

GENERAL SYNOD

Progress Report by the National Safeguarding Steering Group**Summary**

The report is intended to update General Synod on developments in respect of safeguarding at national level following the two sets of hearings on the Anglican Church by the Independent Inquiry into Institutional Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), and the work of the National Safeguarding Steering Group (NSSG) and National Safeguarding Team (NST) in progressing the actions agreed by General Synod at its sessions in July 2018.

About the National Safeguarding Steering Group (NSSG)

1. The National Safeguarding Steering Group (NSSG) was created in 2016. It is responsible for the strategic oversight of national safeguarding activity. It has delegated powers to agree safeguarding guidance and regulations on behalf of the House of Bishops and makes recommendations on the strategic development of safeguarding activity to the Archbishops' Council and House of Bishops.

About this Report

2. General Synod debated and agreed the following motion at its sessions in July 2018:
“That this Synod, recognising that safeguarding is at the heart of Christian mission and the urgent need for the Church of England to continue to become a safer place for all and a refuge for those who suffer abuse in any context:
 - a) *endorse the priorities for action outlined in the report (GS 2092);*
 - b) *endorse as an additional priority the support of safeguarding at parish level to create a safer church of all;*
 - c) *call on the House of Bishops and the Archbishops' Council to ensure that a plan of action is implemented as a matter of priority; and*
 - d) *call on the House of Bishops to introduce, as a matter of urgency, ways to improve relations between the Church and those survivors currently in dispute with the National Church Institutions including, where appropriate, by the use of mediation processes.’*
3. This paper is intended to provide an update to Synod on the progress made in respect of the implementation of the report (GS 2092) created to resource the debate at the July 2018 group of sessions. The report will provide a brief update in respect of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) and their investigation into the ‘Anglican Church in England and Wales.’
4. The report also provides an overview of other key developments relating to the implementation of the National Safeguarding Team’s Business Plan ‘*Promoting a Safer Church*’ and key plans for 2019.

IICSA: Chichester and Peter Ball Case Studies and the national hearing

5. On 5 – 23 March 2018, the Independent Inquiry into Institutional Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) held its first hearings into the Church of England in the form of the Chichester Case Study. The emerging themes arising from this hearing were presented to the Council and House of Bishops in May 2018 and subsequently formed the basis of a report by the NSSG to General Synod in July 2018 (GS 2092, which can be found [here](#)).
6. On 23 – 27 July 2018, IICSA held a public hearing in respect of the Peter Ball case study. In the opening statement to the Inquiry, Leading Counsel acting on behalf of the Archbishops' Council made three key points on behalf of the Church of England:
 - He stated that the Church is 'sorry and ashamed' and gave an unqualified apology to the those who suffered abuse at the hands of Peter Ball and to families and others affected by his abuse.
 - He reminded the Inquiry that Dame Moira Gibb has acknowledged that this type of allegation would not be dealt with in the same way by the Church today but that progress with regard to safeguarding improvements remained too slow.
 - He stated that it would not be the Council's approach to blame or defend individuals but to take collective responsibility for past failures and seek to do better in the future.
7. The full transcripts from the Peter Ball hearings are available at: <https://www.iicsa.org.uk/investigations/investigation-into-failings-by-the-anglican-church?tab=hearing>
8. Subsequently, all 'core participants' in the Inquiry were invited to make written closing submissions by 7th September 2018. The Archbishops' Council made a 25-page written submission on 7 September. These submissions can be found in full at: <https://www.iicsa.org.uk/investigations/investigation-into-failings-by-the-anglican-church?tab=docs>. The interim report on the two Chichester and Peter Ball case studies is expected to be published by the early part of quarter two of 2019.
9. IICSA published their 2019 timetable of hearings on 22 October – 2 weeks have been set aside for public hearings in respect of the national Church, commencing on 1 July 2019. A request was made to the Inquiry to change this date in view of it clashing with General Synod in York. The Inquiry did not agree to our request but has indicated that it will avoid calling senior members of clergy during the period that Synod is due to meet in July.
10. The Inquiry held a Preliminary Hearing on 15 January 2019. Ms Fiona Scolding, Senior Counsel to the Anglican Church Investigation outlined the scope of the wider national public hearing to be held in July 2019 and the timetable for preparations ahead of the hearing taking place. The hearing will consider past and present practice, policies and arrangements for preventing children and young people from being sexually abused and how the Church responds when it occurs. It will consider the extent to which the culture of the Church prevents or inhibits the reporting of abuse. It will also focus on planned safeguarding developments and the extent to which they will mitigate risk of abuse and improve responses to victims and survivors of abuse. The full transcript is available at <https://www.iicsa.org.uk/key-documents/9001/view/preliminary-hearing-transcript-15-january-2019.pdf>.

