

INDEPENDENT REVIEW INTO THE
CASE OF
GEORGE GRANVILLE GIBSON

At the request of the Chair of the Durham
Diocesan Safeguarding Management Group

APRIL 2017

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Foreword

**by the Rt Rev Paul Butler, the Bishop of Durham,
and Mr Mark Gurney, Chair of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel**

It is always utterly unacceptable, and a matter of deep shame, when any representative of the church harms another person. As I, Bishop Paul, said in August 2016, “Following the conviction today of Granville Gibson on two charges of indecent assault, we offer an unreserved apology to all the survivors and those affected by this news. We commend the bravery of those who brought these allegations forward, acknowledging how difficult and distressing this would have been.”

I, Bishop Paul, repeat this apology now. However, as well as apologising for previous failings of the church, we also have to learn, and – on the basis of lessons learned – change the way that we work. We have to both minimise the possibility of others abusing positions of trust within the church to harm others and ensure that any concerns or allegations raised are dealt with well – sensitively, professionally and thoroughly. That is why I commissioned this report.

We are sad that the publication of the report has been delayed for a long time. The main reason for this delay has been the further legal action taken against Mr Gibson. The investigation was commissioned rapidly after Granville Gibson’s first conviction and the report was then completed in a timely manner, for which we thank Dr Stephanie Hill. However, shortly after this, the police and the CPS notified the Diocese of the need to delay publication of the report in the light of further investigations and subsequent charges brought against Mr Gibson. Towards the end of 2019, at a second trial, Mr Gibson was convicted of a further offence. It was only after the conclusion of these proceedings that steps could be taken to begin the complex legal process involved to enable a report of this nature to be published. The process has then been delayed further by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. We are therefore pleased to finally be in a position to put this report into the public domain now.

We have also been committed to learning from this investigation and – where this learning points to change – developing our safeguarding procedures. This we have done, and we continue to learn, develop and improve what we do to protect vulnerable adults and children alike. We have listed a summary of our responses to the recommendations of this report – the lessons we have learned and the changes we have made – and this document is on the Diocese of Durham website. We welcome constructive feedback on our safeguarding processes at all times.

Archbishop Justin Welby said after the recent IICSA 2 report on the safeguarding of children that the Church of England is undertaking “a journey of change”; he acknowledged that “we have not gone quick enough or far enough”; nevertheless, the journey is genuinely being made. Similarly, the IICSA report itself concluded both that the Church of England had in the past failed to protect some children and young people, and that, “Since ... 2013 much has improved, in terms of governance, training, audit, personnel, policies and procedures.” In the Diocese of Durham, we identify with the need to acknowledge and apologise for past failings in the safeguarding of children

and adults alike, and we have been part of the change that the IICSA report recognises.

The IICSA report continued, “However, there is still more to be done. Senior leaders have demonstrated a determination to make necessary changes ... but, to be effective, this determination needs to be translated into action throughout the Church of England.” Our commissioning of this report and our learning from it are part of our ongoing commitment in the Diocese of Durham to translate this determination to protect all vulnerable people into action in policy and practice.

Paul Butler and Mark Gurney,
December 2020

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A note on the text: footnotes, located at the foot of a page and designated numerically, are the author’s; endnotes, designated alphabetically, located at the end of the document, have been added by the Diocese of Durham wherever a change of personnel, policy or nomenclature from 2017 may need to be understood to avoid possible confusion. They do not alter any aspect of Dr Hill’s report.

Executive Summary

This review was requested by the Rt. Reverend Paul Butler, Bishop of Durham following the conviction in August 2016 of Mr George Granville Gibson for historical sexual offences. Its objectives were to review all information available to the Diocese in the past relevant to Mr Gibson's behaviour, to provide a detailed timeline of what was known by whom and when, to consider the Diocese's responses against policy and good practice and to indicate lessons learnt.

In completing the review, all safeguarding records and Mr Gibson's blue file were accessed and a number of clergy and lay people in safeguarding roles have been interviewed.

The reviewer found a background context of inappropriate behaviour by Mr Gibson towards young, exclusively male, clergy, seeming to target them within various situations, sometimes in the context of significant alcohol consumption, invading personal space and being physically and sometimes allegedly sexually inappropriate. However, although many were aware of this, there are no formal records and no specific complaints were made, the matters being dealt with at an individual level rather than shared with the safeguarding team. It is also more likely than not that the then Diocesan Bishop, The Right Revd John Habgood, was informed in the early 1980s of concerning behaviour by Mr Gibson but failed to act appropriately on this. There is certainly no record of it.

In 2001, an alleged, known indecent assault on a young man was not reported to the Diocese's safeguarding team, a red flag clearly missed. In 2004, allegations of historical abuse from 1982 were reported to the Diocese who responded appropriately in informing the Local Authority's child protection officer and the police; there was also regular and good communication with the family. In 2009, a self-completed declaration form referring to an arrest around 1980 was missed by the Diocese and not followed up on and, in 2012, non-specific concerns at time spent with young male servers and altar boys was addressed internally but not shared with a local school where Mr Gibson had considerable involvement with teenagers.

Following Mr Gibson's arrest in April 2014, the Diocese largely responded well to its multiple responsibilities to various clergy and parishioners as well as survivors of Mr Gibson and members of his family.

General additional concerns noted which impact on the efficacy of safeguarding include significant historical problems with record keeping, causing evidential gaps. The culture of the Church of England is also discussed as creating an environment where abuse is more likely to occur if individual members are so motivated and a number of recommendations are made.

1. **Background Context**

- 1.1. The strength and value of the Church of England is its longstanding and trusted position within society. At its heart there is a spiritual focus on leading a Christian life, and clergy are viewed as having a special calling to help people. The organisation and structure of the church enables it to provide lifelong support and guidance to wide sections of the community, including those who are depressed and vulnerable. The relationship between clergy and parishioners is a particularly close and confiding one with a focus on acceptance, forgiveness and redemption.
- 1.2. Unfortunately, close and trusted relationships also provide opportunities for abuse to occur and there is therefore a need to ensure that, as far as possible, individuals are less able to abuse these positions of power and that the organisation does not encourage a culture in which abuse is more likely to proliferate. It is the betrayal of this very trust which compromises the church and its clergy. For any individual or organisation that is afforded such a high level of trust, there needs to be a parallel recognition of the potential for abuse and heightened attention to professionalism, transparency, safeguarding and oversight.
- 1.3. The repercussions of abuse are widely felt, not only spreading and disseminating in the present through interpersonal relationships but also bridging across time when historical allegations come to light. Whilst for observers, time offers a salve to the hurt imagined, for those at the centre of the abuse, this can still feel very real, live and in the present.
- 1.4. Currently, child sexual abuse scandals continue to unfold at an alarming rate leaving few organisations unaffected and encompassing the areas of entertainment, sports clubs, residential schools, youth detention facilities and a variety of faiths.
- 1.5. Abuse of vulnerable members of society is particularly emotive and can be difficult to understand. The context in which abuse occurs needs to be considered alongside the motives of the individual perpetrator as abuse requires a physical space in which to occur. Abuse thrives in situations where secrecy is nurtured or, at least, tolerated and where openness to criticism and freedom of expression are closed down, often not to support the abuse per se but for misguided aims of maintaining the institution's reputation and status quo. Abuse is also assisted by the choices which individuals within the institution make. These may reflect the individual's immediate needs and what is easiest in the short term rather than addressing more difficult responses, which would be better in the long term. Finally, abuse may also be facilitated by a society which is often too busy to notice, or else which finds child sexual abuse in particular so repulsive

that it cannot bear to look too closely, thereby missing things which may be amongst us all.

- 1.6. It is within this current febrile environment of sexual abuse scandals that this independent review of one specific, but no less important, case occurs. The background context is relevant in helping highlight broader contextual issues in how sexual abuse was, and is now, seen and responded to, both across society more broadly but also within the Church of England. It is also necessary to look closely at the specific factors associated with the Diocese of Durham in particular, as well as its individual members, in order to try and develop an understanding of what occurred in relation to Mr Gibson, what factors, if any, have been addressed and what additional important lessons, if any, still need to be learnt.

2. Terms of Reference, Scope and Objectives

- 2.1 The Rt. Revd Paul Butler, Bishop of Durham, requested the Chair of the Durham Diocesan Safeguarding Management Group (DSMG)^a to commission this review following Mr Granville Gibson's conviction for sexual offences on the 4th August 2016. The author was appointed at the end of October with a date of the end of April 2017 to complete the review. She is independent from both the Church of England and the Diocese of Durham.
- 2.2 The scope focuses on Mr Gibson's individual case within the Diocese of Durham and how the Diocese responded historically and following recent police prosecution and later conviction.
- 2.3 Four specific objectives were identified:
- To review what information was available to the Diocese of Durham concerning sexual abuse, sexually inappropriate behaviour or other behaviour unbecoming of a clerk in holy orders, to whom this information was made available, and when;
 - To provide a detailed timeline and transparent account of the response within the Diocese to concerns raised regarding Mr Gibson's conduct;
 - To consider whether the response was in accordance with recognised safe and good practice, and compliant with Church of England policy and legislation and statutory policy and legislation in place at the relevant time periods in question; and
 - To learn lessons about necessary changes and developments needed within the Diocese to ensure that safeguarding practice is of the highest possible standard, examining specifically the culture of the church, how complaints are managed and any other specific areas identified by the review.
- 2.4 At a meeting on 10th February, the parameters of the latter two objectives was recognised as limited in terms of otherwise very large areas encompassing Canon Law and grievance and disciplinary procedures, which were not intended to fall within the remit of this review.
- 2.5 The author is a Consultant in Forensic & Clinical Psychology. She does not, and never has had, any affiliation with any religious bodies. Her Curriculum Vitae can be found at Appendix A.

3. **Methodology**

- 3.1 It is important to note this review does not constitute a judicial process and, therefore, it has been reliant on important documents and records being made available. The terms of reference specify that all records held in relation to Mr Gibson would be made available, including his blue file, which the reviewer has had access to; in addition, it has been possible to access all safeguarding records as they relate to Mr Gibson from 2004 (which is the earliest reference) to the present day. I have not seen safeguarding notes relating to Durham Cathedral but have spoken to a member of their safeguarding team. Access has also been facilitated to view all minutes of the Durham Diocese Safeguarding Management Group (DSMG), albeit these are only available from March 2007 to the present. In addition, it has been necessary to review a number of additional documents relating to local or national policy and guidance in relation to both child protection and wider safeguarding issues. (See Appendix B.)
- 3.2 It has also been necessary to speak to a range of clergy and lay people ministering within the Diocese or in relation to their safeguarding roles. Most importantly, those who directly suffered harm at the hands of Mr Gibson have also been approached and have provided their recollections and experiences, as has a member of Mr Gibson's family. The author is extremely grateful for everyone's time and input, without which this review would be much poorer. A redacted list of both those interviewed as well as those unavailable to take part is at Appendix C. Interviewees were provided with a written summarised record of their interview for their comments on accuracy before information was included within this review. These did not extend to separate, brief responses to subsequent questions or, for example, clarifying a written record.
- 3.3 Finally, a draft was presented to the Chair of the DSMG in April 2017 and forwarded on to the Rt. Revd Paul Butler, Bishop of Durham. *(Editorial note 2020: this version has been redacted, with the anonymization of most of those involved and consulted, in line with legal advice, for publication.)*
- 3.4 The term child used here is that generally accepted in most legal documents to cover both children and young people below the age of 18. In relation to vulnerable adults, those over 18 may be deemed vulnerable for a number of reasons, whether related to personal characteristics (such as physical and/or psychological and/or intellectual difficulties or limitations, mental health problems or substance misuse) or situational factors (such as position, role or status within an organisation) or related to broader social issues including socio-economic standing or immigrant status.

