

The National Safeguarding Steering Group chair and Lead Bishop for Safeguarding, Jonathan Gibbs, opened the meeting. The record of the December 2022 meeting was agreed with no matters arising.

The National Director of Safeguarding, Alexander Kubeyinje, updated the members on the work of the NST, highlighting three main areas:

Redress Scheme: He reported that progress was being made with research taking place into how other redress schemes in the UK and overseas are funded. Funding streams for the C of E scheme are in the process of being discussed but it is difficult to underestimate how complex redress schemes are. The group discussed subsidiarity and financial responsibility and the importance of communicating well and understanding any decisions made. Members were told a stakeholder engagement worker is now in post, which is helping with consultation with all involved, particularly the survivor working group.

Interim Support Scheme: Unhappiness has been expressed by some survivors and members is accepted that the scheme does need a fresh look as it has changed from its inception. Some very good work has been accomplished with a new effective project manager in place but more resilience needs to be built in.

There was discussion on the director's paper for Synod noting he would be addressing Synod on the issues he had raised. Members expressed support for the director noting that by naming the difficult behaviour and acknowledging the difficulties between NST and some survivors, it will enable new ways of working. Discussion on the Directors synod paper and it was agreed that a better way of working and building relationships was very much needed. The Director was given the support of members to address this issue as it was agreed this was key to improving both relationships and outcomes

National Safeguarding Panel

The Independent Chair of the NSP, Meg Munn, referred to the 2022 annual report outlining the last year's work of the panel. She stressed the importance of a better communications strategy, as currently her blog is the main method of communication. Plans for 2023 include devising a comms strategy, considering how to measure the impact of the NSP and try to improve the panel's influence and engagement, particularly with the NSSG. Members commended the panel for its challenge which it gives with both empathy and support.

The Secretary General explained the background to current situation with ISB, Independent Safeguarding Board and the decision re changing the reviewer(s) for Christ Church. Statement on ISB and Christ Church review

PCR2 Past Cases Review 2

There are two outstanding issues to be completed:

The review of the Diocese in Europe is still to be published. Plans are in place for this.

- There is a small amount of money to be returned to the dioceses.

An action plan of the 26 recommendations has been developed – five assessed as green, 17 amber and four red. The four ‘reds’ were explained as follows:

Rec 2: The National Safeguarding Team must develop and deliver a national survivor and victim charter with survivors and victims. This charter should specifically set out for church bodies how children’s views should be sought in all matters that affect them and creating cultures and practices which help them to spot indicators that a child might be being maltreated or at risk, ethically and effectively follow-up on these, and truly ‘hear’ children when they are expressing distress or communicating that something is wrong.

The House of Bishops guidance, *Responding Well To Victims and Survivors* has been agreed and there is a working group considering the implementation of the guidance with a summary and video. As this guidance is now in place and covers the same issues as the recommendation for a charter, an additional project to set up a charter is not seen as a priority.

Rec 7: To develop an information sharing agreement between employers of lay or ordained ministers who hold the Bishop’s Licence, such as self-sustaining ministers or part-time stipends. To extend the scope of the Information Sharing Agreement project, responsible for IICSA recommendations five and six, to include the implementation of an information sharing agreement between the organisations who employ Church of England chaplains (lay such as ALMs or LLMs or ordained ministers, sea scouts etc.) and the dioceses who grant the chaplains the Bishop’s Licence.

Members discussed the development of such sharing agreements which rely on local links and involves a huge amount of work as there are multiple agencies to agree terms with. One diocese has a letter on appointment stating the responsibility to inform Bishops if a safeguarding matter occurs – this works for higher level concerns but it is the lower level concerns that pose difficulties when sharing information. It has been suggested that some agreements could be made nationally such as with the NHS and hospital chaplains. Members agreed that Bishops need to know if behaviour would impact on suitability.

Rec 16: The National Safeguarding Team to provide guidance on the reflective conversations that should be considered when safeguarding situations are explored during Ministerial Development Reviews (MDRs).

This is not easy to implement nationally, nor is it for the NST to lead on the issue. It was noted that safeguarding charity ThirtyOne:Eight may have some part to play in this area.

Rec 25: Bullying is not defined as a safeguarding issue, but is a significant concern. All church bodies requested to ensure that identified incidents of

bullying within the Church are recognised, recorded and dealt with effectively, and in accordance with relevant HR policies or as a safeguarding concern if a threshold is met.

Some discussions are being held on this issue in various groups such as theology of safeguarding, culture of safeguarding group, wellbeing groups –it was noted these discussions need joining up. Members agreed it was not for NST to lead on and a statement from HR may assist to understand how to manage situations of bullying.

Safeguarding in Local Ecumenical Partnerships Guidance

The policy lead explained this had taken two years to agree as it was important that all denominations approved. The guidance will soon be available for sharing.

National Safeguarding Casework Management System

Members were told there was good feedback so far from the dioceses that have been on boarded. Lessons learnt will assist future role out. Staff retention and length of time taken to migrate data has had an impact. Recruitment underway. Three questions were asked and answers noted by NSSG:

Q: Have potential adopters of CMS been scoped for data migration. A: Yes

Q: Has every diocese agreed to sign up? A: Initial response has been positive but until final stages of agreement to adopt has been reached it is not possible to give numbers.

Q: Current communications suggest cost going to be £4500 +VAT but had previously been led to believe it may be less for smaller diocese. A: Cost is going to be no more than £4500 +VAT.

There was some discussion about why closed cases would not go on the system (although it was noted that it would be recorded where information was held).

Independent Safeguarding Board, ISB

The director gave some background to the current situation with the ISB and the report, ‘Don’t panic, be pastoral’, which had 46 recommendations. members agreed that the report needed a response but not all the recommendations were clear and further discussion was needed with ISB members once they have completed dispute resolution.

The suggestion was made that the recommendations would be better grouped in themes and priorities and that it is important to reflect and engage with the criticism. Various members offered to consider the response when drafted by the NST.

NST prioritisation

The director will report to the NSSG when he has reviewed the priorities of the NST as it is not possible to continue with all work streams in the current financial climate. He is considering objectives and impact in discussion with stakeholders.

Bishop Jonathan welcomed the Bishop of Stepney, Joanne Grenfell into the role as lead safeguarding bishop which she will be taking up at the end of March.

The next meeting is on 29 March at Church House.

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