Implementation of GS 2092

11. General Synod in July resolved to endorse the priorities for action outlined in GS 2092. That report highlighted three emerging themes from evidence given to IICSA and outlined thirteen actions arising from these. The three emerging themes involve strengthening:

- support for, and engagement with, victims and survivors of abuse;
- clergy selection, suitability and discipline; and
- structures, independence, oversight and enforcement.

12. The thirteen areas of work are discussed below under the three headings.

Support for, and engagement with, victims and survivors of abuse

(i) *Publish the research being undertaken by the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) alongside a formal Church of England response and action plan*

13. The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) were commissioned by the National Safeguarding Team (NST) in 2015 to independently audit every diocese in respect of their safeguarding arrangements and to produce a report to be published by the diocese outlining considerations for improvement. The independent audit programme was completed in 2017. Following an evaluation of the pilots, it was decided that these audits would not include direct contact between the auditors and victims and survivors. Instead, the NST commissioned a separate piece of research from SCIE to complement their audit work. A survivor survey was conducted during the summer of 2018 with around 60 responses received. The findings of this have now been collated by SCIE and this will inform the final overview report of the audit programme, which will be published along with a response from the NSSG by the end of March 2019.

(ii) *Work with the Roman Catholic Church to develop and commission a central hub and community spoke model of support to survivors ('Safe Spaces')*

14. Work has progressed, led by a dedicated project manager commissioned by the NST, on the development of 'Safe Spaces' in partnership with the Catholic Church in England and Wales. The work is overseen by the Safe Spaces Project Management Board, a sub-group of the NSSG chaired by the Rt Revd. Sarah Mullally, Bishop of London.

15. The project is intended to be ecumenical, scalable, independent and sustainable. Survivors' voices will be at the centre of Safe Spaces and its success will depend on their engagement and positive evaluation of the service. Its intended outcomes will be reviewed to take account of any new findings arising from the SCIE research on survivors' experiences of reporting church-related abuse. The project will offer:

- A central hub with skilled first response advocates trained in trauma informed support and guidance.
- Online sessional counselling for survivors of church related abuse.
- The development of a digital data base of community spokes made up of existing local, national statutory voluntary and community-based services that can support survivors.

- The development of 10 new or existing community based therapeutic initiatives that support survivors of church related abuse co-produced with survivors.
16. The Archbishops' Council authorised, at its January meeting, further work to establish a new Company, of which the Archbishops' Council and Catholic Trust for England and Wales (CaTEW) will be members, to procure the Safe Spaces services. The project is expected to benefit from grant funding from the Allchurches Trust Ltd.
- (iii) *Work with survivors to establish an independently chaired Survivors' Panel to support the work of the NSSG and NST nationally and consider how this model might be developed regionally to support developments at a diocesan level*
17. SCIE and Minister and Clergy Sexual Abuse Survivors (MACSAS) have continued to facilitate discussions with a group of survivors (now 17 in total) following the Synod's July group of sessions. A paper from the group was discussed at the NSSG on 12 November, at which it was agreed that this work should continue towards the co-production of a survivor-led strategic framework for the engagement of survivors in the Church. The paper considered by the NSSG also contained a list of what were described as 'hindrances to partnership working', which will require further consideration by the NSSG at its meeting on 29 January 2019. The NST will be recommending to the NSSG the co-design of a Survivors' Charter.
18. The NSSG recognises that some survivors remain deeply mistrustful of the Church and its officers. It has commissioned a piece of mediation work to attempt to address an individual survivor's disputes with some staff of the NCIs. The approach is being piloted alongside exploring the application of restorative justice approaches and work outlined above in paragraph 13 which is aimed at promoting co-design and production with victims and survivors concerning, for example, the development of future safeguarding responses, training and policy.
- (iv) *Undertake exploratory work to consider options for the Church's approach to redress*
19. The Archbishops' Council is closely monitoring the progress of IICSA's investigation in respect of reparations and redress. The NST will commission exploratory work including considering other national redress schemes and the experiences of survivors of church-related abuse in respect of civil settlement processes and their views in respect of other forms of redress. A review of House of Bishops practice guidance 'Responding Well to Sexual Abuse' will provide the opportunity to articulate clearer expectations about the support that should be provided to victims and survivors.

