

The meeting was chaired by the Church of England’s lead safeguarding bishop, Jonathan Gibbs, who welcomed members and congratulated Mark Steadman (currently Archdeacon of of Stow and Lindsey in Lincoln Diocese) on his appointment to Chief of Staff at Bishopthorpe and welcomed new NSSG member Mark Humphries, Oxford Diocesan Secretary. Mark Steadman will continue on the NSSG in his new role.

Bishop Jonathan raised the issue of NSSG membership, particularly bishops on the group, noting the NSSG is a working group of the House of Bishops and there needed to be more episcopal representation.

He said this was being addressed and he hoped to announce new members soon.

Diversity of membership on the group is also being looked at following helpful representations from two different groups working in this area and the issue of an NSSG annual report was also raised. Although in the original NSSG Terms of Reference, members agreed that the Archbishops' Council annual report safeguarding section and web updates after each meeting covered this area and a separate report was not needed. It was agreed to adapt the Terms of Reference.

Interim NST director Zena Marshall provided a general safeguarding update:

- The interim support scheme is currently helping 27 people and wider governance issues on how this works are currently being addressed. She particularly noted trustee support from two NSSG members Jamie Harrison and James Carey.
- Redress scheme – the project board is now up and running with Bishop David Walker currently the temporary chair, with detailed work now started including around funding and legal issues.
- Learning and Development –very positive feedback on initial sessions from the senior leadership pathway and a professional development programme is now in place for the DSA/CSA network.
- The Safeguarding Board and Programme - now up and running with strong involvement from the diocesan secretary network.

Meg Munn, the independent chair of the National Safeguarding Panel, NSP, gave an update noting her [recent blog on the CDM](#) (relating to the April NSP meeting) attracted 670 readers, highlighting the interest and importance of this. She also highlighted a series of bitesize webinars on best practice being hosted by the NSP in July.

Meg then spoke to the NSP review and planning meeting paper – focusing on the conclusions:

- Need to consider how the Panel can achieve and evidence impact.
- Consideration should be given to further contact between the NST, NSSG and NSP.
- The role of the Panel should also be reviewed in light of the development of the new Independent Safeguarding Board, ISB.
- Consideration should be given as to whether the Panel should have a more formal role in quality assurance

Members spoke of the importance of mapping out connections with all the various groups that talk to each other on safeguarding. Bishop

Jonathan stressed that all that all the issues raised by Meg were very important within a time of great change in safeguarding and they would be returned to more substantially later this year.

Ian McIntosh, from the National Ministry Division, introduced a paper outlining some of the issues with the structural relationships between Theological Education Institutions, TEIs, and the National Church, and of the way in which many TEIs operate as independent educational charities as this impacts upon national Church safeguarding policies (i.e. House of Bishops Safeguarding Guidance).

The paper included a set of recommendations for the NSSG to consider including that all TEIs are asked to conform to the House of Bishops Safeguarding Guidance and amendments needed might also include written agreement for any local arrangements that a TEI might wish to have with a DSA to deliver training and/or safeguarding advice

Comments from NSSG members included asking about a date for compliance on policies, how would the redress scheme fit in and should TEIs have the equivalent of a DSA or should a national TEI adviser be appointed. It was noted that ordination candidates cannot be ordained without having completely the prescribed safeguarding pathway.

The recommendations were supported with the rider that more work would be done on the wider questions raised.

Update on PCR2

There will be a lot of best practice learning in the final overview report with overall themes – there will be both number-based analytics and word-based themes to get the messages across. Along with this the key is to be able to say all files have been looked at. Publication is expected in Spring 2022 with all diocesan independent reports to be completed by the end of the year.

Members discussed the importance of communicating the report and learnings to a range of stakeholders with use of different platforms. While PCR2 would be a reminder that the original PCR had not been done well, it was acknowledged that would also be positive learning for the local church. The issue of not identifying individuals and cases in local reports was raised along with the acknowledgement that PCR2 had been very costly to dioceses in terms of finance and to DSAs in terms of their time and demands.

The NSSG took note of the report and looked forward to receiving further detailed work in action plan at a future meeting.

Update on National Casework Management System, NCMS

- It is a real change programme for the Church.
- There is now a recommended provider but still in contract negotiations.
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National budget is signed off until the end of 2023 including development costs etc

- A recharge model will be brought in from 2024 for ongoing costs, subscription and centralised support (ceiling of 4.5k per year). This will be monitored with a phase 1.
- The spirit of the system is to have all dioceses on it (but not compulsory) and so far no one has said they don't want it, even those who currently have their own.
- Concerns about cost and logistics were acknowledged as a challenge but the NCMS will help with a range of other issues including SARs and annual data. It is much more than a database and will cover data migration for all up to end of 2023.

The comments and report were noted and the NSSG would continue to be provided with further updates.

Update on implementation plan for Safer Recruitment and People Management Guidance

The Safer Recruitment and People Management (SRPM) Guidance was approved by the NSSG in April 2021. As part of that approval process, it was recognised and agreed that a comprehensive implementation plan was necessary to ensure a successful launch and full compliance across all Church Bodies with effect from 4 January 2022 and that the NSSG would be updated on this.

The plan covers the next six months to support those who have responsibility for implementing guidance, and was launched on June 28 with publication of the guidance on the [new E-manual](#). Diocesan online workshops for the implementation phase have started.

Spiritual Abuse

Dave Worlock, deputy director for policy and development outlined the issues from a safeguarding perspective noting the term was now common parlance and the task and finish group looking at this issue was set up five years ago. He said the plan was to make it one element in the Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults guidance and there was a need for clarity of definition.

He said concerns raised around the issue had been addressed by the NST and members were asked to support their revised proposals and agree a timescale for what happens next. The NSSG response would be fed back to the task and finish group in a meeting at the end of July, so an agreed position could come back to the September NSSG and then go to the October House of Bishops.

There was a detailed discussion on issues around spiritual abuse and definition and what it could mean for different areas of ministry. It was suggested that case studies and good practice guidelines are very important, and it was agreed these could be included in the wider policy, which is about creating safer cultures.

A previous [CDM ruling on spiritual abuse](#) was highlighted as being helpful on the issues raised.

It was agreed that all the different points raised in the discussion would be fed back to the Task and Finish group with a further NSSG report in September.

Safeguarding Quality Assurance Framework and National Safeguarding Standards

The NSSG was updated on the work that has been undertaken so far to develop national safeguarding standards as part of the quality assurance framework approach (agreed in February 2020) noting that further prioritisation and development of them is needed, which will be undertaken by the Pathfinder dioceses and cathedrals

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