



This has been a significant year in Safeguarding. In June 2019, General Synod received the Provincial Safeguarding Audit Report. This contained the hugely-concerning statistic, across the whole province, that **62% of vestries** could not give a satisfactory answer to the question:

“if an allegation was made within your congregation, would you know what to do?”

As a diocese, although this was a province-wide statistic, we felt we could not display any sort of complacency. We therefore delivered some initiatives within the diocese.

First, we produced a short video (<https://edinburgh.anglican.org/safeguarding-video/>) giving some basic introductions to the subject, and where to get help. Second, we started a diocesan programme of training, with the first session in St John’s Princes Street on 11 January 2020. It was led by Ley-Anne Forsyth, the Youth & Children Officer for the Diocese of Moray, Ross & Caithness, who also delivers the training for the Glenalmond Provincial Youth Camp leaders. There was an overwhelming but hugely heartening attendance of over 80 people, covering 26 of our charges. We are now planning a repeat session in May 2020, to cover the charges not represented at the first session. After that, we will plan more in-depth sessions, covering the more detailed policy/process aspect of Safeguarding. Feedback on the first session has been encouraging, though:

- *“it seemed good to have clarity of terms and the interactive way of drawing out the issues”*
- *“I found it reassuring and useful to reflect on the way we form relationships in pastoral care”*
- *“I got a lot out of today's session - in other training days, I often came away a little unsure of what to do or say in these situations. Today really cleared this up for me.”*

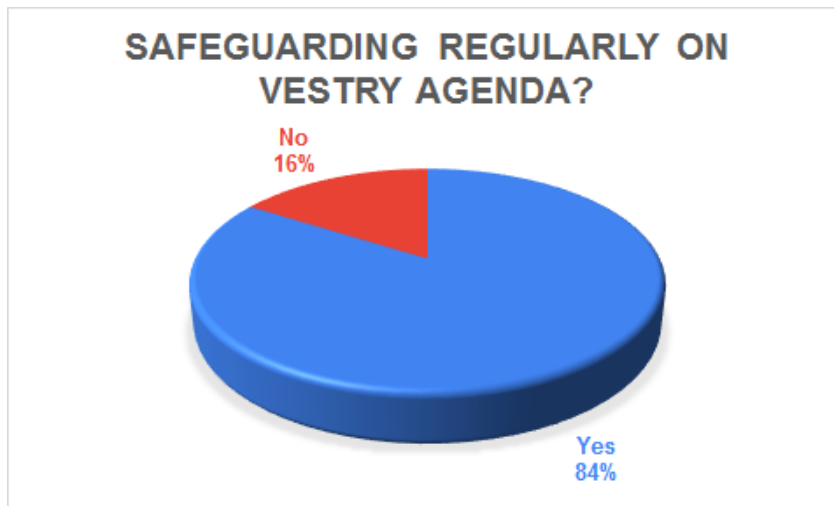
All this is only a start. We have had 4 cases to deal with in the diocese this year, so we are not immune. Our aim, by the end of 2020, is to ensure that someone from every charge in the diocese has attended a basic training session this year, which enables them to respond to the question above with a confident “yes”.

Along with all the other annual diocesan forms, a PVG Annual Checklist was issued to PVG Coordinators in all charges. This asks for various confirmations, such as whether contact information for raising concerns was being publicly displayed, and the regularity of safeguarding being included on Vestry agendas.