Clergy selection, suitability and discipline

- (v) *Implement new requirements to strengthen suitability and selection of candidates for the ministry*
20. All candidates coming to Bishops Advisory Panels (BAPs) from Autumn 2018 confirm in their paperwork their "understanding of and adherence to the Church of England's policy on Promoting a Safer Church." This embeds this requirement in the current selection criteria and processes and it will continue to be embedded in the new processes which will come into effect from Autumn 2020. In terms of a new discernment framework to be used from Autumn 2020, work is being undertaken to advise the House of Bishops as to whether a mandatory psychological assessment of

candidates should take place. This work will be presented to the House in May 2019. This will form part of a raft of new processes which will further strengthen the work of discernment in the areas of the personality, character and relationships of the candidate.

21. The safeguarding training requirements for candidates, before they come to a Panel, and for Diocesan Directors of Ordinands (DDOs) who accompany them in the process, are being revised and this will be completed by summer 2019. Final reports to Bishops now include confirmation that Ordinands have completed module C2 by the point of ordination.

22. From Autumn 2018, a protocol has been agreed and issued to Advisers who might hear at a BAP disclosure of evidence of abuse. It has been drawn up in conjunction with the National Safeguarding Team. The Crown Nominations Commission has also considered ways to strengthen safeguarding assurance in the light of evidence heard in respect of Peter Ball. A process for escalating concerns to the NST is under development.

(vi) Implement new policy in respect of Permission to Officiate

23. The Church published new Permission to Officiate guidance on 20 July 2018, strengthening expectations with regards to safeguarding. This will also be contained in an addendum to House of Bishops' guidance *Safer Recruitment*, which falls within the scope of the duty to have 'due regard' imposed by section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016. An audit of the PTO arrangements is due to be undertaken in July 2019.

(vii) Develop and implement a National Clergy Register

24. Draft legislation, in the form of the draft Church of England (Miscellaneous Provisions) (No. 2) Measure, is currently making its way through the Synod that will support the creation of a national register of authorised ministers by requiring (i) bishops to provide the necessary information to the Archbishops' Council for the purpose and (ii) the Council to maintain and publish the national register. Putting in place the supporting legislative structure involves a three-stage process. The draft Measure came to Synod for First Consideration in July 2018, will undergo its Revision Stage at the February group of sessions and, subject to the satisfactory completion of that, will return for Final Approval in July 2019. If the Measure receives Final Approval and the Royal Assent (possibly by the end of 2019) it will, when it comes into effect, confer on the Council power to make regulations to require bishops to provide information about those they authorise for ministry for inclusion in a national register. These draft regulations will only need a single stage process to receive Synodical approval and would be expected to come to the Synod for that purpose in February 2020. Subject to receiving Parliamentary approval and the Royal Assent, the Regulations would come into effect by the end of 2020.

25. The National Church Institutions (NCIs) are working together to procure a new integrated People and Data System for Clergy, NCI staff and some stipendiary licenced lay workers. This will support existing people services such as clergy payroll. But it will also be designed to support the new National Clergy Register.

