

The independent audit by the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) of Lambeth Palace's safeguarding arrangements has been published today.

The audit, which was conducted in March 2022, involved reviewing a wide range of documentation as well as talking to staff members and focus groups. The purpose was to gain a greater understanding of the policies and culture of safeguarding that exists at Lambeth Palace, the office and residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The SCIE audit was part of a national safeguarding audit programme covering Church of England dioceses, cathedrals and palaces, which is now complete. This national programme seeks to support safeguarding improvements across governance and leadership, organisational culture, policies and practice guidance, case-work, responsiveness to (and support of) victims and survivors of abuse, and recruitment and training, ensuring that all offices have the best possible practice in place.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Revd Justin Welby, said: "I want to thank the SCIE team for this thorough, constructive and helpful report. Safeguarding must be central to the life of the Church, and we are committed to striving for the highest possible standards at Lambeth Palace. We welcome the encouragement and, quite rightly, the challenge from SCIE to continue our ongoing learning and improvement of safeguarding practices.

"I am adamant that this report must underpin and strengthen our continuing efforts to ensure that Lambeth Palace treats safeguarding as a top priority, and I look forward to working with colleagues to make sure that happens. I also want to acknowledge and give my personal thanks and gratitude to the many survivors and victims who engaged in this valuable process. Your voices and experience are essential in our ongoing work to ensure the Church is a safer place for all."

The Revd Ijeoma Ajibade, Chief of Staff to the Archbishop of Canterbury, said: "I am grateful to the SCIE team for acknowledging the many positive changes that have been made to Lambeth Palace's safeguarding arrangements, while also challenging us to continue improving in some areas. The report engages with the complexity of the devolved structures of the Church of England, while acknowledging the scope of the Archbishop's leadership role within those structures – and we are grateful for its informed analysis and constructive recommendations.

"Prior to the SCIE audit, Lambeth Palace conducted its own internal safeguarding review and identified several areas where more work was needed. These included allocating more staff resource to safeguarding, embedding safeguarding more fully into the work of the senior leadership team, and greater collaboration between Lambeth Palace and Bishopthorpe. We have already begun to make progress on these areas – and we are encouraged that the SCIE report have affirmed the need to continue our work in these areas, as well as highlighting others for us to take forward. We will be publishing an action plan in due course, to ensure we are transparent and accountable for the sustained and consistent action we are taking."

The Social Care Institute for Excellence's CEO Kathryn Smith said: "Lambeth Palace and the role of Archbishop of Canterbury are critical in progressing safeguarding across the Church of England, but the role is not straightforward given the structure of the Church. Pointers in the audit report published today are aimed at clarifying, as well as strengthening the role. I'd like to thank everyone who contributed to [this audit](#),

especially the many victims and survivors of abuse who generously shared their experiences, which will often have had an emotional cost."

The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) Independent Safeguarding Audit of Lambeth Palace can be read in full here: [Independent Safeguarding Audit of Lambeth Palace](#)

Lambeth Palace will be producing an action plan in response to the SCIE audit and the Independent Safeguarding Board report 'Don't Panic – Be Pastoral', as well as the recommendations of the recent Church of England-wide Past Cases Review 2 project, in which Lambeth Palace participated. This will be published in due course.

In January Bishopthorpe Palace published its own Independent Safeguarding Audit from SCIE which can be found [here](#).

Finding support

If you or anyone you are in contact with are affected by the publication of this report and want to talk to someone independently please call the Safe Spaces helpline on 0300 303 1056 or visit www.safespacesenglandandwales.org.uk

Alternatively, you may wish to contact the diocesan safeguarding team in your area or the National Safeguarding Team – email safeguarding@churchofengland.org

There are also [other support services](#) available.

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