

The July meeting of the National Safeguarding Steering Group was chaired by the Church of England's lead safeguarding bishop, Joanne Grenfell.

The meeting started with a discussion around the **Future Safeguarding Programme** (relating to independence) for the Church of England being led by Professor Alexis Jay, announced earlier in the month, noting that her report will be completed by the end of 2023. Professor Jay will publish her report and the Archbishops' Council, House of Bishops and General Synod will all be invited to consider the final report recommendations. Members also stressed the importance of diocesan input to the Programme and were assured independent support for survivors was in place during the Programme period.

The National Safeguarding Team, NST, director updated members on a range of issues including the new Code on Safeguarding Practice Reviews (formerly known as lessons learnt reviews) approved by Synod at its July sitting. Members also discussed the recommendations in a report commissioned by the former ISB relating to a survivor Mr X, accepting the majority of the recommendations and noting, in some cases, where more work still needs to be done. The anonymised version of the report was published in June.

The group were given a presentation and provided with recommendations relating to the 2022 PCR2 report about responding to **domestic abuse within church communities**. The objectives include bringing about cultural and behavioural change in recognising and responding to domestic abuse across all Church bodies, ensuring the Church is a place where domestic abuse is discussed with church leaders and that there is a strong mandate to address the issue proactively. The recommendations were all approved.

There was also an update on the senior leadership safeguarding pathway, with a new model to be rolled out in 2024, and the national safeguarding standards and quality assurance framework. The standards, developed over a three-year period of consultation including with victims and survivors, were approved and will be published in the autumn. The Group also approved the slightly amended version of *Safeguarding in Local Ecumenical Partnerships policy*, which was originally signed off in January. This will also be published in the autumn. Proposed changes for the new Code of Practice *Managing safeguarding concerns and allegations* were highlighted and members were informed the Code is expected to go to Synod for July 2024.

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