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- 3.5 Sexual abuse is a broad term covering all aspects of verbal, physical and online sexually related behaviour involving lack of consent and/or abuse of power between two or more people. Its short and long-term effects are well substantiated, leading to a myriad of possible emotional, cognitive and behavioural problems which can affect all areas of an individual's life; because of this, it is acknowledged that sexual abuse constitutes significant harm.
- 3.6 Spiritual abuse¹ refers to the inappropriate use of religious belief or practice including misuse of leadership and position or intrusive healing and deliverance ministries. Spiritual abuse also extends to denying others their right to faith or the opportunity to learn and grow in the knowledge and love of God.
- 3.7 Safeguarding covers a range of policies including vetting and recruitment of appropriate people to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults. It also covers safe working practices, inter-agency liaison and working, and how individuals and organisations respond to concerns once raised.

¹ Taken from *Protecting All God's Children* 2010

4. **Preface**

- 4.1 A number of issues arose during the course of the review which would benefit from being mentioned. These include individuals' memories of events, gaps in written records and the developing understanding of sexual abuse across the decades and the church's response to this.
- 4.2 It is also important to try and tease out the behaviour of, and decision making by, individuals from the wider culture of the institution as well as understanding the interaction between the two. Investigating historical behaviour has to inevitably address the fallibility of human memory, recognising the impossibility of differentiating between true lack of recall and 'forgetfulness' motivated by other concerns. This creates an evidential void that may never be filled.
- 4.3 Similarly, gaps in written records may result from changing practices over time. Whilst all institutions now recognise the importance of accurate and contemporaneous record keeping, there is all too often a paucity of historical information and it is not always possible to ascertain whether missing information ever existed or has been lost or was later destroyed.
- 4.4 Objective consideration of historical information needs to avoid the possibility that hindsight encourages erroneous conclusions about what should have occurred. Our knowledge of factors impacting on sexual risk, and therefore our approach to safeguarding, has changed significantly and this ought to be reflected in an institution's records, policies and responses.
- 4.5 It is also important to recognise the balance between the increase in the number of cases coming forward and the Church's position that it is increasingly proactive in advancing new policies and becoming more transparent and open in their management of abuse claims.

5. The Diocese of Durham: Geography, Key Personnel and Safeguarding

- 5.1. The Diocese of Durham was founded in 635 A.D., thus making it one of the oldest in England. It covers an area of approximately 990 square miles, with a population of 1,468,000² and is therefore geographically large, sitting within the Church of England's Province of York. It consists of several closely-interrelated (but autonomous) bodies.



- 5.2. It is the Bishop of Durham who is responsible for the Diocese. The current incumbent is the Rt. Revd Paul Butler, the 74th Diocesan Bishop, who was, until July 2016, chairman of the church's National Safeguarding Committee. The Bishop currently holds responsibility for 127 full-time stipendiary parochial clergy and 159 benefices.^{3 b}
- 5.3. The Diocese of Durham is split into three Archdeacons: Sunderland, Durham and Auckland. The Archdeaconry of Sunderland, currently led by Archdeacon

² Source: Church of England Year Book

³ Ecclesiastical offices which, under Canon law, carry certain duties together with certain revenues.

Stuart Bain, covers Gateshead West, Gateshead, Chester-Le-Street, Jarrow, Wearmouth and Houghton; a total of six deaneries and approximately 74 parishes. The Archdeaconry of Durham, currently led by Archdeacon Ian Jagger, is responsible for Lanchester, Durham, Easington, Sedgefield and Hartlepool, a total of five deaneries and approximately 66 parishes. The Archdeaconry of Auckland, currently led by Archdeacon Nick Barker, is responsible for Stanhope, Auckland, Barnard Castle, Darlington and Stockton, a total of five deaneries and approximately 74 parishes.^c

- 5.4. Despite its geographical size, the Diocese is a relatively small community. Whilst Durham Cathedral sits within the Diocese, it is a separate legal entity, which is significantly larger in terms of financial turnover and personnel. The cathedral therefore has its own parallel safeguarding procedures and committee, although closer links are now made between this and the Diocese.
- 5.5. The first Diocesan safeguarding advisor (DSA) was appointed in Durham in November 1997. She brought considerable safeguarding experience from working within statutory agencies and there was positive local work completed on safeguarding issues in the late 1990s and early 2000s including the provision of a first working document (*Safe and Secure 2002*) as well as the introduction of contracts to manage risk posed by convicted sex offenders attending church. The DSA established close working relationships between herself and local police, probation and Local Authorities. Child protection training was introduced, although it is outside the scope of this review to have researched this in terms of its suitability, depth, roll out and efficacy.
- 5.6. The Diocese of Durham set up the Child Protection Reference Group in the 1990s, initially with responsibility for child protection and, later, all safeguarding matters including vulnerable adults. This was multi-agency with an independent Chair. It changed its name in 2010 to the Diocesan Safeguarding Management Group. This management group oversaw a revision of *Safe and Secure* in 2008.
- 5.7. Safeguarding within the Diocese of Durham therefore has a twenty year history and now appears embedded within general practice, although this is not to say it is perfect. The current DSA Mrs Beth Miller was appointed in March 2013. She too brings previous safeguarding experience from her work within statutory child protection services.
- 5.8. Both the previous and current DSAs advised of the broad functions of the role covering development and/or implementation of safeguarding policies and procedures, related training and casework (i.e. providing advice if concerns are raised), meeting with known convicted offenders and responding to direct allegations. There is also an increasingly large training component. The Diocese of Durham covers a large geographical area, although both DSAs

found this manageable in terms of travel and timely responses to concerns. The time required to fulfil her duties by the current DSA is variable, due largely to casework requirements, but she estimated around 25 hours per week. Both DSAs have been retained on a self-employment basis.

- 5.9. The current DSA is line-managed by Archdeacon Stuart Bain^d, although has separate professional, independent supervision. Between them, they cover all safeguarding aspects of the Diocese, both those generally across the Diocese and Durham Cathedral, Archdeacon Bain representing the link between general safeguarding and the senior Bishop's team. In a recent independent review by the Social Care Institute for Excellence (2016), the Diocese of Durham was praised for its clarity of function and purpose around safeguarding with good, local interpersonal working relationships and, overall, being, '*... comparatively well along the safeguarding journey ...*' The Institute highlighted the very positive practice of the DSA based on her individual experience but also access to all appropriate internal records and all levels of staff.
- 5.10. No concerns arose within this review of the behaviour or responses of either Mrs Beth Miller or Archdeacon Stuart Bain within their safeguarding roles and I echo the positive reflections noted above. There are advantages and disadvantages to the employment status of DSAs where there is a balance to be struck between necessary independence and, therefore, the DSA's ability to act as required in response to safeguarding concerns but also having a good working knowledge of the Diocese at the ground level, which also requires active involvement within all aspects of the Diocese. The issue is one of both actual impartiality and independence as well as third parties' perceptions of this.
- 5.11. More centrally held, joined-up record keeping was also raised by the Institute's review and, given the importance of written records against the Church's poor history of record keeping, this would seem to be an important and immediate issue. Discussions with both Mrs Miller and Archdeacon Bain indicate the Diocese is in the process of identifying and implementing a more comprehensive safeguarding record-keeping system.
- 5.12. On the 1st January this year, Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor Regulations (2016) came into force. Whilst they helpfully set out the nature and extent of DSA's responsibilities (under paragraph 4), as well as requiring professional supervision and time for continuing professional development (paragraph 5), there is little detail regarding what constitutes the, '*appropriate qualifications and experience*' (paragraph 3(i)) referred to within the document. This would benefit from further clarification.

6. GEORGE GRANVILLE GIBSON

- 6.1 Mr Gibson came to the Anglican Church relatively late in life, although he has a lengthy history of involvement with Christianity as he was a lay preacher at a Methodist Church prior to applying for ordination within the Anglican Ministry and commencing his theological training at Cuddeson in 1969. He was ordained Deacon in 1971 and became Assistant Curate at St Paul's, Cullercoats, in the Diocese of Newcastle. He was ordained a priest in 1972. Following his curacy, he became Team Vicar in Cramlington, where he worked between 1973 and 1977, alongside work on the Newcastle Diocesan Synod. He was also a member of the Board of Governors of Church Commissioners.
- 6.2 Between 1977 and 1985, Mr Gibson was vicar of St Clare's in Newton Aycliffe within the Diocese of Durham. He also sat on the Durham Diocesan Synod.
- 6.3 From 1985, Mr Gibson became rector of Bishopwearmouth alongside being a part-time rural dean of Wearmouth. He was a member of the General Synod Board for Social Responsibility. From 1988, Mr Gibson held the post of Honourable Canon at Durham Cathedral and, between 1990 and 1993, he was also team rector of Sunderland Trinity Minister.
- 6.4 In 1993, Mr Gibson became a member of the Diocesan Parsonages Committee and the Ecclesiastical Law Association. From 1995, he was part of the Convocation of York Panel of Assessors and, from the following year, Diocesan Chaplain to the Mother's Union. A letter of March 1996 refers to his involvement with St Cuthbert's Church Choir.
- 6.5 Also from 1993, Mr Gibson became Archdeacon of Auckland, a position he held until July 2001 when he retired. From this time, Mr Gibson retained the titles of Archdeacon and Honorary Canon Emeritus of the Diocese of Durham. He continued to have permission to officiate until his arrest on 1st April 2014 when it was agreed that Mr Gibson would step down with immediate effect from all ministerial duties and would not offer any ministry at any time.
- 6.6 Following Mr Gibson's conviction on 4th August 2016, all permission to officiate was rescinded and a contract drawn up to manage his on-going attendance at church as a parishioner. Mr Gibson's deed of resignation was formally signed on 6th October 2016. On the 31st October 2016, the Crown Court sentenced Mr Gibson to two months imprisonment and twelve months imprisonment, to run concurrently, after being found guilty of two counts of indecent assault.

