

A meeting of the House of Bishops took place today, Monday 19 October via Zoom.

From October, the House is now meeting once a month, a schedule which is likely to continue until Easter 2021.

The focus of the meeting was an opportunity for reflection and learning on the overarching IICSA report for the Anglican Church in England and Wales which was published on 6 October and had six recommendations for the Church of England.

The House discussed the two most significant themes from the report; proper redress for victims and survivors and greater independence in safeguarding decision making. The House was addressed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, the lead safeguarding bishop and the National Director of Safeguarding. All spoke in favour of the motions put before the House (see below) and strongly urged the House to vote in their favour.

During the course of two plenary sessions and breakout groups the House reviewed the recommendations of the report, affirming that any response by the Church needs to be sensitive to, and mindful of, the views of victims and survivors.

The House unanimously endorsed a motion fully accepting the IICSA report, unreservedly apologising to victims and survivors for the harm done by the Church and committing itself to urgently implementing the recommendations.

The House also unanimously agreed with the proposal that the Church should move towards establishing an independent safeguarding structure, with a new trustee body responsible for safeguarding to take over responsibility for the Archbishops' Council. The House also agreed that an interim arrangement be put in place for additional independent oversight of safeguarding, prior to the establishment of the new trustee body.

The House then underlined the importance of a full response to the IICSA report being released in the coming weeks.

The House also received updates from the various works streams operating under the auspices of the Emerging Church Groups. An overview by the Chair of the Co-ordinating Group, the Bishop of Manchester was given, followed by a brief report from the Chair of the Recovery Group, the Bishop of London regarding ongoing changes and updates to the guidance for worship, following the introduction of the tier system across the nation.

The Archbishop of York updated the House on the work of the Vision and Strategy Group and received the House's endorsement for his work on developing a shared vision for the Church. Further updates were also given by the Governance Group and the Transforming Effectiveness Group.

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