



The Archbishops of Canterbury and York have welcomed the publication today of the [Future of Church Safeguarding report](#) from Professor Alexis Jay, with an outline of next steps for how the Church responds.

Professor Jay, the former Chair of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, IICSA, [agreed in July to develop proposals](#) around independence in safeguarding in the Church.

The work was commissioned following the termination of the contracts of the original Independent Safeguarding Board, ISB.

In a statement the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby and the Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell said: “The Church is committed to the highest standards of safeguarding as it carries out its work in every community across the country, every day of the year. The workings out of the report from Professor Jay will provide a vital next step as we move forward.

“We thank Professor Jay and her team for this fully independent report, and the wisdom, expertise and meticulous proposals contained within it. We recognise her criticism of our safeguarding structures and processes and we welcome this scrutiny and challenge. For the sake of all those who come into contact with the Church, particularly victims and survivors, we welcome the plans that are in place to take forward this work as swiftly as possible to give everyone confidence and trust in our structures and processes.

“Professor Jay rightly acknowledges the excellent work that is done up and down the country by experienced and committed Safeguarding Officers and others, but her challenge to us all is how our safeguarding structures and processes reach that same standard. □This is a constructive challenge that we must all take very seriously.

“We pray for all involved as the Church takes these important decisions. We pray that our response is shaped by our knowledge that all are created in the image of God, and our fervent longing and desire to see a Church which is safe for all.”

The Church of England’s lead safeguarding bishop, Joanne Grenfell, who is chairing the Response Group for the Wilkinson and Jay reviews said:

“The report today from Professor Jay contains important recommendations for the structure of safeguarding in the Church with a clear emphasis on independent scrutiny and the importance of independent professional advice in all our safeguarding work. These are detailed recommendations, clearly informed by victims and survivors. They will come to General Synod this Saturday so that there can be initial consideration of the process for considering and responding to this work, and to the recent review by Sarah Wilkinson.

“I intend that our response will develop better foundations for all of our safeguarding work: working with our trusted safeguarding professionals to keep people safe in our churches must be our priority. We are truly sorry when we have got things wrong and we must continue to learn about how to respond well to the needs of victims and survivors of abuse, as we work to create a healthy culture in every part of the Church of

England.”

Next steps

- The report will initially be considered and debated at General Synod this Saturday February 24) with a presentation from Professor Jay and subsequent debate on the following motion: *‘That this Synod thank Sarah Wilkinson and Alexis Jay for their work and request that the process set out in [paragraph 12 of GS 2336](#) for forming a response to, and considering any necessary implementation of, their recommendations be pursued as a matter of priority.’*
- The General Synod will now be invited to agree that there should be an engagement phase across the Church including with victims and survivors which will be led by the Response Group
- The Response Group will oversee wider engagement and further reflection regarding both Reports in order to brief the National Safeguarding Steering Group (NSSG) and then advise the House of Bishops, and the Archbishops’ Council. Following this, the response to these reports will be presented to General Synod for debate.
- Work to implement the recommendations made by IICSA will continue alongside the Church’s consideration of the Jay report. This includes the planned consultation concerning the implementation of a regional model of supervision and quality assurance for Diocesan and Cathedral Safeguarding Officers (IICSA Recommendation 1) and the Independent Safeguarding Audit Programme (IICSA Recommendation 8). [IICSA 1 and 8 - Regional model pilot](#)

More information

- [Jay Wilkinson Response Group Terms of Reference](#) (proposed)

Finding support

- If you or anyone you are in contact with are affected by the publication of this report and want to talk to someone independently please call the Safe Spaces helpline on 0300 303 1056 or visit 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. There are also [other support services](#) available