7. National Policies

- 7.1. This review can only address policies related to the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults. It is beyond its scope to consider wider policies such as bullying and discrimination, disciplinary procedures or, more latterly, whistle blowing policies; although the author accepts these form part of the background context within which specific complaints may be made, it has not been possible to do meaningful justice to them here and only a brief reference is made as a result.
- 7.2. It is clear that within the church, child protection policies have been relatively slow to materialise, the first being published in 1995, entitled *Policy on Child Abuse*. It was updated in 1999 with the *Policy on Child Protection* and, in 2003, *Protecting All God's Children*.
- 7.3. A national policy entitled *Promoting a Safe Church* was published in 2006 following a directive from the House of Bishops, broadening out safeguarding to also include vulnerable adults.
- 7.4. *Protecting All God's Children* was updated in 2010 and remains in force at the current time. A planned update to this document is delayed although is due imminently. One consequence of this is that a review of the local guidance *Safe and Secure 2008* has also been delayed. However national policies have been augmented by two sets of guidance, both published in June 2015: *Practice Guidance: Responding to Serious Safeguarding Situations Relating to Church Officers* and *Practice Guidance: Risk Assessment for Individuals who may pose a Risk to Children or Adults*.
- 7.5. In terms of broader guidance on expected clergy behaviour, this is set out in varied documents including aspects of Canon Law and directives from the House of Bishops. It was also set out in the document, *Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy* (2003, updated in 2015).

8. **Complaints: What was recorded when, by whom and what action was taken**

8.1. **Prior to 2001**

- 8.1.1 Prior to 2001, there are no recorded, written accounts of, or references to, sexually abusive or inappropriate behaviour by Mr Gibson, and no accounts of any unbecoming behaviour within any of the records held by the Diocese of Durham which have been seen by the reviewer. Although the reviewer has not seen the safeguarding records held by Durham Cathedral, she was assured there are no safeguarding references to Mr Gibson held by them at all and that he had limited involvement with activities at the Cathedral, restricted to his role as an Honorary Canon from 1988.
- 8.1.2 However, despite this, it is clear from talking to a number of clergy that there were rumours and hearsay regarding Mr Gibson's sexuality and subsequent behaviour, particularly at social gatherings. He appears to have had a widely-held reputation for inappropriate behaviour, particularly towards other, often younger, male curates and priests, alongside consumption of excessive alcohol. This included invading personal space and being overly physical with excessive hugs or kissing. Words used by individuals included feeling 'wary' of Mr Gibson, feeling 'uncomfortable' around him, 'disquiet' at his behaviour or feeling 'confused' by it. Individuals also described Mr Gibson as 'arrogant' and 'self-centred at times' who considered himself able to act with impunity due to his position and status within the church.
- 8.1.3 Accounts suggest this was tolerated or dismissed as drunkenness by most and by clergy noting to themselves and others to stay out of his way and not be left alone with Mr Gibson. Whilst his behaviour was considered by some to be evidence of possible homosexuality there was no suggestion that consideration was given to the power imbalance resulting from positions he held and the vulnerability of younger, junior clergy.
- 8.1.4 It is not clear how extensive these rumours were (although they do appear to have been widely known within at least parts of the Diocese) or how much those in senior positions were aware of them. It is also unclear how much they have gained sharper focus in light of recent events. Concerns have been raised during this review at Mr Gibson's promotion within the church, receiving preferments and positions of status, when his behaviour indicated general concern and was strongly indicative against placing such an individual in positions of power; however, it isn't clear how much these reflect hindsight as opposed to concerns expressed at the time. Given the inter-relatedness and small numbers of local clergy within this Diocese, it is reasonable to assume that at least some of these rumours may have been known to those in more

senior positions and, if this is correct, there are questions about decisions made to promote Mr Gibson and nominate him for particular positions.

8.1.5 Prior to 2001, the Church of England's safeguarding policies only referred to children and young people with no explicit recognition of the needs of vulnerable adults. There were also no clear guidelines setting out standards of behaviour by those ordained within a succinct document. However, it is inconceivable that such behaviour as summarised above would have been accepted as reasonable, tolerable or welcome; rather, it was clearly behaviour unbecoming of a clerk in holy orders as supported by later guidance, initially in 2003 and latterly in 2015. For example, at page 2 of the initial guidelines, paragraph 2.9, it states: *'It is essential in pastoral care to acknowledge appropriate physical, sexual, emotional and psychological boundaries. Inappropriate touching or gestures of affection are to be avoided.'* Mr Gibson's behaviour towards colleagues clearly breached these expectations.

8.2 2001

8.2.1 The first reference to possible sexually abusive or inappropriate behaviour is recorded in February 2004 when safeguarding notes record, *'adult male priest complained about Gibson's behaviour at a conference. No complaint made through choice.'* Despite being recorded in 2004, the notes indicate a discussion three years prior when an adult male priest (Priest B) mentioned Mr Gibson's behaviour at a conference to Priest K. The young priest was spoken to in 2004 and the information shared with safeguarding staff and Bishop's Chaplain 1.

8.2.2 When Priest B was spoken to as part of this review, he was very firm in his position that nothing of significance had occurred between himself and Mr Gibson. He described two minor encounters, once when Mr Gibson hugged him too closely and for too long, which left him feeling uncomfortable, and once when Mr Gibson stroked Priest B's foot at a team away day, which is the incident from 2001 and which was reported to the DSA by Priest K. Priest B saw neither as abusive, albeit he felt uncomfortable and confused regarding Mr Gibson's intentions. He was emphatic that he does not perceive himself to have been hurt or abused in any way by Mr Gibson; neither did he initiate or support any complaint being made on his behalf, although appeared to accept Priest K's decision to mention this to DSA X.

8.2.3 When interviewed for this review, Priest K has no recollection of this conversation regarding Priest B with DSA X in 2004, although he did recall an informal discussion when returning from an away day when Priest B referred to Mr Gibson as, *'touchy, touchy, feely, feely Granville.'* Priest K stated he did not think it was serious and that Priest B was sufficiently confident and able to look after himself, both physically and psychologically. Bishop's Chaplain 1

said she could not remember any incident and, therefore, had nothing to add. When interviewed, DSA X double-checked her hand-written notes which dated this conversation to the 15th January 2004, a number of weeks before it was formally recorded. Her notes indicate that Priest K had informed her of Priest B's comments, which she followed up by speaking to him directly with her notes summarising: *'wants nothing to do with the matter if at all possible'*.

8.2.4 The safeguarding notes also indicate that Priest B had raised the issue of Mr Gibson working with young people and a charity in Romania, although made no specific complaint and had no specific knowledge of any concerns. When spoken to for this review, Priest B could not recall this. This is recorded in the DSA's notes, where it is also recorded that Mr Gibson could go to Romania as previously approved as, *'... although visits to Parishes and Monasteries, no direct contact with children although there could be casual contact.'* An extra level of protection was thought to arise from an Archdeacon being part of the group and aware of the circumstances. The then Chair of the Child Protection Reference Group, has no recollection of this discussion and the minutes are not available.

8.2.5 In summary, Mr Gibson's behaviour towards Priest B appears not to have been viewed as a potential safeguarding matter in 2001, only later being recalled in light of another, historical allegation against Mr Gibson made in 2004. Primarily, the age of the complainant was important (in his 30's) with reduced perceived vulnerability attributable to his personality and ability to physically protect himself. However, an opportunity to consider the potential risk posed to younger, less confident, priests was therefore missed. There was also a possible conflation of two separate issues: homosexuality and sexually abusive, non-consenting behaviour, compounded by an emphasis on alcohol, leading to a diminution in personal responsibility and failure to consider similar scenarios where the behaviour may be repeated and lead to greater concern.

8.2.6 On a separate matter, when interviewed for this review, Priest D, recalled that, around 2001, a young man seeking asylum was being helped by her local parish in Darlington. He was around 20 years old. One day he suddenly disappeared from the parish. She was later told by Priest H, her training incumbent, that Mr Gibson had apparently touched the young man when both had been in the church vestry and that the young man had not been seen since. Priest H also told Priest D that Mr Gibson acted, *'inappropriately'* with boys during his trips to Romania, amounting to sitting them on his knee. As far as Priest D is aware, this information was never passed onto DSA X and, therefore, was not acted upon. Indeed, there is no record anywhere of this allegation. Priest H now resides outside the U.K. and was not available for interview.

8.2.7 In summary, in 2001, there was no formal recognition within the Church of England of the abuse of vulnerable adults and how to deal more proactively and robustly with such situations, complaints or allegations. The account of an alleged indecent assault of a young asylum seeker in 2001 is clearly criminal behaviour and yet no safeguarding action was taken, causing an important piece of the picture to be missed and, most importantly, a young vulnerable man possibly forced to move on when he should have been receiving help and sanctuary.

8.3 **2004**

8.3.1 The first recorded, specific sexual complaint against Mr Gibson was made in February 2004. This was for alleged sexual abuse of a child, which had reportedly happened 22 years previously i.e. in 1982 whilst he was the vicar of St Clare's in Newton Aycliffe. The alleged victim would then have been 10 years old. This concern is clearly recorded in the safeguarding notes which indicate the information was shared with Bishop's Chaplain 1, Archdeacon Stephen Conway and Mr Carl Docking (child protection co-ordinator for Durham County Council) two days after the complaint was made by the victim's mother. A note indicates that Bishop Tom Wright would also make senior staff within the church aware of the allegations. There is also copy of a letter from February 2004 from Mr Carl Docking to the Durham Constabulary vulnerability unit outlining the allegations made against Mr Gibson.

8.3.2 When interviewed, Priest K recalled he had been approached by the victim's mother during a Sunday service when she said, *'her son was assaulted by a priest.'* He reflected on the unexpected nature of the disclosure but said he saw her briefly afterwards when she repeated it. He saw her again later the same day when the victim's mother repeated her allegation including naming Mr Gibson. On his return, Priest K said he advised Bishop Tom Wright, as well as discussing the matter with Archdeacon Conway. Priest K was advised to tell DSA X immediately, which he said he did. DSA X's recollections accord with this, receiving a telephone call from Priest K on the 15th February 2004 relaying the allegation made. DSA X recalled that the victim did not wish to pursue the matter with the police and was offered counselling by the Diocese but declined this as he was already involved with mental health services. Her notes state that she had discussed the case with Archdeacon Conway and Bishop's Chaplain 1. They also indicate she passed this information on to the relevant Social Services Child Protection department in February 2004, although there is no copy of either her letter or any response from them.

8.3.3 The disclosure was also passed onto the police force who spoke to the victim, a police constable and Priest K visiting him at home. Priest K said that, at the time, he thought the police officer was making notes but said he later discovered she had in fact only made limited notes. He also thought that the

victim made a police statement but, again, recently discovered this was not the case. He did recall being advised in 2004 by the police constable that there was nothing else that could be done as nothing could be proven. The safeguarding notes record that Priest K liaised with the victims family who were made aware that the matter had been taken, '*very seriously*' by the Diocese and knew the police had advised that matters could not be taken further due to lack of evidence.

