



Geoff Crawford / Church of England

General Synod today approved the first consideration of the draft Redress Measure which makes legal provision for the creation of a national redress scheme for victims and survivors of Church-related abuse. Today's decision is the next step in delivering on the commitment made by the Church in its response to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) and is a tangible way of saying sorry to victims and survivors for past failings in safeguarding.

Overwhelming support for ongoing work on redress was approved by Synod at its July meeting which heard that financial payments will be offered alongside therapeutic, spiritual and emotional support, acknowledgment of wrongdoing on the part of the Church, and apology and support for rebuilding lives.

The Bishop of Winchester, Philip Mounstephen, Chair of the Redress Project Board introduced the draft measure (full speech below) noting that it does not contain every single detail of the Scheme. He stressed that questions and comments from Synod were a critical way of continuing to shape the scheme.

Further details on how the Scheme will run will be developed as the Measure is revised and will be expressed in the Rules, being drawn up by the Project Board which includes survivor and victim representation and in consultation across the Church. These Rules along with the revised Measure are both expected to come back to Synod in July 2024 but with a written update to be given at the February 2024 Synod. Bishop Philip stressed that had the Measure not been introduced until all the detail was finalised then it would put the Scheme back by a year or two.

The draft Measure makes provision for a single 'redress body' to deliver the Scheme. A procurement process is currently underway to identify a suitable supplier, who will work with the Project Board and Team for around nine months to help advise on the technical stages of designing the Scheme before it is in operation. The successful supplier is expected to be announced early in 2024. A key consideration is that any victim or survivor who comes forward must have a clear and simple pathway to access the scheme with funding and support details worked out by the different bodies involved behind the scenes.

The draft Measure reflects the reality that the Church of England comprises a large number of autonomous office holders and bodies, many of them charitable, which are bound together by a shared missional pastoral purpose and the Measure's provisions are intended to help all parts of the Church, collectively, to show their contrition and repentance for the Church's failings. There will be a detailed funding formula, and provisions to ensure that no part of the Church will be asked to contribute financially beyond their means (this will include an upper limit 'cap' and a means test on unrestricted funds). In June it was announced that the Church Commissioners' board, which has always been committed to supporting the Scheme, had agreed to allocate £150m in funding to be released once the key parameters of the Scheme are in place. This funding allocation means financial awards can be administered promptly once the Scheme is in operation.

Bishop Philip added: “I hope we will continue to work constructively across Synod and the wider church – and, crucially, with survivors, to put in place a Redress Scheme that is robust, fit for purpose and, above all else, provides survivors of Church-based abuse with the redress they most certainly deserve.”

A written update on the Scheme including the chosen supplier and details of the proposed financial awards will be brought to Synod in February 2024 with the Revised Measure expected to return to Synod in July 2024 followed by the Final Drafting and Final Approval stages.

Notes

The revision committee stage, which now begins, will take into account comments made by Synod members during this session (and in writing to revisioncommittee@churchofengland.org not later than 5:30 pm on the 19 December 2023). Further details in the General Synod [explanatory notes](#) and [policy paper](#).

[Updates on redress Scheme](#)

[Redress blogs](#)



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Full speech from Bishop Philip Mounstephen, chair of the Redress Project Board

Thank you, Synod, for your warm welcome in July when, together with survivors, we brought before you the work we have begun in developing a National Redress Scheme. Together, we agreed that we must do this as a proper expression of our sincere regret for past failings in safeguarding - and do it well.

Many people in this room have been asking when we will be ready to launch the Redress Scheme. Survivors of abuse have been asking the same: When they ask, will we be open for applications? Well Synod this is up to us. So we bring before you today a draft of the Measure for first consideration which, together, we will all work on in coming months to attempt to convey our heartfelt contrition and deep repentance for the failings of the Church. We have harmed many people, and allowed many people to be harmed and we must respond to those people together.

