

The September meeting was chaired by the lead safeguarding bishop, Jonathan Gibbs.

The impending IICSA report (20th Oct) was discussed, noting that while it was a response to all the Inquiry strands there would be a focus on religious institutions, particularly the Church of England and Roman Catholic Church. Members agreed it would take time to respond fully but a holding statement would be issued on the day once the report had been read.

Diocesan safeguarding audit returns – the deputy director of development highlighted key issues noting the audit is intended to encourage debate and conversations both strategically and locally. Members accepted a recommendation on consistency in recording and agreed both to co-ordinate work already in progress around domestic abuse and around safeguarding issues arising from the cost of living crisis. It also agreed to take a further look at its work responding to the safeguarding needs of children. It was agreed the recommendations would come back to a future NSSG including a look at how the returns would be published.

Update on National Safeguarding Training Group - members agreed to change the Group's name to Safeguarding Learning and Development Group as this better reflects the nature of what the Group does. It also reflects the ideas of on-going learning and formation in respect of safeguarding than "training events". Members also noted the need for a new chair as Bishop Mark Sowerby had now finished his term of office.

Update on Safe Spaces - the deputy director of partnerships explained who the 'owners' of Safe Spaces are: the Church of England & the Church in Wales and the Catholic Church with representatives who are directors as well as an advisory committee including survivors, legal reps, and advisors from the Churches. SPLITZ will be taking over from Victim Support for new callers and Victim Support will continue with the current cases until new contractors confirmed in the new year. The chair thanked the deputy director and her team for the enormous amount of work in the past few months.

Mandatory Domestic Abuse training for PCC members – two papers were presented to the NSSG from a diocesan secretary and the NST. This item will be revisited at the November NSSG.

Update from the National Safeguarding Team – the interim safeguarding director introduced the paper highlighting a number of items including: the last date for the survivor survey being extended until 9 October, positive feedback from the content management system initial rollout, the ITT (Invitation to Tender) for the Redress scheme is in process, and that the Learning Lessons Review policy had been slightly delayed due to a staff absence but consultation would begin in October.

National Safeguarding Panel report -the Chair of the NSP had sent apologies but members had noted the full report and thanked members of the Panel for their contribution, particularly those whose terms were ending.

Approval of PCR2 report – following a full discussion at the July NSSG members were informed about final data including new cases. Clarity was sought on a couple of items and it was agreed the PCR2 team would incorporate these comments into the final version. The NSSG endorsed the report and agreed publication date of October 5. The comms plan was discussed noting a briefing for diocesan comms leads at the end of September. The PCR2 team is to complete a high level exec summary to assist dioceses when they publish their local executive summaries relating to their individual reports.

Update from the Independent Safeguarding Board - Jasvinder Sanghera and Steve Reeves spoke to updated on the Boards work noting that the chair had currently stepped aside and their survivor report should be out next month with their website up and running in the next few weeks. They outlined their proposed ways of working noting contact with survivors but stressed the need for the completion of the information sharing agreement.

Bishop Jonathan thanked the ISB for their contribution.

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