

The House of Bishops has commissioned further work on the Seal of the Confessional, building on the [report and interim statement](#) from the previous working party published in 2018/2019 and originally set up in 2014.

The new working group will take account of relevant findings, in the final report from the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) to be published in October.

Publication of final IICSA report

The group which will meet over the next 12 months will bring together theologians, Church leaders and safeguarding professionals along with other advisers as part of the wider reference group. The voices and experiences of survivors will be critical to this work and will be included, but not named, in the group.

Terms of Reference

- To assist the House of Bishops and the Archbishops' Council in responding to the recommendations of IICSA concerning the Seal of the Confessional, including considering legal options if these are recommended by IICSA
- To review the work on the Seal of the Confessional that led to the Interim Statement currently posted on the Church of England website, as well as the implementation of its recommendations
- To assist the House of Bishops and the Archbishops' Council in moving from an 'interim statement' to a settled position which can be appropriately set out through different communication channels

Working group members

Rt Revd Dr Joanne Grenfell (chair)

Joanne Woolway Grenfell has been Bishop of Stepney since July 2019. Previously, she was Archdeacon of Portsdown in the Diocese of Portsmouth, Director of Ordinands and Residentiary Canon in Sheffield, and a parish priest. Joanne's interests include mission and strategic development, education, particularly school governance, public life, and poetry. She is co-vice chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council of the Church of England. Her London diocesan responsibilities involve being lead bishop for safeguarding and overseeing the Diocese's social engagement ministry and racial justice priority work.

Revd Preb Dr Isabelle Hamley

Isabelle Hamley is a writer, theologian and speaker. She is currently working as Theological adviser to the House of Bishops, after posts as Chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury, parish priest, university chaplain and theology tutor. Before ordination she was a probation officer. She is passionate about the Old Testament, and has written in particular on the Bible and Mental Health, and on matters of justice, violence and faith. Most recently she has written the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent book for 2022, *Embracing Justice*.

Professor David Shemmings

David Shemmings OBE PhD is Emeritus Professor of Child Protection Research at the University of Kent, UK and Visiting Professor of Child Protection Research at Royal Holloway, University of London. Prior to moving to Kent in 2007, David was Professor of Social Work Research at Middlesex University. He qualified as a teacher in 1974 and worked with traumatised children for a number of years. David is the author of over 70 articles, books and chapters on relationally-based social work theory, research and practice. He was formerly co-Director, with Prof Jane Reeves, of the International Centre for Child Protection at the University of Kent which established the online multi-disciplinary and internationally-respected, distance learning MA in Advanced Child Protection, together with a number of 'serious, interactive games', each aimed at enhancing practitioners' skills and raising young people's awareness. David trained many of the practitioners who worked with survivors of the Grenfell fire disaster. He is currently providing training to social workers supporting host families about to offer homes for refugees from Ukraine. In 2019 Yvonne and David Shemmings published [research into Sexual Abuse within a Church of England Diocese](#). David was awarded an OBE for Services to Child Protection in the June 2014 Queen's Birthday Honours List.

Very Revd Andrew Nunn

Andrew became Dean of Southwark in 2012 having been Sub Dean and Canon Precentor from 1999. He grew up in Leicester and studied for a degree in Public Administration before reading Theology at Leeds University before ordination. He was formed for the priesthood at the College of the Resurrection, Mirfield. Andrew's ministry before being at the Cathedral was principally in parishes in inner-city and suburban Leeds, where he was also chaplain to a Church of England secondary school. After leaving Leeds, he became Chaplain to the Bishop of Southwark. Andrew contributes to the life of the church by teaching and speaking at a number of courses and events in the Diocese of Southwark and further afield outside the Diocese. He is a member of the General Synod of the Church of England and on the Panel of Chairs of the Synod. He served as a

member of the Crown Nominations Commission from 2011 until 2017. He was a member of the working party looking at the Seal of the Confessional and the Canon of 1603. In 2021 his book *The Hour Is Come* was published by Canterbury Press, to be followed by *Bethlehem Bound* in 2022. He writes a weekly blog called *Living God* and is well known on Twitter for his daily prayers. His many interests include theatre, cinema, reading and travel and his particular passion is living out and helping to encourage an inclusive church in which all people feel at home and valued.

Dr Andrew Atherstone

Andrew Atherstone is Latimer research fellow at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, and a member of Oxford University's Faculty of Theology and Religion.

Rt Revd Jonathan Baker

Jonathan Baker has been Bishop of Fulham (London) since 2013. He is also Guild Vicar of St Andrew, Holborn Circus. He was ordained deacon in 1993 and priest in 1994. He has experience of parish ministry in Ascot (Berkshire) and Reading, before becoming Principal of Pusey House, Oxford from 2003-13. He was ordained bishop in 2011, acting as the Bishop of Ebbsfleet from 2011-13. He was a member of the General Synod House of Clergy from 2000-2011 and the House of Bishops from 2015-2021.