- 8.3.4 Unfortunately, minutes from the DSMG are not available from this time as they were typed on another organisation's system and paper copies were not being correctly stored and kept, although it is not clear why. As part of this review, DSA X reviewed her hand-written notes and fed back this matter was specifically discussed at a meeting on the 1st April 2004 but that, as the complainant was not prepared to make a statement, little else could be achieved. There is no evidence of an internal risk assessment being completed, whether attributable to the police's advice not to tell Mr Gibson about the allegation, the lack of procedural guidance and/or a belief none was necessary. (Risk assessment policies were only introduced in 2015.) There are no other notes of this complaint in the records made available to the reviewer; specifically, there is no record in Mr Gibson's blue file, although this would have been expected given the nature of the allegations and the action taken.
- 8.3.5 The police's advice to the Diocese at the time was that Mr Gibson should not be made aware of the allegation as this may inhibit other victims from coming forward. The reviewer understands this advice was discussed within the senior staff team meeting, although she has not had access to these minutes. Priest K recalled discussing this with Bishop Tom Wright and said he noted at the time, and reiterates now, his strong disagreement with this advice. As minutes are not available, it is unclear how agreement was reached amongst the Diocesan senior staff group to follow the police's advice.
- 8.3.6 Regarding the allegation of abuse, the Diocese appears to have responded appropriately and in a timely fashion, both in relation to notifying internal safeguarding staff as well as external agencies, particularly the police and the Local Authority child protection officer. Importantly, the family were also kept informed and reassured that their concerns had been taken seriously. The Diocese's decision to abide by advice from the police force is a key issue and one which should be reviewed in light of policy and practice at the time. As an authoritative public body with responsibility for the prevention and detection of criminal matters, it is understandable the Diocese would have taken their advice seriously. The fact matters would now be addressed differently does not negate the validity of the Diocese's decision at that time.

8.4 2008/09

- 8.4.1 In 2008, the Diocese of Durham commissioned an independent report from a consultant ("Consultant 1") which was completed in March 2009, to review files for past cases of safeguarding children issues following direction from the then Archbishop Rowan Williams. For each clergyman (retired and existing), Readers and those with permission to officiate (PTO), a checklist was completed by the DSA. In relation to Mr Gibson, this is dated September 2008 and signed DSA X. One question concerns any allegations of inappropriate conduct or criminal offences against children or vulnerable adults, which was incorrectly ticked 'no' as to was whether Mr Gibson needed to be added to the Known Cases List. (It was later confirmed that Mr Gibson was only added to the Known Cases List post-conviction.) These are clearly in error and, whilst it might be an anomaly, it may undermine the review's subsequent findings of no outstanding child protection matters. (The review did highlight failures in administering CRB checks including completing these in a timely fashion or sometimes at all and ensuring records were kept and updated.) Consultant 1's Review included a letter trawl which apparently highlighted Mr Gibson's case as one of concern. However, the current safeguarding officer advises that a number of attempts have been made to locate this information but it is no longer available, although nobody can articulate why. DSMG minutes of 25th March 2009 also noted that Counsultant 1 would shred all documents and delete any electronic records associated with this report and, therefore, there is little which can meaningfully be gleaned from this now as it is heavily anonymised.
- 8.4.2 Later, in December 2009, a confidential declaration form was completed by Mr Gibson. These forms are completed at various times including when an individual moves parish. Here Mr Gibson makes the following self-declaration: *'a charge of indecent assault was made against me by a youth from the young offenders institute at Newton Aycliffe. After investigation, the DPP's office decided there was no case to answer. This event occurred around 1980. Sorry but I cannot be more precise about the dates.'* It is of significant concern there is no recorded response in terms of following this up with Mr Gibson or, indeed, with the police, and this was a clear red flag missed indicating a systemic failure within the Diocese's safeguarding procedures when the form was completed in 2009; also, possibly by the police if they failed to advise the Diocese of any such investigations in 1980. I understand the form would have been seen by the Bishop's office but no follow up with DSA X appears to have occurred. Durham Constabulary have since advised they have no record of Mr Gibson being interviewed for such allegations around 1980. Finally, Mr Gibson would have been expected to have shared this with his superiors but there is no record of this either, although it isn't now possible to determine whether it was never reported by Mr Gibson or just not recorded.

8.5 2010

- 8.5.1 On the 30th April 2010, the Durham Diocesan DSA received a telephone call from the Child Protection Advisor to the St Albans and Europe Diocese after Mr Gibson had been raised as a potential concern as a result of their Past Cases Review. DSA X's notes state: *'Allegations had been made re an historical sex assault and he was requesting information.'* DSA X emailed a copy of information held relating to disclosures made in 2004 as well as a copy of a letter from Social Services (although this letter isn't now within the safeguarding records). No further action was taken by the Diocese of Durham.
- 8.5.2 For this Review, the current DSA for St Albans and Europe was contacted. She came into post in February 2016. She confirmed that, when reviewing previous records, she had come across a letter to the Independent Safeguarding Authority dated August 2010 from the former DSA, referring Mr Gibson following an entry in a confidential declaration form. (Mr Gibson was also made aware of this in a letter to him dated 3rd October 2010.) The information contained in the declaration mirrors that within the December 2009 form held by the Diocese of Durham and noted that, in the late 1970s, when Mr Gibson was a vicar at Newton Aycliffe, he had been charged with an offence of indecent assault but the DPP indicated no further action, with Mr Gibson's note stating the victim had made similar disclosures before. This form was dated 18th January 2002 and there is a handwritten note underneath: *This has been brought to my attention. I have no concerns in view of action taken by the CPS.* However, there is no name or signature recorded.
- 8.5.3 As there was no response on file from the ISA, the DSA for St Albans and Europe contacted the now Disclosure and Barring Service who responded in May 2016 with a copy of their initial response, acknowledging the referral but stating that, due to the Data Protection Act (1998) and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006), their policy is not to automatically inform referrers of the outcome of individual cases. The DSA for St Albans and Europe did contact the vicar who had succeeded Mr Gibson's ministry in Romania who advised that he had heard no complaints about Mr Gibson's behaviour. The DSA for St Albans and Europe clarified that Mr Gibson had had a two-week PTO licence in Romania (other records date this between 28th April and 19th May 2002). When asked about other visits to the country (twice per annum noted in a letter from Mr Gibson dated 18th January 2002) The DSA for St Albans and Europe said these were the responsibility of the Diocese of Durham and unrelated to St Albans and Europe Diocese activity.
- 8.5.4 Following Mr Gibson's conviction, The DSA for St Albans and Europe sent Mrs Beth Miller everything in their records relating to Mr Gibson. The reviewer has seen these records and they do not include any additional information.

8.6 2012

8.6.1 In September 2012, concerns were raised by Priest D (then vicar) and Priest J (then curate) that Mr Gibson was mentoring at St Aidan's Church of England Academy in Darlington including giving instructions to a young male server at St James' Church. Mr Gibson also apparently took some children out for meals, although Priest D believed his wife was always present. Priest J described a culmination of issues which, together, raised her concerns and she shared these during a supervision session with her professional supervisor. These included Mr Gibson's general poor boundaries and the attention he gave to young men. She had also heard an account when a young male curate described being shown around St Aidan's C of E Academy by Mr Gibson who, 'accidentally' touched his bottom. (This was later shared with the police in 2014.)

8.6.2 The, then chair of the DSMG, and DSA X, discussed this, with the outcome that the latter met with Mr Gibson on the 11th September 2012. He denied spending any time alone with servers and maintained he was fully aware of child protection guidelines and abided by them. Although Mr Gibson did mentor some boys from the school, he stated he always ensured he was fully in sight of others. Both the then Chair of DSMG and DSA X noted that, as no specific complaint had been made, there was no further action they could take, although there is a note that Mr Gibson should complete further training on safeguarding, which he apparently did. (The system of recording training completed appears to be separate from each clergy's file and it isn't therefore easy to ascertain which courses any one individual has been on.) Training on safeguarding matters would also have proved ineffective as a deterrent against any intention to abuse. This information does not appear to have been considered against the previous 2004 allegation of alleged historical sexual abuse of a boy and no conversation was had with the school itself. The latter appears to have been another omission where important safeguarding matters could have been discussed, checked and reinforced.

8.7 2014

8.7.1 In March 2014, it had been discovered that Mr Gibson had invited a pupil from St Aidan's Academy whom he was mentoring back to his house for tea. This contravened both school and church policies and the then chair and DSA X both expressed concern, which is recorded in the safeguarding notes. Also at this time, Mr Gibson's laptop was serviced by the school's I.T. department who found an icon on his website for *Silver Daddies* which, although apparently legal, had graphic images of naked men and homosexuality. The DSA made a referral to MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) in Darlington. Within less than a week, Mr Gibson was arrested for historical sexual offences.

8.7.2 There is no further record of formal complaints or allegations made against Mr Gibson in terms of sexually abusive or inappropriate behaviour, or indeed any other behaviour unbecoming of a clerk in holy orders, until his arrest on the 1st April.

8.8 Post Arrest

8.8.1 Mr Gibson was arrested on the 1st April 2014. This created a number of obligations by the Diocese, which some may see as opposed to each other, and this section addresses the Diocese's response following Mr Gibson's initial arrest through to being charged (in May 2015) and to his trial and later conviction in August 2016. Following Mr Gibson's conviction, on the 4th August, the Rt. Revd Paul Butler issued a public statement offering an *'unreserved apology to all the survivors and those affected by this news.'* This independent review was also identified to review, *'... all the circumstances surrounding this case so that we can learn from what has happened.'*

8.8.2 Mr Gibson's arrest triggered a dual-pronged approach in relation to Mr Gibson himself, a third strand of responding to possible survivors of Mr Gibson's behaviour, a fourth strand of responding to the Gibson family's reactions to how the church responded and a final strand of managing general relations across the Diocese from parishioners to other clergy and lay members of the church. The Church of England's national safeguarding team also had to be appraised of events, which they were.

8.8.3 Following Mr Gibson's arrest, the Diocese was initially aware of two possible victims; a third victim was included later in the process. There is evidence of clear, on-going communication between the police and the DSA in terms of alleged victims. An entry in her records for the 3rd April 2014 noted an offer to Survivor 2 although this was declined by him and she confirmed she had no contact with him until the trial when she introduced herself through his police support liaison officer.

8.8.4 When interviewed, Survivor 2 expressed his, *'disappointment'* at the Diocese's response following Mr Gibson's arrest, specifically their lack of contact with him until Mr Gibson's conviction. This is consistent with his belief that the church continued to support Mr Gibson and was therefore unable to truly consider his guilt. He believes the church needs to focus more on the harm caused to victims rather than defending itself, that a, *'tighter rein'* should be kept on clergy who have responsibility for people's well-being and that the church should act sooner on all disclosures and not just following a guilty conviction. In summary, they should be more preventative than reactive. However, he also thought it was positive that he had met with Bishop Mark Bryant (when the Rt. Revd Paul Butler was unavailable) and received an apology from him, which Survivor 2 thought had been genuine.

