

The January 2022 meeting of the National Safeguarding Steering Group, NSSG, was chaired by the lead safeguarding bishop, Jonathan Gibbs who welcomed new members to the group: Bishop Philip Mountstephen, the Bishop of Truro, who is chairing the redress scheme board, the Bishop of Chichester, Martin Warner, who is advising on IICSA Recommendations 1/8 (Chichester is one of the pilot dioceses), the Bishop of Warrington, Bev Mason, the Bishop of Woolwich, Karowei Dorgu and the new adviser to the lead safeguarding bishops.

**In his introduction Bishop Jonathan led a brief discussion on the role of the NSSG** noting the complicated structure of Church governance and the relationships that are important to the work of the group.

He stressed the huge programme of work arising out of IICSA and the need to work together with dioceses and bishops.

There were a range of comments in response noting the need for a more strategic and forward-looking approach, with an emphasis on prevention and building a healthy culture with a focus on making it an attractive place particularly for young people as the Church looks ahead to the future.

Secretary General William Nye updated the group on the recruitment process for a permanent National Director of Safeguarding, noting the very professional job Zena Marshall had done in the interim role. The process is underway and there should be more details next month.

**The group noted an update from Interim director Zena Marshall on the current work of the NST:** Safe Spaces, survivor engagement, guidance development and learning and development, the National Casework Management System, the Information Sharing Project, IICSA Recommendations 1 & 8 / Regional Model Pilot (see below), the Redress and Interim Support Scheme, Past Cases Review 2 (see below) and the independent learning lessons reviews commissioned by the NST.

The importance of having time to discuss and formulate a detailed response to any review recommendations was raised and noted by members.

**A communications update** outlined the importance of working with all diocesan (and cathedral) comms officers on national issues and noted the recent PCR2 briefing and ongoing training courses. The Safer Recruitment video, recently produced, was highlighted as an example of best practice for supporting parishes and dioceses.

**Meg Munn, independent chair of the NSP (National Safeguarding Panel)**, outlined the work of the Panel for new members and presented recent minutes, the NSP annual report and its revised Terms of Reference. These were approved by the Group. She also highlighted her blog which contains details of Panel meetings to ensure its work is transparent.

**The Group welcomed an update on the response to IICSA recommendations 1 & 8/ regional model project** with an outline of the workstreams and importance of pathfinder dioceses which will be grouped into two regions and one central model. The update provided a timeframe and recommendations for delivery particularly on the importance of engaging with survivors. It was stressed that the line management of diocesan safeguarding advisers (to become officers) will remain the same but professional supervision would be trialled regionally and nationally in the pathfinder model. It was also noted the importance of bishops remaining responsible for safeguarding in their

diocese, while not having direct operational oversight. The issue of long term cost was raised and the Group agreed this needed to be carefully considered as the project developed.

**The PCR2 update** outlined the progress on the diocesan, NST and province reports, all carried out by independent reviewers. The current timeline is aiming for publication of the national report at the end of May. Mechanisms to meaningfully engage stakeholders particularly survivors in the development of the themes and recommendations to be made in the report have been established. Group members noted the importance of learning which must also include the good practice that has developed with a clear focus on how dioceses have responded to survivors. The NSSG agreed a range of ongoing actions including identifying an appropriate chair for the Editorial Group and confirming its responsibility for publication and ownership of both the Foreword and Introduction.

**The Group received a progress report on the Virtual Senior Leadership Safeguarding Learning Pathway.** This is part of the new Safeguarding Learning and Development Framework approved in 2021 which introduced a new approach to safeguarding learning. The new approach focuses on making the connection between beliefs and values, and good safeguarding behaviours, and exploring key issues for senior leadership such as the nature of leadership and culture. Current Pathway scheduling will see delivery to all dioceses and cathedrals concluded by mid-January 2023. The remainder of this session will continue to be held virtually but members commented on the importance of getting back to in person learning.

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