The Measure before us today is not a final product. It's the beginning of the legislative process. The sooner we start – all of us, together – the more time and opportunity we will have to scrutinise in detail the ways that the whole of the Church, at every level, can offer this response of repentance and redress. And this approach that we are taking today provides an early opportunity to Synod to propose revisions and amendments, so we can make sure that every part of the Church is fully equipped to participate in the Scheme.

In Rules which will sit alongside the draft Measure, we will outline the mechanics of the Scheme: the ways in which the Measure will be implemented in detail. We need to hear from you this morning and through the revisions process so that these Rules can be designed to make sure the Scheme works well in practice.

Indeed I am hoping that we will hear from some who will be directly involved in that process in the course of this debate. There would be no point in the Project team, advised by survivors, doing all of the policy work and designing the entire Scheme before coming here only then to begin the legislative process. That would not only add a further year or two before we could open the doors of the Scheme but would also present you with a fait accompli which survivors would rightly expect you to approve, but would deny you the reasonable opportunity you might expect to scrutinise and amend the legislation.

Hence we are giving you early sight of the Measure and the opportunity to revise and develop it together. Since the warm encouragement you gave to the work of the Project Board in July, for which many thanks, we have gone to market with a procurement process to identify a supplier to deliver the Redress Scheme, and also to help us conclude the technical stages of designing the Scheme, and we have received some very promising tenders which are in the procurement process at present.

Furthermore, we have devised a funding formula to protect every parish, TEI and any other part of the Church from any apprehension they may have that they will be asked to pay more than we can see is feasible for them. The £150million of funds allocated by the Church Commissioners

will enable us to make financial awards to applicants promptly, and local contributions will be facilitated separately from the awards process. The Church Commissioners will make these funds available as and when needed when we have made further progress towards launching the Redress Scheme, both here at Synod and in the work the Project Board and Project Team are undertaking.

When it comes to financial contributions, clearly a parish's priority is local ministry, in partnership with the diocese. This Scheme does not change that. In fact, we are determined to honour this, and we have agreed that a means test in relation to unrestricted funds and a maximum level of financial contribution – a 'cap', if you like – will be implemented, along with other protections and provisions outlined in the policy note which you received along with the draft Measure.

This will mean that every parish and local accountable body will be included in the process equitably and fairly, with transparent means tests to be applied consistently.

We have designed this to be affordable and we will set the thresholds at reasonable levels to make sure that every parish and local accountable body is treated alike and fairly, and no parish or other local body will be asked to contribute beyond that which the Scheme assesses they can reasonably afford.

Let's be clear there is already a risk that claims may be made but this is a means of enabling us together to manage those claims in a proactive manner, sharing the load between us and supported by the generosity of the Church Commissioners. In coming weeks, we will work on some of the remaining crucial policy points such as the level of financial awards the Scheme will administer to eligible applicants; whether to introduce a requirement that an eligible applicant receives their financial award as a full and final settlement; whether financial contributions from local bodies should be considered to be mandatory or voluntary, and other crucial matters. So please speak into these and other matters this morning, and please submit proposals for amendment to the revision committee.

One of our lamentable failings which has made it possible for some people to abuse others while in the Church of England has been our reluctance to face up to unpalatable truths and avoid confronting difficult and painful situations openly and candidly. Today, here in public, let us start as we mean to go on - with a transparent and honest conversation about the ways we can deliver the commitment we agreed in July: to develop the Redress Scheme as a proper expression of that regret; and to look forward to its further development.

Let us take on board today collectively our responsibility in this and let us indeed look forward together as we develop this Scheme, listening to and learning from each other and crucially from survivors, so that this scheme will genuinely be co-created. So that as a whole Church we can in due course express our repentance properly, genuinely and with humility, and, in doing so, confront our own failings. We must learn from those failings and determine together to take a better course.

And this draft Measure I believe gives us the opportunity to do just that. So I commend this Draft measure to Synod and move the motion standing in my name. Thank you.

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