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- 8.8.5 Offers of support were also made to Survivor 3 (the first before the start of Mr Gibson's trial) although these were declined, Survivor 3 considering them too little too late. Safeguarding notes indicate the initial approach to Survivor 3 had been by email, which the reviewer queried as possibly too impersonal, and it was explained that Survivor 3 then resided abroad and email was seen to be a more immediate means of offering support. However, the DSA accepts a personal letter may have been more appropriate with hindsight. She has responded to requests for information from Survivor 3 regarding wider church policies.
- 8.8.6 In terms of Survivor 1, his on-going involvement with the church made communication with him easier and he has received both emotional and practical support throughout, both by Mrs Miller as well as other members of his local church. When reflecting on how challenging the trial had been for him, Survivor 1 also referred to the support he had received from both his wife and also Mrs Miller. In relation to her input, Survivor 1 had found this very helpful, particularly providing emotional support and keeping him updated; she has also attended meetings with him. However, he felt she could have assisted more fully when some difficulties arose between him and St Clare's following Survivor 1's own attendance at court in 2016. He remains angry and frustrated at the additional safeguarding checks put in place by St Clare's as a result of this, which he experienced as rejection of him.
- 8.8.7 The victim has also since met with the Rt. Revd Paul Butler whom he thought had been, '*really brilliant*' in acknowledging his suffering and apologising for this, although Survivor 1 did feel that he had to work harder to achieve this due to the not guilty verdicts. However, it was more important for him that the church believed him rather than the jury as the former remains a meaningful part of his life and he continues to receive on-going support from staff at the parish church he now attends. The victim also receives counselling through the Pastoral Care and Counselling Service, which is progressing, and he finds it helpful to talk things through.
- 8.8.8 In terms of managing wider reactions, a helpline was initiated following Mr Gibson's trial and conviction as a short-term measure as the DSA felt it may assist those with concerns or queries during a period when she was away, although she reported there were no calls made to it.
- 8.8.9 In relation to Mr Gibson, Durham Diocese's safeguarding notes set out the separate functions of disciplinary and pastoral functions in response to Mr Gibson and his wife. Two senior staff members were given these respective responsibilities.

8.8.10 In terms of disciplinary measures, Mr Gibson was seen immediately post arrest and advised he must step down from all church-related activities and Boards and cease all ministerial duties; Mr Gibson also agreed to step down from all duties associated with St Aidan's Academy. This was followed up in writing and an agreement drawn up regarding Mr Gibson's subsequent attendance at Holy Trinity Church. This was all in accordance with current guidelines and procedure.

8.8.11 Formal disciplinary measures were enacted following Mr Gibson's conviction when all PTO was formally removed. Clergy disciplinary measures were implemented and he was referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service and placed on the Archbishop's list. Mr Gibson signed his deed of resignation on the 6th October 2016. All of this appears to have been within guidance and followed clear safeguarding issues alongside offers of continued pastoral support for Mr Gibson and his wife.

8.8.12 Mr Gibson's arrest and how the Diocese responded to this would also impact upon members of Mr Gibson's wider family. As part of this review, it was therefore also deemed important to determine the experiences of Mr Gibson's family as these related to the church's decisions and actions. The reviewer met with one of Mr Gibson's sons who articulated the significant shock, distress and turmoil experienced by the family during this period, in addition to anger and some disagreement with aspects of the Diocese's responses, particularly letters and announcements made to various churches. The trial itself was traumatic, raising questions about how decisions were reached by the jury and, as an extension of this, how the Rt. Revd Paul Butler determined to offer a formal letter of apology to one of those who had accused his father. This particularly upset the family, not only in identifying a third victim but, more importantly in Mr Gibson's son's mind, deeming his father a child sexual abuser on account of this person's then young age. When asked specifically about his decision to write to Survivor 1, the Rt. Revd Paul Butler recognised the distress it may cause some but felt that, on balance, it was important for the survivor to be heard and believed.

8.8.13 Perhaps understandably, Mr Gibson's son expressed consternation and anger at the tone of some of the Diocese's responses, which he felt were too slanted towards survivors and, therefore, suggestive of his father's guilt even before the trial had commenced and which he felt failed to adequately address Mr Gibson's significant history of positive involvement with the church. Balancing this, it was recognised that a number of the Diocese's responses were necessary, including suspending Mr Gibson's PTO; it was also positive that Mr Gibson had a number of supportive meetings with Archdeacon Barker who was there to provide pastoral care.

8.8.14 Finally, the Diocese also had to consider how to respond to wider reactions expressed by both clergy and parishioners across the Diocese. This was addressed through notices read out at specific churches, supported by their vicar and Mrs Miller, whilst, in relation to other clergy, an email was disseminated. One person interviewed for this review experienced this email as somewhat insensitive and overly focused on containment rather than simultaneously seeking to offer comfort and/or invite further information. The tone was therefore seen as unhelpful and, it was felt, it could have been more balanced.

9 Those directly harmed by Mr Gibson

- 9.1 The Diocese of Durham has acknowledged three victims or survivors of Mr Gibson's abusive behaviour. Two of these Mr Gibson was convicted of assaulting following his trial. The third (Survivor 1) has been acknowledged as somebody harmed by Mr Gibson despite the not guilty, or undecided, verdicts reached by the jury. This section addresses their issues more directly.
- 9.2 The youngest complainant is Survivor 1. He is the young man whose mother made a complaint in 2004 about alleged abuse. He has a long involvement with the church through his family and he regularly attended St Clare's Church in Newton Aycliffe, attending the choir and assisting as a server. The victim suffered sexual abuse from two men prior to that reported by Mr Gibson, from around the age of 8, and described early behavioural problems. Although he was taken into Local Authority foster care, he continued to attend St Clare's. He states Mr Gibson sexually abused him between 1977 and 1985, the period when Mr Gibson officiated at St Clare's.
- 9.3 Initially, Survivor 1 described Mr Gibson's behaviour as, '*nice (and) friendly.*' However, he also recalled Mr Gibson later indecently assaulting him in the vestry area of St Clare's during evensong, where the majority of the abuse occurred, but also on Thursday evenings in Mr Gibson's car, when the two travelled to services. Mr Gibson allegedly touched the victim's groin and would kiss and cuddle him, threatening him not to tell. The victim felt as if nobody would believe him and it was only after his father died in 2003 that he thought he should tell someone. He recalls telling his mother but doesn't remember the later meeting with Priest K and a police officer. He now regrets not taking matters further at the time.
- 9.4 The victim thought the abuse had had a, '*massive effect*' on him. He blames Mr Gibson for him going into foster care and taking away his childhood. The victim's wife attended his meeting with the reviewer and she described problems with physical and emotional intimacy as well as her husband suffering low mood and often feeling depressed; he sometimes takes things out on her. The victim is bitterly disappointed that Mr Gibson was cleared of all charges against him, although pleased he was convicted on other charges.
- 9.5 Another of those harmed by Mr Gibson is Survivor 2. Interviewed as part of this review, Survivor 2 recalled a troubled early life and being sentenced to Community Service, he thought around the age of 18, which he served at St Clare's Church in Newton Aycliffe. This is where he met Mr Gibson. Initially, Survivor 2's impressions of Mr Gibson were positive, that Mr Gibson was, '*wonderful*' and somebody an impressionable youth could look up to. However, Survivor 2 also described repeated sexual assaults by Mr Gibson, estimating

around 15 in total over a three to four month period. These assaults allegedly occurred in both the church itself and Mr Gibson's home (specifically in his study). They involved penetrative acts, which would now be called rape but was then termed buggery. Although Survivor 2 followed no religion, his mother did, and he had been brought up to fear wrong-doing and being eternally punished.

- 9.6 As a result of the assaults, Survivor 2 refused to return to his placement, eventually disclosing the abuse to his probation officer. However, he described being told by her that he was lying and, 'evil.' His mother had not believed him either and these responses exacerbated the initial trauma. Survivor 2 was ultimately returned to court and re-sentenced to a period of youth detention, spending three months at Medomsley Detention Centre, which remains the subject of on-going police investigations into sexual and physical abuse. During his detention, Survivor 2 said he was unexpectedly visited by Mr Gibson who sexually assaulted him on one occasion there as well. Due to the paucity of records, it isn't clear whether this refers to Mr Gibson's self-declared arrest around 1979/1980 following an allegation of sexual assault at a Youth Offenders Institution, although Survivor 2 had not mentioned Mr Gibson's arrest when interviewed.
- 9.7 Survivor 2 described how his life has been destroyed by the combination of these experiences. He has suffered significant mental health concerns including being detained in psychiatric hospitals on a number of occasions due to risks to his own life and, sometimes, others' too. He is now in his 60s and feels as if his childhood and most of his adulthood have been taken from him. He resides in a secluded area, finding people too anxiety-provoking. He struggles to find purpose or meaning in his life and, although he has been married twice and has children and grand-children, he feels emotionally restrained and unable to love them the way he would wish to. He cannot be physically close to his children as his experiences have distorted his concept of physical contact between adults and children and he feels robbed of the opportunity to lead a normal life, unable to live as he sees others doing.
- 9.8 Survivor 2 understandably found the recent criminal trial stressful. He acknowledged anti-establishment beliefs and continues to feel angry at both the legal system for what evidence was allowed to be heard by the jury, as well as his belief that the Church of England funded Mr Gibson's legal defence. In this regard, Survivor 2 continues to blame the church, interpreting their presumed financial outlay in providing Mr Gibson's defence, as support for Mr Gibson and his behaviour. When discussing Mr Gibson's defence, both his son and the current DSA were adamant that the church had not funded Mr Gibson's defence and he was apparently advised that, as a retired priest at the time of his arrest, he was not eligible.

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- 9.9 In addition to Survivor 2, Survivor 3 is another known survivor of both Mr Gibson's and – he would emphasise – the church's abuse of him too.
- 9.10 Survivor 3 was a young man in his twenties when he was ordained, with his first placement at St Clare's Church in Newton Aycliffe around 1981. His training incumbent was Mr Gibson, although Survivor 3 noted from early on that Mr Gibson was not interested in investing time and effort into his development.
- 9.11 Within six months, Survivor 3 was approached by a female parishioner who had allegedly seen Mr Gibson kissing a young male Vietnamese man who had arrived in the area and was seeking support. Survivor 3 was clearly perturbed by this and unsure what to do. He described being cautioned by another priest who warned him not to pass on these concerns about Mr Gibson as he would be, '*hung out to dry.*' Not long afterwards, Survivor 3 described being indecently assaulted by Mr Gibson who wrapped his body around Survivor 3, pressing his erect penis into him. Survivor 3 described shock and confusion and pushed Mr Gibson away who acted as if nothing had happened.
- 9.12 Survivor 3 described Mr Gibson later visiting him at home and apparently telling him he thought he had a homosexual spirit in him, which was causing him to have multiple affairs across the parish and seeking Survivor 3's advice. Survivor 3 advised him to speak to other senior clergy, which Mr Gibson later told him he had done and that, following this, the homosexual spirit had been cast out.
- 9.13 However, as Mr Gibson refused to provide Survivor 3 with further information, leaving him dis-satisfied, Survivor 3 took the step of asking to see the then Bishop of Durham, the Rt. Revd John Habgood. Survivor 3 described consternation and apprehension, in part due to the nature of what he had to discuss and in part to the significant power and status imbalance. Survivor 3 found the Bishop's response lacklustre, although Bishop Habgood did apparently state he would speak to Mr Gibson, which he later told Survivor 3 he had done. Survivor 3 said he was told that Mr Gibson had denied the allegations and that Bishop Habgood refused to speak to the parishioner himself, rather, allegedly telling Survivor 3 that he should stop listening to vexatious gossip and causing problems.
- 9.14 Survivor 3 recounted how this was the start of a process of him being forced to relinquish his Orders and licence to officiate and, ultimately, leaving his calling as a clergyman at that time.
- 9.15 Survivor 3 spoke at length about the power imbalances within the church resulting from the strict hierarchy, extensive rules and expectations of how to

behave, and reliance upon others for patronage to get on. Bishops have significant power and local influence, which can lead to variations in practice and approach. Survivor 3 also found their allegedly classist attitudes towards his working class background, “*offensive*.”