Deborah Toni

Deborah Toni is a qualified and registered social worker with over 40 years' experience in safeguarding work. Most of her career has been in the voluntary sector providing both statutory and non-statutory social work services to military personnel and their families overseas and in the UK. She was responsible for ensuring that the social work services delivered to children and adults were in line with legislation, good practice, and military law with safeguarding as the core. She was a member of the Ministry of Defence Children's Safeguarding Board and contributed to case work reviews, investigations, and complaints. In 2021 she was employed by the Church of England as an independent reviewer for the Past Cases Review (2) and in January 2022 took up the post of safeguarding adviser to the Lead Bishop for Safeguarding. Her experience of working with a large institution with its own culture and laws will assist in her understanding of, and contribution to, the discussion concerning the Seal of the Confessional.

David Worlock

David completed his BA degree in Theology at Durham University in 1977. Volunteering for a homelessness charity in the city, David's interest in social work grew. David qualified as a social worker in 1981, completing an MSc in Social Administration and Social Work Studies at the London School of Economics. He subsequently worked for over 40 years in children's social care and child protection services in various capacities. This included as a social worker, Team Manager and Director of Children's Social Care, in several London boroughs. At senior management level, David's area of specialism was service change and improvement, built on the application of evidence from research. For a period as an independent consultant David chaired a number of Local Safeguarding Children Boards. From 2014 David spent four years as the Programme Director at the Frontline Organisation, a registered charity funded by the Department for Education to develop and deliver an innovative professional social work education / qualification programme for those wishing to work in child protection. David joined the Church's National Safeguarding Team in October 2019 where he is the Deputy Director for Development, which covers quality assurance safeguarding learning

and policy development.

Revd Adeola Eleyae

Adeola Eleyae is Director of St Mellitus College, Chelmsford. Ade is also Vicar of All Saints, Goodmayes and has previously served as the Bishop's Equality Adviser in the Diocese of Chelmsford. She is also an Associate Priest at Chelmsford Cathedral. Ade worked as a solicitor both in private practice and for the Government from 1996 -2015. She brings extensive experience in the areas of equality, human rights and social justice.

Revd Canon Dr John Rees

Revd Dr John Rees was Provincial Registrar for the Archbishop of Canterbury from 2000 to 2021, and Registrar of the Diocese of Oxford throughout that time. Having been ordained in Ripon Diocese in 1979 and served overseas in West Africa in the early 1980s, he has continued to minister in parishes alongside his work as a lawyer since returning to the UK - with a view to bringing theological insights to bear on legal and structural policies at every level in the Church. He is an honorary canon of Christ Church, Oxford and a provincial canon of Canterbury Cathedral. For seven years before his retirement in 2021 he was a Chaplain to HM the Queen.

Revd Canon Leah Vasey-Saunders

Leah Vasey-Saunders is Vicar of Lancaster and Assistant Archdeacon in the Diocese of Blackburn, in her 19 years of ordained ministry she has worked in post-industrial urban parishes, in a cathedral and has served on General Synod. She has had significant experience as a safeguarding lead in governance roles in schools and cathedral and has personal experience as a confessor and penitent. Leah is Chair of an Anglican catholic renewal charity, On Fire Mission and is a member of the Liturgical Commission.

Father Shaun Baldwin

Shaun studied for the RC priesthood in Durham and was Ordained in the RC Church in 1989, serving in the northwest before resigning from RC ministry in 2000 and marrying. He retrained as a Probation Officer working predominately with high-risk offenders in community and custodial settings and was also as a Court Officer. During this time, he moved to the CofE and was licenced as a non-stipendiary Assistant Curate in 2011. He eventually left the Probation Service to return to stipendiary ministry and is currently the vicar of two parishes in the Blackburn Diocese. He is a survivor of childhood sexual abuse committed by a priest. In addition to his parish duties, he is an advocate for victims/survivors of sexual abuse locally and nationally as member of his Diocesan Survivors Voices group, Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel, and volunteering and engaging with the National Safeguarding Team through their survivor engagement strand of work. Shaun has many years' experience of being a confessor and a penitent in the RCC and the CofE.

Revd Professor Christopher Cook

Christopher Cook is Emeritus Professor in the Institute for Medical Humanities at Durham University, and Honorary Chaplain for Tees, Esk & Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust. From 1997 to 2003 he was Professor of the Psychiatry of Alcohol Misuse at the University of Kent. He was ordained as an Anglican priest in 2001. Chris was Professor of Spirituality, Theology & Health in the Department of Theology & Religion, and Director of the Centre for Spirituality, Theology & Health, at Durham University from 2012-2022. He is Chair of the Spirituality & Psychiatry Special

Interest Group at the Royal College of Psychiatrists and Co-Chair of the Section on Religion & Spirituality at the World Psychiatric Association. His book publications include: *Hearing Voices, Demonic and Divine* (2018), and *Christians Hearing Voices* (2020). He is lead editor of *Spirituality and Psychiatry*, second edition to be published in 2023.

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