



and scrutinise safeguarding on behalf of the Church of England are

Geoff Crawford / Church of England

Members of the Church's General Synod will be asked to choose between two possible models for independent safeguarding at their upcoming meeting in London from February 10-14.

In one model safeguarding officers currently working in dioceses, cathedrals and the national Church would transfer to work for a new organisation. In the other diocesan and cathedral officers would remain with their current employers but most national staff would move to a new body. In both cases safeguarding work would be scrutinised by a second external body.

The models, set out in more detail in a [paper to members of Synod](#), were developed in response to reviews conducted for the Church of England by Prof Alexis Jay, chair of the national Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), and the barrister Sarah Wilkinson.

Synod members will also have an opportunity to debate a motion [responding to the Makin Report](#) into the abuse by the lawyer John Smyth, which prompted the resignation of the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby. And they will be asked to approve new safeguarding codes of practice including guidance on managing allegations.

The [Synod papers](#) also include [detailed draft proposals](#) for possible new arrangements to enable the wider use of prayers asking for God's blessing for same-sex couples including in special services.

The proposals, developed by working groups representing the range of views on questions of sexuality and marriage across the Church of England, are published for discussion and feedback.

These proposals also include additional measures of "pastoral reassurance" that seek to affirm and support the diversity of theological views within the church.

Other key items coming to General Synod include a motion, brought by Fr Alex Frost from the Diocese of Blackburn, on encouraging the ministry of people from working class backgrounds in the Church of England.

There will also be debates on racial justice; the role of sport in Christian outreach; the global prayer initiative Thy Kingdom Come; and possible changes to the voting procedures of the Crown Nominations Commission.

Synod will also have an opportunity to look at proposals for simplifying the way money flows around the Church, providing more financial support to dioceses and levelling up clergy stipends.

The Bishop of Stepney, Joanne Grenfell, the Church of England's Lead Bishop for Safeguarding, said: "There is, quite rightly, considerable interest in our safeguarding work and I will be leading a number of debates and sessions on these vital questions at Synod.

“In the light of the Makin review, it is essential that we recognise together the pain of all victims and survivors living with a legacy of abuse, while highlighting the recommendations and work already under way.

“The proposals on safeguarding independence are the product of a huge amount of work and feedback from across the Church including from victims and survivors and it is right that Synod now makes the decision on which model to pursue.”

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