

Melissa Caslake, the Church of England's national director of safeguarding, is moving on to a new role as Chief Officer for Children's services for Devon County Council. She will leave the National Church Institutions during January.

## Message from Melissa

I am leaving my post to take up a Director of Children's Services role, having over the last 18 months embedded a new structure for the safeguarding team, established clear priorities and introduced change proposals which were reinforced by IICSA and formed part of our response to the final publication of its report on safeguarding in the Church. I have been privileged to work with survivors, members of clergy, diocesan and safeguarding professionals; and others in the national Church and beyond. I hope their expertise will continue to be respected and heard. I would like to thank all those who have supported the safeguarding journey so far and wish the Church well as it reflects on how best to implement the IICSA recommendations for the future.

## Message from Bishop Jonathan Gibbs, the Church of England's lead safeguarding bishop

I am enormously grateful to Melissa Caslake for all that she has done as the Church of England's first National Director of Safeguarding. She has made a huge contribution to our work in this vital area and her departure will be a big loss to the Church. It is vital we must not lose momentum while of course, we need also to reflect and consult widely especially with the survivor community about next steps to ensure we build on the good work that Melissa has done.

Melissa has brought experience, skills and commitment to her role and I would like to express my personal thanks for her support and leadership within the NST and National Safeguarding Steering Group. She joined the NST shortly after IICSA's hearings into the Church of England and has led us through to the publication of the Church's response to the IICSA report, including steps towards the creation of new independent structures for the oversight of safeguarding.

Melissa has worked tirelessly with a dedicated team of colleagues to improve the quality and consistency of the Church's safeguarding work and especially to improve our response to and care for survivors. I am conscious that this has been a very demanding and personally costly role, facing challenges from many different directions. Melissa has sought to help the Church to become a safer and healthier place for all and we owe her a real debt of thanks for all her work on our behalf.