

GENERAL SYNOD

Women in the episcopate - appointment of Independent Reviewer

1. The Archbishops of Canterbury and York have, with the agreement of the Chairs of the Houses of Clergy and Laity, invited Sir Philip Mawer to act as the Independent Reviewer under the Regulations which will establish a procedure for the resolution of disputes arising from the *House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests*. Sir Philip has accepted the invitation. His term of office will begin as soon as the Regulations are made by the House of Bishops on 17 November and will run until the end of 2017.
2. The Reviewer will be responsible for considering grievances from parochial church councils where they consider that a bishop or other cleric has not acted consistently with the House of Bishops' Declaration, including the five principles that it contains. The Regulations envisage that on occasions the Reviewer may wish to encourage mediation for the resolving of disputes.
3. The Reviewer will also have a wider power to conduct inquiries where concerns are expressed about acts or omissions under the Declaration more generally. Bishops and other clergy will be under a canonical duty to cooperate with investigations into grievances. As well as dealing with individual grievances the Reviewer will produce an annual report, which will be published.
4. After serving in the Home Office and the Cabinet Office as a senior civil servant Sir Philip was Secretary General of the General Synod from 1990 to 2002. He was then Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards from 2002 to 2007 and the Prime Minister's Independent Adviser on Ministerial Interests from 2008 to 2011. He chaired the Professional Regulation Executive Committee of the Actuarial Profession from 2009 to 2013. He has previously been Deputy Chair of the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group and is now Chair of Allchurches Trust Limited, the charity which owns the Group.
5. This will be a part time, unpaid role. The Regulations provide for the possibility of appointing one or more Deputy Reviewers. The Steering Committee which drafted the Regulations recommended this flexibility in case the workload proved too much for one person. But it also said that 'in the early days we see advantage in one person having the opportunity to take an overview across the country as issues arise for the first time... That will, of course, mean that the choice of a person of quality, integrity and fairness will be absolutely crucial' (GS 1924, paragraph 69). The Archbishops are very grateful to Sir Philip for being willing to take on this new and significant responsibility.

William Fittall
Secretary General
23 October 2014