

# *Diocese of Plymouth*

*Office of the Bishop*

*Right Reverend Christopher Budd*

## **Safeguarding Review of Plymouth Diocese**

The report that follows these introductory remarks was commissioned by the Plymouth Diocese in the summer of 2011 in the wake of our discovery that our then Safeguarding Co-ordinator had been accessing abusive pictures of children. I wish to thank Wendy Noctor and her NSPCC team, who undertook the review for their thorough work.

The first part of the review concentrated on cases undertaken by the Safeguarding team and in particular Christopher Jarvis. Its findings indicate that the work was carried out to a high degree of compliance with the national policies in force in England and Wales. But the present safeguarding team (Robert Brown, Annette Moody-Burkinshaw and Mary England) have acted quickly to implement the review's recommendations: these have already led to an improvement in the IT equipment and systems being used and to better practice in recording and reviewing progress of cases.

The second part was more wide ranging and involved many people concerned with Safeguarding across Cornwall, Devon and Dorset, the large area covered by the Diocese. There are many more recommendations in this part, not because any major flaws were identified but so that what is currently good enough practice can become better practice. The 34 recommendations will all be taken up and implemented by a range of people across the Diocese.

An interesting but expected feature of the review is the insistence on the importance of training. Training is not always popular but here its aim is that Safeguarding should no longer be viewed as an added extra to the life of the Church, but as a dimension of normal day to day living. This is important. It is very easy to see Safeguarding as one more thing we must do, rather than as a natural concern in all that we do.

Not all the recommendations concern Safeguarding exclusively. There are some which have wider reference (e.g. 19: IT monitoring and 21: Communications issues). Both these need further discussion, but are being taken seriously and will affect our practice in due course.

The Diocese was reassured by the finding that its Safeguarding operation was being conducted satisfactorily; but the recommended improvements will be made. The very nature of Safeguarding means that there can be no room for complacency.

I would like to thank everyone involved in Safeguarding in the Diocese, from the Diocesan Team and the Safeguarding Commission to the clergy and parish safeguarding representatives who keep our parish communities safe for everyone.

I would like to express a particular word of gratitude to the Independent Chair of the Commission, David Pond. He led the management of the crisis and guided it to a satisfactory outcome (as represented in the RSPCC report) with considerable personal involvement, well beyond the call of duty.

The report which follows is unabridged and represents a stage of the Safeguarding journey of one Diocese after a significant crisis.