

**Statement from National Director of Safeguarding**

The following statement has been issued by the independent reviewer into the Church's handling of allegations against the late John Smyth. We would like to say as commissioners of the review, the NST recognises the process has gone on longer than is acceptable for those waiting for an outcome and for the Church to act and learn on the outcomes of the report. Along with the reviewer we apologise for this delay. We continue to offer additional resources and financial support to ensure the report is received by the end of April with a view to publication as soon as practically possible after that date.

**Statement from Keith Makin, Independent Reviewer**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank victims for their courage, time, and detailed input to the review and more recently in meetings with me. I recognise the impact that the duration of the review has had on victims, their families and others involved in this case.

Concerns have been expressed that I may have been put under pressure to delay publication of this report, I can confirm this is not the case. Several factors have contributed to the time taken reaching this current stage, including varying the terms of my contract. This will enable me to carry out representations, where those criticised in the review will be given advance notice of this and provided with an opportunity to respond.

I can confirm that my report is now being prepared for this process and I anticipate this will commence in March 2024.

**Support**

Both the reviewers and the Church recognise that giving information to this review has the potential to be re-traumatising for victims and survivors. While support has previously been offered the NST has now secured the service of a specialist advocacy service. FearFree Support provides specialist support to victims and survivors of abuse, offering trauma informed and victim led bespoke support. Its director of services has identified an experienced independent advocate for victims and survivors – Nina Tanner – to deliver this service and this information has been relayed to the survivors and victims.

**Contact:** [Nina.Tanner@fearfree.org.uk](mailto:Nina.Tanner@fearfree.org.uk)/ 07825 741751

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