which the procedures cover the way that the recommendations of independent reports can (and were) rejected, again undermines this vital process.

## **9 CULTURE**

### **9.1 Role of safeguarding in the church**

- 9.1.1 When the authors reflected on the culture of safeguarding, we had observed in many of the audits, we had the distinct impression that this was one which was largely focused on the needs of the clergy as opposed to the needs of victims and survivors. The case records provided much detail of such support in contrast to that provided to the victims and their families.
- 9.1.2 In one case the SCO wrote to an alleged victim that the SCO role was to advise the religious order and ensure they follow policy and procedure. This was in response to requests about what the SCO would do in response to the allegations. Such a reply was extremely worrying, as the focus of the safeguarding role should be on the welfare of children and vulnerable adults, not on advising clergy and procedural compliance.
- 9.1.3 We also observed a sense of hostility and irritation in some responses to alleged victims, with inadequate compassion and understanding of their current problems and the link of these with past abuse.
- 9.1.4 There is little sense of a safeguarding service, independent of clergy and able to provide a professional service. There was a wide variation in terms of independence and professionalism of the SCOs, but they appear to be isolated professionally. It is also not clear from our work to what extent the safeguarding service is provided by appropriately trained and qualified safeguarding professionals, as opposed to clergy or individuals without such a professional background. There needs to be recognition of the potential conflict of interests when clergy are in safeguarding roles, whether that be in dioceses, parishes or in the religious orders.
- 9.1.5 The management of safeguarding professionals is another potential contributing factor to such a culture. If this is undertaken by clergy it is likely that the culture will not change. We have little information from the audits or procedures on this, but did pick up an impression of it being managed by clergy.

### **9.2 Other cultural issues**

- 9.2.1 The audits raised the following as cultural issues that can provide obstacles to a safe Church: