

The November meeting of the National Safeguarding Steering Group was chaired by the lead safeguarding bishop, Jonathan Gibbs. The previous minutes were approved with a particular note that the conflict of interest policy had been approved and is on the [E-manual](#). Bishop Jonathan outlined the challenges of safeguarding in the Church at a time of strain particularly on resources. He thanked the national team and all those working in safeguarding across the Church where there was now a clear programme of change. He stressed the importance of working together at both national, diocesan and parish level.

The interim national safeguarding director, Zena Marshall, updated the Group on:

- The redress scheme project, which now includes a survivor group, and the interim support scheme (the terms of reference and user guide are [now published](#)).
- [Learning and development](#), various of the training modules now have CPD accreditation
- [IICSA recommendations one and eight](#) (the working group still lacks a bishop). There was discussion around management of the regional model (currently in pilot form).
- Safe Spaces, the one-year evaluation is due, and funding is now being looked at beyond the two years.
- National Casework Management System – the contract has been signed and there has been a demo of the system to DSAs.
- PCR2, publication expected mid-May – there was a broader discussion about capturing the important material for learning for the future. It was noted that emerging themes highlighted in the national report should also include the positive developments.
- Learning lessons reviews, the safeguarding programme and the Independent Safeguarding Board, ISB. It was agreed that the two ISB members, the chair and survivor advocate (the third member is soon to be appointed), would be invited to the next NSSG.

The chief legal officer updated the Group on the Code of Practice (an [IICSA recommendation](#) on statutory safeguarding guidance, from the Chichester and Peter Ball report, which stated that the current 'due regard' was considered by IICSA not to be clear enough). This statutory code of practice measure, which contains requirements that a relevant person must comply with, has been [through Synod](#) and received parliamentary approval and Royal Assent. It is proposed the Archbishops will commence the new legislation from 1 January. The Group was also reminded that the definition of vulnerable adult from the 2016 legislation remains and is a statutory definition. It was noted that it is a broader definition than the statutory sector concept of adult at risk which was designed for a different purpose.

The Group approved the new Serious Incident Reporting, SIR, guidance for diocesan Boards of Education – which is similar to other SIR guidance already published and comes into effect on January 1. The Group asked if a line could be added to make it even clearer the distinction between DBE responsibilities and schools regarding reporting safeguarding incidents.

There was an update on the Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults guidance which had come back to the Group for some revisions following last month's [House of Bishops](#) particularly around the definition of spiritual abuse. There had been feedback from 16 dioceses, and relevant revisions and clarifications had been made. There was also a discussion around other definitions of abuse in the document. It was agreed a smaller group would convene to prepare the document for presentation at the House of Bishops next month, looking at the tone and comments made by NSSG.

Bishop Jonathan led a discussion on safeguarding governance issues particularly focusing on the relationship between the NSSG and House of Bishops. The Bishop of Bristol, Viv Faull said that trying to change culture is a delicate and lengthy task and referred to her long experience working in cathedrals.

There was an update on the implementation of Safer Recruitment and People Management guidance noting the importance of getting buy-in, particularly as this covers recruiting volunteers in parishes. It was noted the NST was providing on-going training and resources for dioceses as the revised policy comes into force on January 1.

The Group also received an update on the Responding Well to Victims and Survivors guidance, which was approved at the last NSSG, and was now in the implementation phase. This includes the use of digital tools, existing networks and training, particularly around the role of support person. The importance of partnerships in this work was stressed to the Group.

The ongoing work on a survivor engagement framework was shared and discussed with the Group noting the importance of getting survivors round the table to improve safeguarding. It was noted this was a separate piece of work from how to respond well to survivors as previously discussed. The Group heard that survivors wanted a voice and position in discussions, but this had to be meaningful and inclusive. There was a discussion on the importance of co-production and how to engage with people, looking at different ways of walking and working with survivors. The NSSG endorsed the NST's strategy to develop a survivor engagement framework with victims and survivors in the next 18 months. This work aims to result in a standardised approach, principles and practices, ensuring people with lived experience of abuse have a voice which is listened to, valued and acted upon.

The communications update focused on a range of issues including social media and the need for constructive materials to promote new policies and learning points from PCR2. It was noted that more resources would be needed to develop these tools.

Meg Munn, the independent chair of the National Safeguarding Panel (NSP) provided an update on the Panel's work. She noted the new terms of reference and plans to include a parish level representative. She noted that linking with the ISB was ongoing and she was inviting the ISB chair, Maggie Atkinson to a Panel meeting. The October meet had focused on Quality Assurance, with the upcoming November meeting planned to focus on PCR2.

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