- 9.16 Survivor 3 summarised that Mr Gibson’s initial abuse of him was not what has angered and dismayed him the most but, rather, what he described as the persistent cover up by the Church of England to protect a clergyman (and thereby themselves). Rather than Mr Gibson being reviewed, Survivor 3 described a process of insidious demolition of his professional reputation and personal character; as livelihood and accommodation are attached to church office, he lost these too and became temporarily financially dependent upon the charity of friends and family. He found the superficial civility of the church a veneer, which made it impossible to judge others’ true intent, as well as being deeply hypocritical and the antipathy of what the church should stand for. Survivor 3 believes deeply that the church’s own reputation and standing is continually placed before the well-being of its individual members.
- 9.17 It is of particular concern there is no record of any conversations between Survivor 3 and the then Rt. Revd Bishop Habgood. There is no reference to them at all within Mr Gibson’s blue file and, whilst not available to the reviewer, Survivor 3 states there is no mention of these in his blue file either. The reviewer has been advised that the former Bishop John Habgood is no longer fit to be interviewed on account of health concerns.^e She has also been advised that, following the implementation of the Data Protection Act (1998), an order was received to edit clergy files to remove hand-written entries made by Bishops or Archdeacons describing their personal comments about individual priests’ suitability for candidacy selection or training. There was also encouragement to reduce the overall bulk of blue files which were thought to hold extraneous material such as routine letters. The order apparently did not cover retired or deceased clergy and, locally within the Diocese of Durham, there was an emphasis on leaving information in situ and erring on the side of caution.
- 9.18 It is of course possible there are other victims of Mr Gibson whom we currently have no knowledge of. If so, some of these may still come forward whilst others may not for varied reasons.

10 Culture of the Church of England

- 10.1 Much has been written on this subject, not only as the result of various independent and judicial reviews into cases of sexual abuse by clergy from the Church of England (and other faiths although, predominantly, the Catholic Church) but also through extensive media coverage, as well as in academic journals and books. Needless to say, an in-depth analysis is out with the remit

of this review; the issue is too extensive to do justice to and this section therefore reflects only on the background culture and how it contributed to failings in relation to Mr Gibson's case. If the church sets itself the highest standards of welfare and promoting and protecting parishioners, how do we understand its failings?

- 10.2 In understanding sexual abuse within institutions, there is a necessary confluence of two main factors: the individual characteristics of the abuser including his emotional and social functioning, interpersonal relationships and sexual deviancy, and organisational issues, i.e. there must be opportunity for abuse to happen – not only a physical space but an emotional or psychological context too – in which behaviour which is uniformly abhorred can still repeatedly occur.
- 10.3 Power is inherent in all abuse. The Church of England is very hierarchical, with status and power closely aligned to position in a system which is very top-down; despite the daily ministrations which are the bread and butter of the church's objectives performed by those nearer the bottom, its culture (i.e. its beliefs, assumptions and values) remain firmly fixed by, and directed from, those at the top. This top-down approach disempowers those at the bottom, weakening their voices and influence. Progressing within such institutions is associated not only with hard work but also compliance with the status quo and a number of people interviewed for this review referred to Mr Gibson's status and associated power as a deterrent to feeling able to address concerns more directly.
- 10.4 The hierarchy is also apparent through historical weak central governance of safeguarding, resulting in a lack of clear focus or direction; local autonomy and the significant influence of Bishops, whom some consider act with impunity, also leaves complainants nowhere else to go if their concerns are not listened to. Again, this appears to have occurred when concerns were directly raised with the then Diocesan Bishop in the early 1980s.
- 10.5 Many clergy and lay members of the church are caring and compassionate, embodying the core principles of Christianity. However, in those who also sexually abuse others, these positive character traits, supported by a lack of general criminality, lead to a skewed perception of the possibility of abuse or a disavowal of it altogether, as though a person who has done such good cannot also have done such harm. This is a commonly held belief and is likely to have been evident in relation to how some perceived Mr Gibson and the possibility of sexual abuse by him. However, neither the apparent ordinariness of abusers nor their potential for doing good should be taken to negate their ability to also do great harm. Some spoken to as part of this review mentioned the positive work completed by Mr Gibson in various parishes across the Diocese, in

assisting individual families, serving on Boards and providing support to local communities facing multiple adversities. Comments include that he was, *'well loved'* by his congregation and that, even following his conviction and imprisonment, Mr Gibson continues to receive positive messages of support from individuals whose view of him remains unchanged. These diverse and apparently irreconcilable impressions make it difficult for many to form a cohesive understanding of Mr Gibson and his behaviour.

- 10.6 Historically, poor responses from those in positions of power within the church and lacklustre investigations are likely to have deterred others from voicing their concerns; not only would they risk possible censure and being labelled as the problem themselves but there would be little likelihood of any meaningful response. This appears to have been the case here in that, whilst it cannot be said definitively, there is a strong case that the then Diocesan Bishop was informed of the possibility of sexually abusive behaviour by Mr Gibson, which wasn't rigorously addressed. This is evident not only in accounts by Survivor 3 but also comments from Mr Gibson at trial noting that the then Diocesan Bishop had asked him if he had got his problems sorted. What remains unknown is exactly what was reported to Bishop Habgood. The lack of record either indicates an inadequate response at the time, based on a presumed failure to recognise the seriousness of the situation and/or disbelief of it, or possible misguided decisions to later remove allegations and concerns from personal files.
- 10.7 There is also a significant lack of clarity regarding written records in terms of what information warrants an entry in somebody's blue file, which are kept and which removed, why and by whom, compounded by a very poor history of record keeping. It is difficult not to draw the conclusion that the culture of the Church of England provided opportunities for important safeguarding information to not be recorded, which was implicitly supported and which also appears to have been a factor in Mr Gibson's case.
- 10.8 The Church of England follows Scripture. This is understandably of great meaning and value to those within the church, both clergy and parishioners alike. Whilst there is great merit and value in these beliefs, they may also be misleading when applied to abusive situations. Conceptualising sexual abuse as a sin which can be overcome by repentance and absolution (and therefore managed and the abuser considered worthy of trust again with a chance to move on) significantly misses the point that sexual abuse is often insidious, with on-going risk factors evident in many cases. Whereas the church may equate repentance with trust and a new start, the scientific community which studies and works with adult sexual offenders would equate remorse with a good first step but insufficient by itself to negate risk, with underlying motivational factors for abuse still likely to be present. Sexual abuse of children or vulnerable adults should not be seen as a short-term aberration or giving in to temptation but the

surface manifestation of significant underlying problems which requires active intervention and, in many cases, long-term management.

- 10.9 Homosexuality remains a divisive topic within the Church of England. Whilst this is a broader issue, in relation to sexual abuse the secrecy which the church's stance against homosexuality causes also provides cover for sexual abuse, particularly of male victims by male clergy, which is significantly higher in the Catholic and Anglican Churches than within the general population. Discussions around homosexuality risk becoming distorted due to it being seen as a sin; as many within the church, both clergy and lay people, share this view it leads to blindness around excessive time spent by adult, often middle-aged men, with young, often teenage, boys with difficulty conceiving that something else, the sexual abuse of male children by male priests, may be occurring. These two very different issues i.e. consenting loving relationships between same-sex adults and the sexual abuse of children or young adults, become conflated as if they are similar and yet neither can be discussed. This creates opportunity, as men spending time with boys isn't questioned in the same way that men spending time with teenage girls would be. The male domination of the church until recent times has also created greater opportunities for the abuse of male victims, as those serving and assisting clergy were male servers and altar boys.
- 10.10 Many spoken to for this review had either first hand or anecdotal information relating to repeated drunkenness, poor boundaries and sexual approaches from Mr Gibson at seminars or training events. Ironically, the fact that many appear to know about it devalues the significance of the behaviour, making it appear less harmful; there is a diffusion of responsibility such that, as everybody seems to know and nobody else is doing anything, the individual doesn't need to either, which creates a collective dismissal. Alternatively, the fact Mr Gibson's behaviour was so public appears to have led some to reframe it as high jinks and therefore not so serious that it needed to be reported.
- 10.11 The Church is a relatively small organisation, particularly at the local level where, within a Diocese and certainly within neighbouring parishes, many parishioners and clergy will know each other. This closeness fosters a subconscious co-reliance and desire to maintain positive working relationships, which can contribute towards non-disclosure as raising concerns has the potential to disrupt social and professional relationships, with cover-ups and malfeasance more likely as a result.
- 10.12 Another contributing factor is the Church of England's overall position in relation to statutory and institutional frameworks. Alongside statutory safeguarding frameworks, the Church of England operates its own legal system and jurisdiction, and its ultimate authority is derived from the application of Canon

Law. This creates an ongoing tension between two legislative systems, one within the church, having an emphasis on repentance and forgiveness, the other having a primary focus on evidence of harm done to others and the protection of society.

- 10.13 Society, including the Church of England, naturally struggles to fully appreciate the nature and extent of sexual abuse of the young and vulnerable, although, intellectually, we are now more aware of this as a problem. However, at an emotional level, when allegations challenge long held beliefs about others or an institution this can result in denial and defensiveness. Historically, a lack of robustness in addressing sexual abuse continues because of this difficulty accepting that something so dreadful actually occurs.
- 10.14 Within institutions there can also be a ‘them and us’ mentality, maintained by in-group bias. Clergy and those attending church automatically share a belief system and world view. There is a commonality and, to varied degrees, a sense of likeness which makes acceptance of sexual abuse by clergy more difficult to contemplate and accept by those close to them. An acceptance of abusers’ denials reduces this tension as denial reaffirms the status quo. It is easy to fail to balance this against the equally reasonable interpretation of denial: that it is human nature to deny in order to avoid negative consequences and maintain one’s positive self-image and which should, therefore, always be robustly considered and challenged where indicated.