(viii) To work with others to review the Clergy Discipline Measure and consider other processes to assist and provide more robust processes for the handling of safeguarding concerns and complaints

26. At its January meeting the Clergy Discipline Commission will consider the possible options for the amendment of the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003 (CDM) identified in GS 2092. It is expected to give further consideration to them at its following meeting, alongside other options emerging from the ongoing analysis by the NST of the responses to its consultation on the effectiveness of the CDM in the safeguarding context. The NST will be undertaking a deep-dive review of a small number of cases to inform this work, which is expected to be presented to the NSSG in April 2019.
27. The Commission also continues to seek and analyse information on delays in the CDM processes, which it will consider alongside the results of a survey being undertaken by the Bishops of Salisbury and Lincoln of diocesan bishops' experience of the CDM generally.

Structure, independence, oversight and enforcement

(ix) *Develop and analyse options for further strengthening independent elements of oversight, scrutiny and powers of intervention*

28. The Secretary General presented a paper to the Archbishops' Council in September outlining options in respect of structure and governance. The Council have agreed to the establishment of the NST as a Directorate in its own right and to appoint a National Director of Safeguarding. An Interim National Director of Safeguarding, Sir Roger Singleton, commenced on 2 January 2019. He is currently reviewing the leadership structure within the NST to help maximise the capacity of the Archbishops' Council to continue to lead and deliver the transformation of safeguarding across the whole Church. The appointment process will have commenced by the end of January and is expected to be concluded by the end of March 2019.

29. Meg Munn has been appointed as the first independent chair of the National Safeguarding Panel (NSP). Meg is a former MP and Government Minister, with a background in child and adult safeguarding. Since commencing her role in September, she has undertaken a review of the Panel's functions, developing its terms of reference in order to provide high level strategic advice and direction on policies and practice in safeguarding and to hold the Church to account for its work on safeguarding through regular scrutiny. Meg is also a member of the NSSG. A joint workshop between the NSSG and NSP took place in November to consider barriers to, and solutions for, embedding safeguarding as part of the life and mission of the Church. A range of actions are currently under consideration.

(x) *Continue to emphasise the duties and accountability of all clergy, church officers and (ultimately) Diocesan Bishops for safeguarding*

30. The current roles and responsibilities of clergy and senior clergy such as Bishops and Deans are outlined in the House of Bishops practice guidance *Key Roles and Responsibilities of Church Office Holders and Bodies* (October 2017). This guidance will be revised by the end of 2019.

(xi) *Develop a business proposal for the establishment of an independent Ombudsman Service with regards to complaints relating to how safeguarding cases have been managed*

31. In November 2018, the NSSG received and agreed an initial paper scoping the development of a Safeguarding Ombudsman Service. This paper was also discussed at the National Safeguarding Panel in December. Further work is now progressing to

develop and enhance the proposals made. The service is expected to offer an independent ombudsman facility when safeguarding complaints processes have been exhausted within dioceses, NCIs and other church bodies.

- (xii) *Consider the findings of the final SCIE Overview report following the completion of the independent diocesan safeguarding audits and in particular any recommendations in respect of structure, centralisation and independence*

32. SCIE have now concluded the first part of their final Overview report, which relates to the independent auditing of diocesan safeguarding arrangements. The report contains a total of 32 'Considerations' for the NST across 11 themes. The final report, which takes account of the findings from the survivor survey (see paragraph 10 of this report) will be presented to the NSSG at the end of January. The NSSG will aim to publish a response to this report by the end of March 2019.

- (xiii) *Undertake an analysis of the benefits and risks associated with the development of a national safeguarding service employing all safeguarding staff centrally*

33. The report of the Secretary General to the Archbishops' Council included an initial analysis of the benefits and risks of centrally employing all safeguarding staff. The Archbishops' Council do not consider that the benefits of such an arrangement currently outweigh the risks associated with major structural change of this nature. There is stronger support, however, for developing a supervision model and more consistent supervisory arrangements for Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers.

Overview of other key National Safeguarding Developments

34. A Project Manager has been appointed to lead the implementation of the **Past Cases Review-2** overseen by the establishment of a Project Management Board chaired by the Deputy Lead Safeguarding Bishop, the Bishop of Horsham. Funding has been agreed nationally by the Archbishops' Council for 50% of costs up to a cap of £30,000 per diocese.

