



***Statement from John Perumbalath:***

Having sought the permission of His Majesty the King, I have today taken the decision to retire from active ministry in the Church of England.

Earlier this week, I was approached by Channel 4 news who informed me they would be broadcasting a story containing allegations of inappropriate behaviour by me against two different women.

Since those allegations were made, I have consistently maintained that I have not done anything wrong and continue to do so. Since the claims were made in 2023, they have been investigated and considered by experts from the National Safeguarding Team and had found them unsubstantiated. The first allegation was also investigated by the Police resulting in no further action. Despite this, media reports have treated me as guilty on all charges and treated these allegations as fact.

Further it has been erroneously reported that prior to my appointment as Bishop of Liverpool, I had failed the safeguarding assessment process. This is categorically not true. As the Church of England have made clear in their written statements over the past 48 hours responding to these false claims, the National Safeguarding Team found no concerns about my operational safeguarding experience and recommended some development work for me as I took on additional strategic safeguarding responsibilities – which is commonly the case for new diocesan bishops.

This rush to judgment and my trial by media (be that social or broadcast) has made my position untenable due to the impact it will have on the Diocese of Liverpool and the wider church whilst we await further reviews and next steps.

I do not wish this story to become a distraction for this incredible diocese and its people whom it has been an honour and joy to serve. This is not a resignation occasioned by fault or by any admission of liability. Rather it has become clear that stepping back from my ministry and waiting for the completion of further reviews would mean a long period of uncertainty for the Diocese and all those who serve it. I have taken this decision for my own well-being and the best interests of the Diocese. The exact date when my role will formally end is not yet determined. There are protocols to observe that I will now be attending to.

But I step back from my ministry today. This means I will not be ministering in or leading the diocese with immediate effect. I have informed the Archbishop of York of my decision and I understand he will put in place the necessary arrangements for episcopal oversight of the diocese for the remainder of my time here and during the vacancy.

**John Perumbalath, Bishop of Liverpool**

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***Liverpool leadership statement:***

Having received the news of the retirement of the Bishop of Liverpool, we acknowledge his decision in taking this step for the good of the

Diocese of Liverpool. This is a deeply painful situation, and we hold all concerned in our prayers.

We will be liaising with the Archbishop of York in the coming days to establish interim episcopal oversight for the diocese. We continue working hard to support all those who have been affected by this story; and to support our clergy, congregations and staff as their ministry continues.

**Debra Walker, Chair of the House of Laity**

**Peter Dawkin, Chair of the House of Clergy**

**Sue Jones, Dean of Liverpool**

**Pete Spiers, Archdeacon of Knowsley & Sefton**

**Miranda Threlfall-Holmes, Archdeacon of Liverpool**

**Simon Fisher, Archdeacon of St Helens and Warrington**

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***Statement from the Archbishop of York:***

I acknowledge the decision made by the Rt. Revd. Dr. John Perumbalath to resign from active ministry in the Church of England. I respect his decision and thank him for his ministry.

My thoughts and prayers continue to be with all those who have been affected by this situation.

I am committed to ensuring stability during this time of transition and will be putting the necessary arrangements in place to provide episcopal oversight for the Diocese. An acting Bishop for the Diocese of Liverpool will be announced in the coming days.

**Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York**

## **Finding support**

If you or anyone you are in contact with are affected by this matter and want to talk to someone independently please call the Safe Spaces helpline on 0300 303 1056 or visit [safespacesenglandandwales.org.uk](https://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](mailto:safeguarding@churchofengland.org).

There are also [other support services available](#).

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