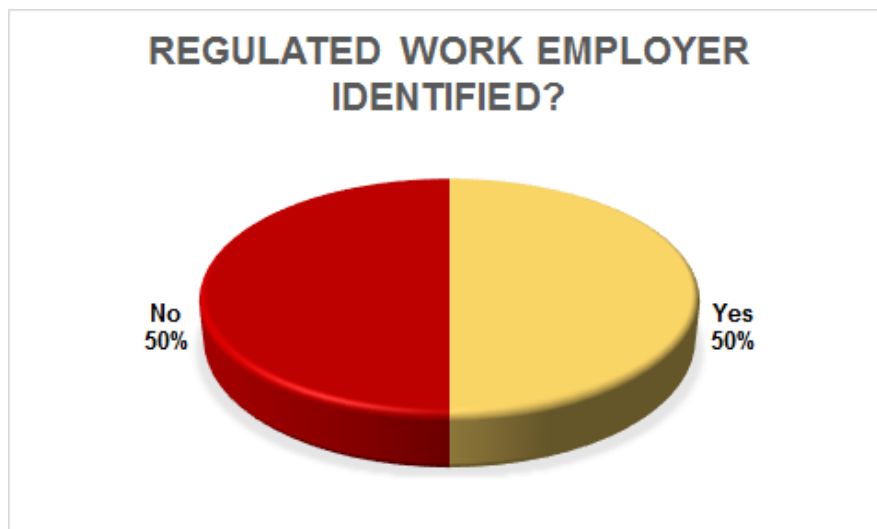
I am very grateful to all the PVG Coordinators, who take on this critical coordination work voluntarily. Nevertheless, it remains a whole-Vestry responsibility, and the PVG Coordinator is just that – the coordinator.

At the time of compiling this report, the return rate of those forms was 94% (2018: 69%) with only **3 charges not submitting a return**. This, is a huge improvement.

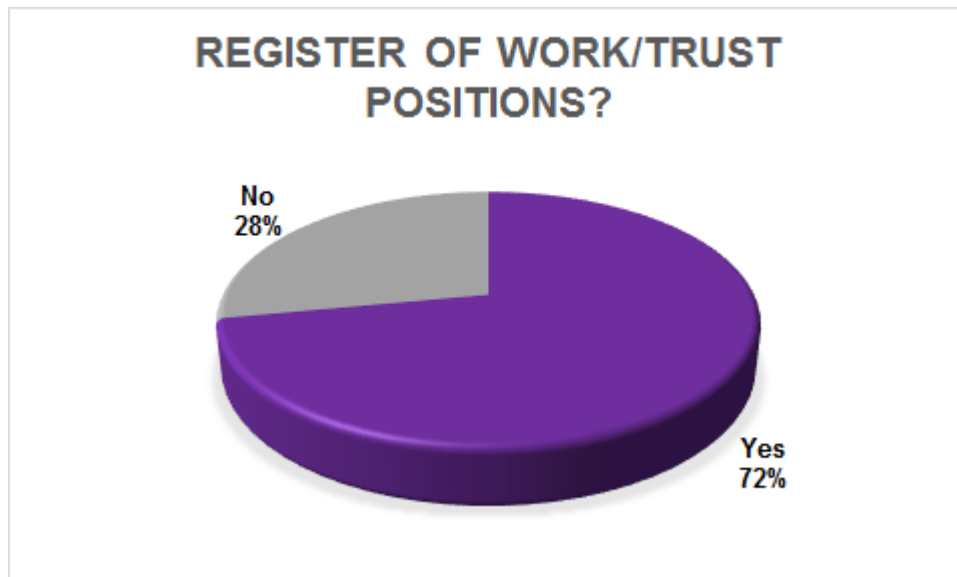
Key concerns from these 49 returns are:



This needs to be a regular item, partly to give the opportunity for issues to have a ready place to be reported but, perhaps more importantly, to keep it as a 'live' issue for all vestries, and to maintain the awareness of its importance.



One person on each Vestry (usually the Rector or Priest in Charge) must be nominated as the lead person on Vestry to have *“responsibility for the day-to-day training, supervision, management, review and appraisal of those doing regulated work with children and/or adults, and have the power to suspend or dismiss them.”*



Each charge **must** know who is doing “directed work” with vulnerable groups and who is in a “position of trust”.

This evidence continues to raise concerns, and could lead to Safeguarding incidents occurring, not being identified, or being wrongly handled. We are doing all we can, as a diocese, to help and support you, but each Vestry needs to understand its responsibility, and where to ask for help.

The Provincial website has some valuable information and resources for those involved in Safeguarding, and we encourage you to view what is available:

<https://www.scotland.anglican.org/who-we-are/organisation/safeguarding/>

Charges are reminded that the appointment of a new PVG Coordinator has to be approved in advance by the Bishop, via the Diocesan Protection Officer.

Simon Filsell
Diocesan Protection Officer