

Professor Maggie Atkinson has resigned as chair of the Church of England's Independent Safeguarding Board, ISB; in a statement she said she wished all concerned the greatest success in their crucial work on safeguarding.

The Archbishops' Council has agreed the appointment of Meg Munn as the acting chair until the end of 2023. She will work closely with the two other Board members, survivor advocate Jasvinder Sanghera and Steve Reeves who have started developing plans for what independent scrutiny of the Church's national safeguarding work will look like in the long term.

The ISB work will continue to sit alongside the Church's National Safeguarding Panel of which Meg is also the independent chair and there will be updates on this in due course.

Speaking this week, Dr Atkinson said: "Changing family circumstances and ISB matters have meant that my presence even from a distance has become a distraction and therefore I decided to tender my immediate resignation to the Archbishops' Council.

I wish all concerned the greatest success in their crucial work on safeguarding across the Church and will keep their endeavour in my prayers."

Dr Jonathan Gibbs, the Church of England's lead safeguarding bishop, and member of Archbishops' Council said: "I would like to personally thank all three board members for their work so far, particularly their important focus on responding well to survivors. I wish Maggie well as she leaves the Board and welcome Meg as she works with Jasvinder and Steve and builds on the existing work of the ISB. The Archbishops' Council remains committed to this important principle of independent oversight as the ISB moves to its next phase."

Meg Munn is a former MP and Government minister and a qualified social worker with extensive experience in senior safeguarding roles in local authorities. She has been the Independent Chair of the National Safeguarding Panel since 2018.

Meg said: "I am pleased to be asked to take up the role of Chair of the Independent Safeguarding Board. As I know from my work leading the National Safeguarding Panel, independent scrutiny and oversight is a vital part of the Church's national safeguarding work. I look forward to building on that and the work of the Board to date.

I want to thank Maggie Atkinson for her work as Chair. She demonstrated a strong commitment to engaging widely to develop phase 2 of the Board's work, an approach that I will follow."

Jasvinder Sanghera and Steve Reeves said: "We would like to thank Maggie Atkinson for her work and acknowledge this has not been an easy decision for her. While working with limited resources, we have met the various challenges of the past seven months. The work of the Board in raising the voices of victims and survivors has continued. We welcome Meg Munn to the role of acting Chair and look forward to our collectively work towards implementing the vision of the ISB."

Notes

Independent Safeguarding Board Independent Safeguarding Board <https://independent-safeguarding.org>

National Safeguarding Panel <https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-governance/national-safeguarding-panel>

Church of England safeguarding governance <https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-governance>

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