

A new comprehensive policy on [safeguarding practice reviews](#), previously called lessons learned reviews, was approved by General Synod today.

This is the first safeguarding code of practice to come to General Synod since the new Code of Practice Measure was approved in 2021. The Measure effectively replaced the former rules under which safeguarding guidance has been issued ensuring that Synod must approve any new Codes of Practice. This change, which applies to any new code, replaced the former 'duty to have due regard' with a 'duty to comply' with the requirements of the Code. There is also an extension of the list of 'relevant persons' to whom this Code applies. The strengthening of guidance was a recommendation arising from the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA).

Introducing the new policy, Bishop Joanne Grenfell, the Church of England's lead safeguarding bishop, said: "The vital, underlying aim of this first safeguarding code of practice I am introducing to Synod today, for approval, is understanding the past as a means of strengthening preventative work for the future."

She noted that the current advice on such reviews is just two pages in a much wider 2017 document ([Responding to, assessing, and managing safeguarding concerns and allegations against church officers practice guidance](#)). This will now be replaced by the new policy on safeguarding practice reviews.

Bishop Joanne also outlined the different processes that exist in respect of safeguarding, so that people are clear what to expect from each, stressing "learning lessons," is about taking a step back to try to understand why the events happened in the way they did; answering the "why" question enables an organisation to learn and make improvements that will keep people safe in the future.

See the [full speech](#) from the lead safeguarding bishop.

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