



The House of Bishops is one of three Houses that make up the General Synod. The House of Bishops meets in May and December outside of General Synod to discuss issues such as episcopal ministry, mission and national issues that affect the Church.

Under Article 7 of the Constitution of General Synod, the House of Bishops has a special role with matters relating to doctrine, liturgy or Sacrament. It also has the right to amend legislation as it sees fit before the legislation is put before the General Synod for approval.

The following bodies report to the House of Bishops: Advisory Council for Religious Communities, Broken Rites and Bishop's Visitors.

The **College of Bishops** includes all serving bishops in the Church of England (diocesan and suffragan), and meets in January and September to discuss and advise on major issues. The College of Bishops is not a formal part of the General Synod structure.

## Membership

The membership of the House of Bishops consists of:

- All diocesan bishops including the offshore dioceses of Sodor and Man and Gibraltar in Europe
- The Bishop of Dover who functions as the diocesan bishop of Canterbury
- The Bishop to the Armed Forces
- Nine elected suffragan bishops

In addition, six female suffragan bishops (who are not members of the House) and three Provincial Episcopal Visitors can attend and speak at meetings of the House, but are not allowed to vote:

- Female suffragan bishops: Bishop of Aston, Bishop of Crediton, Bishop of Hull, Bishop of Kensington, Bishop of Sherborne, Bishop of Taunton
- Provincial Episcopal Visitors: Bishop of Oswestry, Bishop of Richborough, Bishop of Ebbsfleet

Plans to elect clergy of UK Minority Ethnic or Global Majority Heritage backgrounds to serve on the House of Bishops have been agreed in what is hoped will be a “catalyst for change” towards making the leadership of the Church of England more representative.

# Standing Committee

The role of the Standing Committee is to set agendas for the House of Bishops meetings, represent the House of Bishops in discussions with other faiths, and to deal with certain matters on behalf of the House of Bishops.

The Standing Committee is made up of eight members including the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Archbishop of York, and either:

- The two bishops elected as members of the Archbishops’ Council on the basis that one of them serves as the Business Committee Chair. If this is not possible then one of the Council bishops and the bishop elected onto the Business Committee
- One bishop from the elected Church Commissioners
- The Chair to the Faith and Order Commission
- One bishop elected from the House of Bishops
- One appointed by the Archbishops
- One female bishop elected

# Actions & Decisions

- [House of Bishops March 2024](#) (16.94 KB)
- [House of Bishops December 2023](#) (48.72 KB)

# Key documents

- [Affirming our Common Humanity](#) (145.7 KB)
- [Extended Communion Guidelines](#) (65.67 KB)
- [Guidelines on Deliverance Ministry](#) (217.46 KB)
- [Human Sexuality](#) (1.4 MB)
- [Marriage - A teaching document](#) (118.62 KB)
- [Marriage after divorce and ordained ministry](#) (35.33 KB)
- [Marriage in Church after Divorce](#) (143.65 KB)
- [Marriage Measure 2008 Guidance](#) (213.19 KB)
- [Marriage of persons from outside the EEA](#) (36.47 KB)
- [Protecting All God's Children](#) (282.66 KB)
- [Register of the Recognised Communities of the Church of England](#) (140.9 KB)
- [UKBA Guidance for clergy](#) (99.99 KB)

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