The National Safeguarding Steering Group, NSSG, May meeting was chaired by Bishop Julie Conalty, deputy lead bishop for safeguarding (survivor engagement). Members signed off previous minutes and discussed matters arising including items due to come to the next meeting.

Bishop Joanne Grenfell, lead safeguarding bishop, gave an update highlighting the future of Church safeguarding work, ongoing discussion around the Seal of Confessional and the Makin Review (John Smyth)

**National Safeguarding Panel, NSP**

The interim chair of the NSP, highlighted items from the annual report (2023) noting it had been an uncertain year due to the loss of the previous longstanding chair. The process for a permanent chair is currently underway. Members noted the work that has been undertaken to consolidate the NSP mandate and Terms of Reference, while acknowledging that the future of the NSP is dependent on current developments on safeguarding independence. The annual review was received by the NSSG with members recording the importance of its scrutiny work and the hard work of the Panel.

**National Safeguarding Team, NST, update**

The national director of safeguarding gave an update and members discussed the following items:

- Development of a strategic plan for the NST
- Makin Review – noting Maxwellisation process has started
- Constructive regular meetings with director and lead bishop, and victims and survivors
- Staff completing trauma-informed training
- Interim Support Scheme
- White Ribbon Programme
- Safe Spaces

**Response Group to the Jay and Wilkinson reports**

Members were updated on the work of the Response Group to these reports on safeguarding independence in the Church with the co-chairs highlighting:

- Vision is clear – to make the Church a safer place, detailed work more complex
Importance of research and analysis along with deep engagement

- Issue of ownership and accountability

- Parishes – there is a Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) on the Response Group providing a vital challenge as the parish is where most safeguarding happens

- Importance of Response Group listening to all voices

A discussion followed looking at the Group’s detailed response work to date: members highlighted the value of the existing independent INEQE audits and the regional model of DSA supervision (an IICSA recommendation) and the importance of building on these in the response work while considering the consistency of safeguarding provision across dioceses.

Members received an update from the **PSO (Parish Safeguarding Officer) National Group** which was established in July 2023 to develop and implement strategies to strengthen the learning and support offered to PSOs and the role. The group consists of 50% parish safeguarding officers; diocesan safeguarding professionals; parish clergy and lay roles; with coordination and administration of the group provided by colleagues in the NST. The NSSG approved the revised PSO role description, with some agreed constructive changes, and endorsed the completion of the Information and Welcome Pack, safeguarding promotion articles and the extended learning module.

**Managing Allegations Code update** – members were informed that to ensure getting the detail of the document consistent and watertight, with clear, accessible language, it would now come back to NSSG later in the year and go to General Synod in February 2025. The current **Responding to, assessing and managing safeguarding concerns or allegations against church officers** guidance remains in place with a short new risk assessment guidance for DSOs being issued in the meantime.

**Source URL:** https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-news-releases/nssg-may-meeting