11 Analysis

- 11.1. This review has been assisted by a number of factors, predominantly the positive, mainly open, input from all those approached, as well as the number of people interviewed of differing positions in relation to this case. This input and the attitudes and approach from almost everyone contacted has been positive and helped to facilitate completion of this review. Other positive contributory factors include the reviewer's independence from the Church of England and the clear hand she was given from the beginning in terms of exactly what was reviewed and who was approached. She has not been refused permission to see any documents requested.
- 11.2. However, there have also been limitations, the main one of which has been the paucity of written records available until the very recent past, which leaves significant gaps and unanswered questions. In addition, it has not been possible to speak to some key personnel, mainly the then Rt. Revd John Habgood due to health reasons. The other area of limitation refers to exactly what directives were issued following implementation of the Data Protection Act and what records, if any, in relation to Mr Gibson were removed as a result of this.
- 11.3. There are also a number of issues which will impact on safeguarding which fall out with the scope of this review including local leadership, safeguarding training, adequacy of internal supervision and mentoring, and the relationships between senior members of the Diocese and its safeguarding groups.
- 11.4. In summary, in relation to Mr Gibson's general sexually inappropriate behaviour, this appears to have been incorrectly attributed to homosexuality and/or drunkenness with insufficient weight given to its abusive nature and, therefore, need for action. At a local level, there were likely reservations to making complaints for fear how these may be received by those in senior positions with possible discomfort or more serious negative repercussions for the individual including them being seen as disturbing the status quo, making allegations which couldn't possibly be true and/or causing un-necessary difficulties. Whilst the concept of whistle-blowing isn't new, protection for workers is a relatively recent development and, historically, there was little legal protection and, one concludes, little emotional support for those who brought challenges to the church by questioning those in authority.
- 11.5. These broader factors were compounded by lack of training around safeguarding with little explicit notification in the past of its importance by those in senior positions and, for those further down the hierarchy, little sense that this was everybody's responsibility. Some individuals lacked experience of safeguarding and, due to the lack of internal safeguarding structures and procedures, had little direction on how to respond to concerns. Many would also lack specific knowledge and appreciation of how grooming occurs. This

reflects the general silence across society before the 1990s of the sexual abuse of its young and vulnerable members, with lack of knowledge of just how widespread this is and it being capable of being perpetrated by individuals from all social strata and levels of education and profession, as well as by those who, in other contexts, may be held in high esteem.

- 11.6. These factors were supported by implicit wider acceptance at the parish and Diocese level of Mr Gibson's behaviour as many knew about it but did not do anything, thereby defusing the sense of personal responsibility.
- 11.7. At the organisational level, there has been a lack of openness to hearing such concerns and challenging those in positions of authority within the church. Whilst Mr Gibson's general, sexually inappropriate behaviour was at the less serious end of the spectrum, this was important information missed as it provided a background context of poor boundaries, alleged targeting of young male priests and significantly more time spent with young men or teenage boys, against which specific complaints of assaults could then have been judged. Such behaviour should also have led senior members of the church to have better weighed their decisions to promote Mr Gibson into positions of power, with greater trust and autonomy. Any accounts of bullying of clergy would also be viewed in this context of how robustly the church dealt with complaints made.
- 11.8. In addition to an inability to think about sexual abuse, there also appears to have been a wider inability to perceive mistakes happening when, to truly promote an atmosphere of safeguarding, identifying mistakes early on should be welcomed, in order to rectify any behaviour which transgresses boundaries and which acts as a deterrent and natural barrier to more explicit acts of violation occurring.
- 11.9. Despite being short-term thinking, overly focusing on the immediate impact of allegations, it is hard to see how senior staff members did not put the immediate reputation of the church first although, in the long-term, this is ultimately more harmful to the organisation as well as those potentially left at risk.
- 11.10. A contributory factor to concerns being missed was poor, or non-existent, record keeping, even following the implementation of specific child protection (and later safeguarding) policies. Whilst it is now a simple response to highlight the lack of record keeping, either to defend against purposeful inaction at the time or to limit personal responsibility, nevertheless this is a significant failing as, even without formal policies, it is difficult to conceive how any individual could not consider such allegations sufficiently important to be recorded somewhere. This lack of record keeping prevented a more complete, cohesive picture of Mr Gibson's behaviour coming to light sooner when individual allegations were made, such as those in the early 1980s to the then Rt. Revd

Bishop Habgood. These allegations could have been better considered against other, relevant information also known, allowing for more informed and robust decision making.

11.11. Regarding the specific concerns raised to the Rt. Revd Bishop Habgood, the author considers this more likely than not to have occurred. It is therefore concerning that Mr Gibson's blue file holds such little information and nothing in relation to safeguarding, other than his self-declaration in 2009. Given Mr Gibson's extensive history of involvement with the church, his promotions and broader roles and responsibilities, the paucity of information in his file is surprising, although it isn't possible to determine its cause. Exactly what was said to Bishop Habgood about Mr Gibson in the early 1980s cannot now be known definitively, although it is likely that specific concerns about sexually inappropriate and/or abusive behaviour was raised and, therefore, not dealt with. This was at the time when we now know Mr Gibson is alleged to have sexually assaulted Survivor 1, which abuse may have been affected if Mr Gibson had been more robustly challenged about his behaviour and more action taken by those in positions of seniority.

11.12. Indeed, there were a number of red flag moments when specific complaints of suspected indecent assault were missed:

- a) An apparent systemic failure by the police to advise the Diocese of Mr Gibson's arrest and interview around 1980 for child sexual abuse, although I note their position that there is no such information within their records;
- b) An apparent systemic failure by a member of the Probation Service to pass on allegations of sexual assault when reported to her by Survivor 2 as part of his Community Service Order in the late 1970s;
- c) The likely failure of then Rt. Revd John Habgood to respond to concerns raised by Survivor 3 around 1981/82 both in relation to himself being assaulted and the complaint from a parishioner that another young male may have been assaulted;
- d) Failure to internally report an alleged assault on a man seeking asylum around 2001; and
- e) Failure to follow up on Mr Gibson's self-declaration form in 2009 regarding the historical alleged assault, both internally as there is no record of any response to this within the safeguarding structures and through failure to seek more information from the police.

11.13. Failure to record and therefore consider Mr Gibson's behaviour altogether led to what must now be seen as erroneous decisions to promote and propose him for other socially responsible roles including involvement with St Aidan's Academy. Against what is now clearly described about his behaviour, Mr Gibson would be judged to have been an inappropriate choice for active

involvement in a school with teenage boys and where Mr Gibson held a position of authority and, therefore, implied trustworthiness when a number of his colleagues saw Mr Gibson as so untrustworthy that young men were informally warned not to find themselves alone with him. At no point were concerns about Mr Gibson shared with the Academy and this also represents concerns, preventing the school from making their own informed choice in terms of Mr Gibson's on-going involvement with them.

11.14. However, against this background of concerns, there are a number of factors which now appear to work well in terms of overall safeguarding within the Diocese of Durham. At the heart of this are the dual roles of the DSA and the DSMG. The former works well within the Diocese, being easily available if concerns are raised and bringing with her relevant experience and expertise in safeguarding and a good ability to form working relationships, both at an individual level and across organisations. The DSMG has good multi-agency representation and a chair who remains independent from the Church of England, thus adding a crucial level of independence and impartiality to safeguarding decisions. These structures are now well embedded and established giving a clear message to all those working within the Diocese of Durham of the importance and centrality of safeguarding.

12. Summary

- 12.1. Society is belatedly waking up to the horror of sexual abuse and violence, often against its most vulnerable members and the Church of England must do so too. Sexual abuse is a significant social problem and will take more than an approach based on the belief that it is just a few bad apples in order to resolve and truly assign it to history. The horror and disgust with which most respond to sexual abuse is matched only by the manipulation of those who perpetrate it, inadvertently facilitated by society (and organisations within it) whose resistance to looking too closely ironically provides fertile ground for abuse to continue. It also inadvertently adds to survivors' shame and guilt, when this should rest with those who perpetrate the abuse and, to a lesser extent, those who turn a blind eye or deaf ear to warning signs and allegations.
- 12.2. The Church of England has a long history of providing positive assistance and help, working with all sections of communities, often the most disadvantaged and challenging, offering on-going need and providing emotional support, moral guidance, practical assistance and hope and salvation when other segments of society appear not to care. This provides warmth and light to many whose lives may otherwise be dark and weighed down. The church is largely populated by dedicated members who devote their lives to ministering to others and completing God's work. This often involves emotional intimacy and involvement in peoples' private lives, not only at times of happiness, but also sadness and despair. This work can be emotionally draining and highlights the difficult circumstances clergy often have to work in and respond to. It is therefore likely that peoples' experiences of the Church of England will be highly variable. Many reading this will not recognise the alleged cover-ups and cold, dismissive, uncaring approach which some survivors recount, or even the report of persistent coercion and verbal attacks on their characters. Yet others will know this only too well and both contribute towards preventing a more global, shared understanding of the church, one which is more cohesive and comprehensive than divided.

13. Recommendations

- 13.1. I support many of the current practices within the Diocese's safeguarding team, specifically the role, experience and availability of the current DSA and the support she receives from the Diocese in conducting her duties thoroughly; the formation and regular meetings of the DSMG, comprising multiple agencies and an independent chair, bringing separate oversight and multiple perspectives to safeguarding decision-making within the Diocese; the improved links between the separate safeguarding teams of the Diocese and Durham Cathedral, and the strong links between the DSA and local constabularies and Local Authority safeguarding departments.
- 13.2. The local development of good quality safeguarding material is also positive, which compliments national guidance, although the *Safe and Secure* document is significantly overdue for an update.
- 13.3. The increased focus on survivors' needs is a welcome development, as illustrated by the Rt. Revd Paul Butler's response to Mr Gibson's victims, particularly Survivor 1.
- 13.4. The Diocese enacted a comprehensive response after Mr Gibson's arrest and later conviction, which followed guidance and good practice, responding to multiple, and sometimes opposing, needs of the various members of the Diocese, Mr Gibson's family and the survivors.
- 13.5. It is also positive that the Diocese was open to an external audit of their safeguarding practices by the Social Care Institute for Excellence in 2015, which openness is something they should continue to build upon.
- 13.6. However, there are also a number of areas for further consideration. Amongst these is the relative independence of the DSA secondary to her employment status. Whilst the author has identified no concerns in relation to either Mrs Miller or her manager, Archdeacon Stuart Bain, and the DSA reports separate clinical supervision, the principle of independence should be kept under review, albeit within the context of the wider safeguarding framework and assistance from the DSMG.
- 13.7. All safeguarding notes should not only be written up immediately but made sufficiently clear to accurately reflect what was said by whom and when. Use of direct quotes for the most important aspects assists with this, as well as clearly recording what action was taken and on what basis. There needs to be an emphasis on meticulous record keeping with an expectation that nothing less will do.

