

The NSSG chair, lead safeguarding bishop Jonathan Gibbs opened the meeting and welcomed the national safeguarding director, Alexander Kubeyinje who shared initial thoughts since taking up the role in September. He particularly focused on meeting with representatives from survivors' groups and individual survivors, (working with the deputy lead bishop for survivor engagement) as well as meeting with diocesan secretaries and bishops. He intends to visit more dioceses in 2023.

The director then updated members on the current work of the National Safeguarding Team, NST, particularly focusing on the development of the redress scheme and the Learning Lessons Review Guidance which is progressing with further consultation. Other highlighted items included the Senior Leadership Safeguarding Pathway and the delivery plan for PCR2 noting that some recommendations were beyond the remit of the NST. Members were told there will be a paper at the next NSSG giving an update.

An update on the work of the National Safeguarding Panel, NSP, from the independent chair noted the success of the recent best practice webinars with new topics being sought for 2023. The chair highlighted the struggle to find replacements for members who have completed their tenure and NSSG members approved a change in the Terms of Reference which would provide some flexibility to widen the pool. Members noted the constructive engagement of the NSP on issues and the follow up blogs. The Group was reminded that the chairs tenure with the NSP ends in September 2023.

A communications update highlighted survivor-informed training for the digital team and the campaign in progress re domestic abuse awareness which had received positive media coverage. The issue of penalty by consent and requirement to publish was discussed and it was noted that virtual questions for Synod had been submitted (now published).

The group discussed domestic abuse training for PCCs and its importance in the context of economic hardship, increase of referrals and taking forward the relevant PCR2 recommendation. The high work load and responsibilities of PCC members was also considered along with other ways of highlighting the issue. The group agreed, that the requirement remains for PCC members to attend training whilst a review of various recommendations takes place.

Members approved amendments to the Church of England's Confidential Declaration Form and heard an update on the prioritisation work of the NST and a forthcoming review of its resources and initiatives taking into account staff resources and budgets.

An update on the Independent Safeguarding Board, ISB, reminded members that the Chair had stepped back from duties which had impacted on the work of the ISB. The group heard that a conversation around scoping of phase 2 for their work was important and ongoing while remembering the importance of the independence of the Board.

The safeguarding data paper showing trends over a three year period was discussed and members agreed a publication in early 2023. It was

noted that the NSP would consider the paper as statistics are helpful to scrutiny work.

An update on the [final IICSA report](#) published in October noted that many recommendations require Government response before action by the Church as in some cases legislation will be required. The recommendations applying specifically to the Church include redress and mandatory reporting which may or may not be accepted by the Government which is due to make a [public response](#) within six months of the reports publication. The detailed response from the Church on the report was approved by the NSSG and will be published in the new year.

Members were also updated about the completion of Cathedral Audits by SCIE. The briefing identified nine major safeguarding learning themes set out in the form of a quality assurance tool that cathedrals can use to reflect on their own safeguarding practice. The NSSG agreed to:

- The sharing of the report with Deans and Chapters, Bishops, Cathedral and Diocesan Safeguarding Advisors and DSAPs.
- Commend Deans and Chapters to agree a local approach to enable them to reflect on each learning theme in order to inform the development of their safeguarding arrangements.
- Publication of the document on the Church of England website.

Finally members were updated on [Safe Spaces](#) and the procurement of the new provider which was [announced](#) at the end of November.

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