35. The **Parish Safeguarding Handbook** was revised following further feedback from Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers and Version 2 was launched on the website in October 2018. This version has now proceeded to the publishers for publication. This will be available later in the year. Hard copies of the handbook along with other resources are now being circulated to dioceses for distribution to parishes.

36. New guidance, agreed with the Charity Commission, for **reporting safeguarding serious incidents**, was published on 2 January 2019. This is aimed at bringing greater consistency to the reporting of the most significant incidents to the Charity Commission along with bulk reporting of other serious incidents. Implementation of the guidance will also facilitate the collation of national safeguarding incident data by the NST, which will enable a thematic analysis of safeguarding serious incident reports to be undertaken by the NST and inform future improvements to the national safeguarding guidance. Briefing sessions are taking place in early February to assist with implementation.

37. An independent review of the **Training & Development Framework** has been completed and will be presented to the NSSG at the end of January. The report recommends that a review of the current framework be undertaken in order to both simplify arrangements and ensure a more consistent application of it across dioceses.

38. A programme of **independent auditing of safeguarding arrangements within cathedrals** commenced in autumn 2018. The programme, expected to be concluded in 2021, will include the offices of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York.
39. The House of Bishops discussed the report of the Working Group on the **Seal of the Confessional** at its meeting in December. Subject to some further work, the House has agreed for training to be undertaken and guidance to be issued leading to the appointment of Diocesan Advisers in the Sacramental Ministry of Reconciliation. The House of Bishops will have a further discussion about the Seal at its meeting in May 2019.
40. The decision of the Right Worshipful Timothy Briden (acting in his capacity as commissary to the Bishop of Chichester) was published by the Bishop of Chichester and the Archbishops' Council on 24 January 2019. The decision related to 'fresh information' brought to the attention of the Church following publication of Lord Carlile's independent review into the Church's original handling of allegations against the late **Bishop George Bell**. The terms of reference for the independent investigation and independent 'decision-making body' (Timothy Briden) did not involve re-investigating the allegations made by 'Carol', for which a civil settlement had already been made.

Other Planned work for 2019

41. In addition to the activity outlined above, there are several other pieces of key work planned for 2019, although this does not represent all of the work included within the National Safeguarding Team's Business Plan for 2019.
42. The NST plans to launch an **electronic safeguarding manual** of policies, guidance and resources for dioceses, parishes and other church bodies in March 2019. The e-manual will provide a central and more accessible place for all existing and new guidance and the capacity to update and add such guidance in a timely manner. It is intended that new or revised House of Bishops guidance will be issued during 2019 in respect of learning lessons case reviews, posthumous safeguarding allegations concerning church officers, religious communities and safer recruitment.
43. The NST aims to commission or deliver **specialist safeguarding training** to dioceses including in respect of risk assessment and management and sexual abuse and grooming.
44. The NST plans to hold a **National Safeguarding Summit** for safeguarding advisers and independent chairs in September 2019. The NSSG will be actively seeking ways of ensuring that the event includes the voices and views of survivors.
45. The NST will be developing **Safeguarding Standards** to support future self-assessment, audit and quality assurance, and improvement activity. The roll-out of a programme of Safeguarding Progress Reviews with dioceses (structured 'critical friend' support and challenge conversations between the NST and dioceses) has been suspended whilst such standards are under development.
46. The Archbishops' Council has established a Project Management Board to develop a **national case management system** for dioceses and the NST. Discussions are actively taking place between key parties as to the system and timescale for its implementation.
47. The NST will commission **independent learning case reviews** where appropriate. This will include in respect of the Church's handling of allegations against Victor

Whitsey (former Bishop of Chester now deceased). It will support an independent review in respect of abuse allegedly perpetrated by John Smyth (now deceased).

48. The NST has established a Working Group to consider the interface between safeguarding and education functions in the Church and how to engage **children and young people** in co-producing safeguarding material to raise awareness and strengthen prevention and self-protection.

The Rt Revd Peter Hancock

The Bishop of Bath and Wells and Lead Bishop for Safeguarding
Chair of the National Safeguarding Steering Group

25 January 2019