

465 people from parishes and churches between the Tees and the Humber and from the A1 to the Yorkshire Coast have taken part in one or more of 23 online events and an in-person meeting at Bishopthorpe Palace during 'Everyone's Business', the first-ever Safeguarding Week held by the Diocese of York with York Minster from Monday 22nd to Friday 26th November.

Brainchild of York Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser Julie O'Hara and York Minster Safeguarding Officer Dee Cooley, and undeterred by the restrictions and challenges posed by the COVID pandemic, the week offered a wide range of free-standing training events and webinars by experts from within the Diocese and from external organisations including the Independent Domestic Abuse Service (IDAS) and North Yorkshire Police.

Supplementing the extensive regular training given to clergy, church office holders and volunteers, the events included advice on detecting and addressing harm being done to children and adults, responding well to disclosures of abuse, keeping appropriate records of incidents and reports to comply with data protection legislation as well as the needs of survivors and perpetrators, and presentations on the contributions offered by independent charities in particular circumstances.

Archbishop of York Stephen Cottrell, who hosted the final session in person at Bishopthorpe Palace, said, " I'm delighted that 465 have attended events in Safeguarding Week, that's such a positive sign of how seriously people in our churches are taking this important aspect of our ministry. Good Safeguarding is a fundamental part of what good mission and good ministry looks like. Jesus in his ministry shows us how to reach out to the vulnerable and marginalised in a holistic and compassionate way.

"As a church we continue to be on a difficult and sometimes painful journey around Safeguarding. Placing Victims and Survivors of abuse at the heart of our safeguarding work is of vital importance as is creating safe-spaces in which people can tell their story, be taken seriously and responded to well. The lessons of the past continue to teach us that we always need to do better; and that's why I'm so delighted about the diocesan Safeguarding Week, this has been about how we shape our present and our future so our churches are equipped to be everything they should be in the proclamation of the love we find in Jesus Christ.

"I'm so grateful to Julie, Dee and their team for the enormous amount of work that's gone into this week, and the great response it's brought from across the Diocese and the York Minster community; we're on the way towards Safeguarding really being 'Everyone's Business'."