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- 13.8. Safeguarding information should be kept not only in the safeguarding records for the Diocese but also within the relevant blue files with clear accountability for who has responsibility for adding information to personal files as well as a record when something is removed, although the latter should never occur in relation to safeguarding concerns.
 - 13.9. Moves to implement a more joined-up, accessible system of writing and storing safeguarding records needs to be expedited, as good record keeping provides a solid foundation for safe practice and timely, well-considered, robust decision making.
 - 13.10. The Church of England should not rely on the outcome of criminal investigations for risk assessment and management but determine their own, local, robust assessment and management systems to allegations raised.
 - 13.11. Consideration should be given to repeating an audit of DBS checks, ensuring these are all completed and any concerns adequately responded to.
 - 13.12. When considering recommendation of clergy to other Dioceses or for promotion, a careful consideration of all available information should be a matter of course and any potential concerns thoroughly investigated before approval is reached.
 - 13.13. There should be a clearer focus on victims or those harmed through the actions of the church and its members, considering their immediate needs, rather than the longer-term reputation of the organisation itself. Assessment and management of risk needs to be at the heart of processes and decision making and not the reputation of the institution or any one individual.
 - 13.14. The church should continue to work on developing a more open culture where concerns, discrepancies and disagreements can be aired and considered without censure or criticism. Safe practice should be at the heart of all ministrations and this requires a corresponding ability to speak openly of even minor discrepancies or concerns, which should be shared appropriately. This relates to the concept of relational security i.e. abuse is less likely to occur in organisations where all members feel their voice will be heard and where concerns can be raised at an early stage and where ineffective or potentially harmful practice will not be ignored. This helps reinforce the idea that safeguarding is everybody's business.
 - 13.15. Historical offences should be dealt with in the same way that current abusive practices are, with this clearly stipulated and written into the Diocese's safeguarding practices.

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- 13.16. The church may benefit from incorporating knowledge on sexual abusers, their motivations, how they operate and on-going risk, into existing safeguarding training to ensure all members are aware of how sexual abuse can be perpetrated by colleagues. This should also balance notions of redemption and forgiveness against an on-going need for monitoring and vigilance.
- 13.17. The church is very hierarchical, a structure which is likely to remain. However, increased awareness of how this impacts on how the church meets its core aims and goals is necessary including its structure inadvertently creating a context in which abuse is more likely and how many of those nearer the bottom of the hierarchy can be disempowered, weakening what should be individual parts of a stronger whole.
- 13.18. The church may also need to review its bullying and whistle-blowing procedures. Whilst these fall out with the remit of this review, the Diocese's whistle blowing policy is already over due for renewal and is very brief, consisting of only one side of A4 to cover what can be complex issues.

Appendix A: Dr Stephanie Hill – Curriculum Vitae

Dr Hill qualified as a Clinical Psychologist in 1994 and holds a BA (Hons) in Psychology and an MSc and Doctorate both in Clinical Psychology. She is a Registered Practitioner Psychologist with the Health and Care Professions Council under the dual specialisms of Forensic and Clinical. She is also a Chartered member of the British Psychological Society.

Dr Hill has also completed an LLB and LLM (Mental Health).

Since qualifying, she has worked extensively with mentally disordered offenders across both secure and community-based settings. This has involved providing individual and group-based interventions for adult offenders including violent and sexual offenders. This has also necessitated a firm grounding in risk assessment tools and procedures in relation to a range of abusive and harmful behaviours, as well as assessing and treating mental disorders in adult clients with enduring and complex disorders. This has necessitated a comprehensive understanding of the complexity of sexual abuse and up to date knowledge of research.

Dr Hill has also worked closely with different agencies over the years including the National Probation Service, with colleagues providing mental health in-reach services in prisons, and voluntary sector organisations including Barnardo's. She is currently working in independent practice.

Appendix B – Records and Documents Reviewed

Minutes/Notes/Files

- Minutes of the Durham Diocesan Safeguarding Management Group between 2004 and the present
- Safeguarding case notes between 2004 and the present
- Blue file of George Granville Gibson

Local Policies and Reports

- Safe and Secure – May 2002
- Past Cases Review by Independent Consultant A – March 2009
- Anonymised copy of report by Mrs Carole Moffatt – Durham Diocesan Review of Deceased Clergy Files, dated August 2014
- Safe and Secure – July 2008

National Policies

- Meeting the Challenge. How Churches Should Respond to Sex Offenders – July 1999
- Policy on Child Abuse – 1995
- Policy on Child Protection - 1999
- Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy – 2003
- Protecting All God's Children - 2004
- Protecting All God's Children – 2010
- Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy – 2015
- Practice Guidance: Responding to Serious Safeguarding Situations Relating to Church Officers – June 2015
- Practice Guidance: Risk Assessment for Individuals Who May Pose Risk to Children or Adults – June 2015
- The Gospel, Sexual Abuse and the Church – 2016
- Diocesan Safeguarding Advisors Regulations – 2016

Other inquiry reports

- Report of Dame Elizabeth Butler-Sloss – January 2012
- Interim report of the Commissaries into the Diocese of Chichester – 2012
- Recommendations of the Elliott Review – March 2016

Other literature

- Final report: The role of organisational culture in child sexual abuse in institutional contexts (December 2016) by Donald Palmer, Valerie Feldman and Gemma McKibbin
- Durham Diocese Independent Safeguarding Audit – September 2015 by the Social Care Institute for Excellence

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- Social Care Institute for Excellence (2015): Hear no evil, see no evil: Understanding failure to identify and report child sexual abuse in institutional contexts
 - Child sexual abuse and the churches: A story of moral failure? (October 2013) by Patrick Parkinson
 - Anglican Communion Safe Church Consultation – October 2012

Appendix C – Individuals Interviewed

Those directly harmed by Mr Gibson

- Survivor 1
- Survivor 2
- Survivor 3

Clergy

- Priest B (by telephone)
- Priest D
- Priest J
- Priest K
- Bishop's Chaplain 1 (by telephone)
- Bishop's Chaplain 2
- Archdeacon Geoffrey Miller – Newcastle
- Archdeacon Stuart Bain – Sunderland
- The Bishop of Ely (by email)
- The Rt. Revd Paul Butler

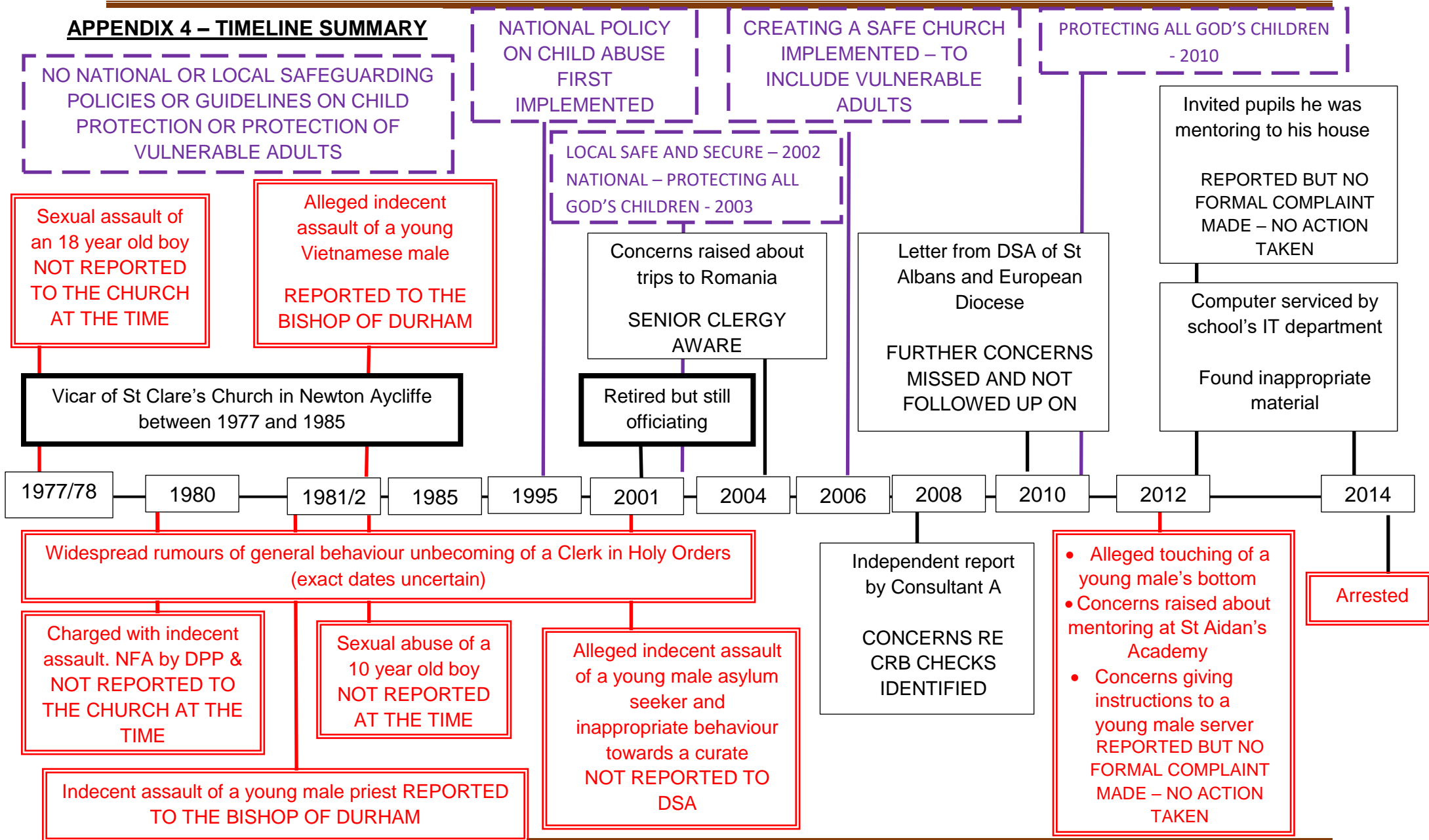
Lay people

- Mrs Carole Moffatt – Former Chair of the DSMG
- DSA X, Former Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser for Durham
- Mrs Beth Miller – Current Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser for Durham
- Diocesan Safeguarding Officer for St Albans and Europe
- Mrs Moira Murray (by telephone), National Safeguarding Officer
- Ms Ruth Rogan, Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor for Newcastle^f
- Son of Granville Gibson
- Mrs Hilary Monckton-Milnes (by telephone) – Current Diocesan Registrar for Durham^g
- Head teacher of St Aidan's C of E Academy
- Mr Philip Davies – Chapter Clerk of Durham Cathedral^h

People unavailable for interview

- Ex-Archbishop John Habgood due to ill-health
- Priest H (now lives abroad)

APPENDIX 4 – TIMELINE SUMMARY



^a This body is now the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel (DSAP).

^b The number of stipendiary clergy is now nearer 110 (the exact number changes at any one time as vacancies arise).

^c 2020: alterations to the structure of deaneries and the diocese mean that the Archdeaconries of Auckland and Sunderland now each have six deaneries and the Archdeaconry of Durham has two. All three Archdeacons are new in post since the time of the report.

^d Archdeacon Stuart Bain moved to a new post in 2018. The current position is this: the Archdeacon of Auckland, Venerable Rick Simpson, now holds the safeguarding portfolio on the Bishop's Leadership Team, and works closely with the DSA on matters of policy and practice; the DSA is contractually engaged by the Diocese, and the management of this arrangement is carried out by the Diocesan Secretary. The DSA continues to have separate, independent professional supervision.

^e John Habgood died in March 2019.

^f As at April 2017; now no longer in post.

^g As at April 2017; now no longer in post.

^h As at April 2017; now no longer in post.