

The House of Bishops National Safeguarding Steering met via Zoom at the beginning of July. There was a wide-ranging discussion on the need for a paradigm shift in the Church on safeguarding and what practical proposals including funding that would involve. On the importance of a redress scheme, following a commitment at February Synod, the NSSG were told that two posts to carry out detailed scoping on this were now going forward for approval. There was overwhelming support that this be moved forward as quickly as possible.

Meg Munn, the independent chair of the National Safeguarding Panel, NSP, underlined the importance of this work and said that redress would be the issue under scrutiny at the July meeting of the NSP.

On a wider discussion on budgets members acknowledged that the impact of COVID-19 on the Church as a whole meant that certain proposals could not be signed off until the Archbishops' Council budget was approved in September.

Training also came under the spotlight noting that since the COVID-19 'lockdown' and due to the result of social distancing restrictions, all face to face training had been suspended. As a result of this it was brought to the NSTs attention at the beginning of June that there were 200+ ordinands due for licencing (as a work around to ordination not being possible) that had not yet fulfilled the requirements of safeguarding training to allow for this to happen. Between Monday 15th June and Thursday 2nd July, the National Safeguarding Training and Development Managers delivered the new virtual Leadership module 17 times in its entirety – on a scale of which is unprecedented - including responding to the questions and issues arising by the ordinands themselves.

Members were briefed about this new future vision and leadership training module which had been previously circulated to the House of Bishops and involves redrafts of all modules as well as the release of a number of new specialist modules.

Feedback from a consultation on a new proposed regional model was discussed. The model comprises the appointment of Regional Safeguarding Leaders (RSLs) who would each work with a cluster of dioceses, cathedrals, TEIs and religious communities. These RSLs would provide a higher degree of support and leadership in safeguarding work than can currently be provided by a small central national team. The NSSG agreed that plans should be drawn up to develop two pilots to help evaluate these proposals.

Plans were outlined for developing a set of national safeguarding standards, which would provide a clear, objective benchmark for what good safeguarding should look like. There are expected to come to the NSSG later in the year.

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