



The results of a vital survivor engagement survey have been published today. The aim of the national anonymous online survey was to listen to the views of victims and survivors about how they would like to work with the National Safeguarding Team, NST, to develop and implement a Survivor Engagement Framework. The survey, which was open for nearly three months later in 2022, gathered the views of 171 adult victims and survivors of any form of abuse with the majority of respondents identifying as victims of Church-related abuse.

The main findings were around motivation and barriers to engagement with the majority expressing a desire to influence decision making and change balanced with concerns about people's negative assumptions and biased behaviours. Responses also included the importance of inclusive and accessible engagement and how to ensure that any survivor engagement does not retraumatise or negatively affect victims and survivors who participate.

Overall safety, empowerment, trust and communication emerged as key themes in relation to preventing re-traumatisation.

Respondents also fed back how they would most like to engage with the Church nationally on opportunities for engagement and how their input should be recognised and valued. There was strong support for a code of conduct or charter to enable and protect working relationships for anyone involved. Remote interaction or engagement online or via email or a Web forum were more popular than face to face meetings. The majority also agreed that a clear policy of how the Church brings survivors and Church Officers to work together will help make the Church a safer place.

The next steps are to develop and implement an action plan to co-produce the Survivor Engagement Framework to include strategic outcomes, key milestones, resources, risk assessment processes, communication strategy and evaluation. There will also be a coproduction of a charter/code of conduct with victims and survivors.

Bishop Julie Conalty, the deputy lead safeguarding bishop for survivor engagement said:

*We owe sincere gratitude to victims and survivors of abuse who shared their views with the National Safeguarding Team in this survey. Their responses will help us to coordinate and standardise our approach to survivor engagement. The survivor engagement framework is a great opportunity for the Church to enable not only survivors to become the heart of our safeguarding work but also to make a real change in the Church.*

Ioannis Athanasiou, survivor engagement lead at the NST and the author of the report, said:

*In involving individuals with lived experience of abuse, colleagues at the NST and many other stakeholders to coproduce the survivor engagement survey, we all learned what excellent results we can achieve by working with victims and survivors, instead of doing things for them. Although it took time for me to write this report, it was important to capture and share evidence with respect to survivors' responses and present the data in the most simple and*

*accessible way as possible.*

## **Getting involved**

If a victim or survivor of abuse wants to engage with this work, they can visit [the survivor engagement webpage](#) where instructions are provided.

## **Finding support**

If you or anyone you are in contact with wish to talk to someone independently, please call the Safe Spaces helpline on 0300 303 1056 or visit [safespacesenglandandwales.org.uk](https://safespacesenglandandwales.org.uk).

Alternatively, you may wish to contact the diocesan safeguarding team in your area or the National Safeguarding Team at [safeguarding@churchofengland.org](mailto:safeguarding@churchofengland.org).

There are also a range of [other support services](#) available.

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