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Response to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse's Final Investigation Report into the Anglican Church**Summary**

1. This paper details the proposed joint response from the National Safeguarding Steering Group (NSSG), the House of Bishops and the Archbishops' Council to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse's final Investigation Report into the Anglican Church, published on 6th October 2020. Appendix A also provides a brief summary of some of the report's key themes, and Appendix B provides further details of the proposed response.
2. The NSSG met on 12th October 2020 to prepare a response to the recommendations. The response was subsequently considered by the House of Bishops on 19th October and a unanimous vote supported and accepted all of IICSA's recommendations, particularly the two most significant themes arising from the IICSA report. Firstly, proper redress for victims and survivors, and secondly, greater independence in safeguarding decision making.
3. The motion passed at the House of Bishops was as follows:
This House fully accepts the IICSA report, sincerely apologises to victims and survivors for the harm done by the church and endorses and commits itself to urgently implementing the six recommendations as set out below.
4. The House then voted on two further motions, both of which were fully supported:
This House agrees with the proposal that the Church should move towards establishing an independent safeguarding structure with a new trustee body responsible for safeguarding, to take over responsibility from the Archbishops' Council.
This House agrees with the proposal that an interim arrangement is put in place for additional independent oversight of safeguarding, prior to the establishment of the new trustee body.
5. The response was then considered by the Archbishops' Council on 3rd November. The Archbishops' Council also passed a motion fully accepting the IICSA report, sincerely apologising to victims and survivors for the harm done by the church and endorsing and committing itself to urgently implementing the six recommendations.
6. The Archbishops' Council also considered further proposals regarding the development of independence, noting that implementing the six IICSA recommendations will require adequate resource beyond the current arrangements, as well as significant impetus at governance level to urgently progress key workstreams. Those key workstreams include:
 - Independent oversight of safeguarding
 - Redress for victims and survivors
7. The Archbishops' Council subsequently endorsed the proposal to create a co-ordinating task and finish group. The group will oversee and ensure all 6 IICSA

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recommendations are implemented swiftly, with particular concern for independent safeguarding and redress. The group will be a sub-group of the NSSG, chaired by the lead safeguarding bishop, with representation from:

- Archbishops' Council
- Church Commissioners
- House of Bishops

8. The group is expected to work on an agile basis, meeting more often than the NSSG, to allow work to move swiftly. Members of the task and finish group will not necessarily need to be members of the NSSG. The scope of the group will include the oversight of:

- The project group for safeguarding independence
- Development of the interim pilot support scheme for victims and survivors
- Development of a national redress scheme
- Project work to implement other aspects of the IICSA recommendations

Conclusion and next steps

9. There can be no doubt that this final report makes shocking and disturbing reading, and the primary response to this must be recognising the terrible impact the Church's actions and lack of actions have had, and continue to have, on the lives of those affected. Our collective response to the report must include apology for the wrongs done and harm suffered to all those who have experienced abuse and re-abuse through the Church. Any response also needs to be sensitive to and mindful of the views of victims and survivors. As the report notes, senior leaders have demonstrated a determination to make necessary changes to keep children safe but, to be effective, this determination needs to be translated into action, including significant culture change.

10. There are some areas where the Inquiry has not made recommendations and has stated its intention to do so later. This includes the Seal of the Confessional and mandatory reporting. As a result, this paper makes no proposals in respect of these, however a meeting has been set up by Bishop Tim Thornton to further consider next steps regarding the Seal. There will also be further work needed to address the areas of improvement noted within the report that do not have associated recommendations.

11. The final response will be sent to the Inquiry and published on our website.

12. As the inquiry concludes, despite considerable improvements to practices and procedures, change must be implemented "in every small part of the Church, from the province down to the most tiny rural parish". They must also be "reflected in the attitudes and daily actions of those working and worshipping at every level" in order to "produce real results".

13. 'Senior clergy must lead by example to drive a change to the Church's culture. It is their responsibility to exhibit appropriate attitudes and behaviours, and encourage that in others.'

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Recommendation

14. This paper asks Synod to endorse progress made to date and support the motion.

Dr. Jonathan Gibbs, Bishop of Huddersfield and Lead Bishop for Safeguarding
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Motion

The following motion is proposed:

This Synod fully accepts the IICSA report, sincerely apologises to victims and survivors for the harm done by the church and endorses and commits itself to urgently implementing the six recommendations as set out below.

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Joint Response to Recommendations from the National Safeguarding Steering Group, the House of Bishops and the Archbishops' CouncilRecommendation 1: The structure of safeguarding in the Church of England Part 1

The Church of England should create the role of a diocesan safeguarding officer to replace the diocesan safeguarding adviser. Diocesan safeguarding officers should have the authority to make decisions independently of the diocesan bishop in respect of key safeguarding tasks. Diocesan safeguarding officers should be employed locally, by the Diocese Board of Finance. The diocesan safeguarding officer's work should be professionally supervised and quality assured by the National Safeguarding Team. The National Safeguarding Team should set the broad requirements for anyone applying to be a diocesan safeguarding officer (adapting as required the existing requirements in respect of diocesan safeguarding advisers).

15. The NSSG, House of Bishops and Archbishops' Council welcome this recommendation, for the Church to genuinely demonstrate a positive culture around safeguarding, independence of decision making, quality assurance and oversight is vital at all levels. The Archbishops' Council and the House have already agreed to the principle of independence in safeguarding. We accept and support this recommendation, but also aim to go beyond this, to establish an independent structure of oversight of safeguarding, voted for by both the Archbishops' Council and the House. We will need further work on the details of how to do this, which is likely to require legislation for a new structure. In the meantime, given the urgency of making progress, we will look to put an interim arrangement in place, whereby a small number of independent professionals are recruited, who could provide independent oversight of safeguarding work, and in due course could form the nucleus of a new independent trustee body.
16. Taking into account the inquiry's recognition that dioceses are the 'building blocks' of the Church of England, we support the local employment and deployment of DSOs, with quality assurance and supervision from the national team. We request that Canon 30 and the associated DSA regulations are amended to accommodate this recommendation, and that plans are drawn up with urgency for moves to independent supervision and oversight for DSAs/ DSOs and an independent oversight structure for Safeguarding. This work will involve engagement with victims and survivors for their views and input. As the report endorses, the National Safeguarding Team has proposed a regional leadership structure. The NSSG requests that the NST builds on the work and consultation to date to produce a costed project plan to deliver independent safeguarding based on the recommendation.

Recommendation 1: The structure of safeguarding in the Church of England Part 2

It should be enshrined in policy that those who are volunteers and who do not follow the directions of diocesan safeguarding officers should be removed from responsibility of working with children.

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17. The NSSG, House of Bishops and Archbishops' Council accept the principle of this recommendation, that those in voluntary roles within the Church of England must follow House of Bishops safeguarding requirements, including any directions given by Diocesan Safeguarding Officers.

Recommendation 2: Revising clergy discipline

The Church of England should make changes and improvements to the way in which it responds to safeguarding complaints using the Clergy Discipline Measure (whether related to allegations of abuse, or a failure to comply with or respond to the Church's safeguarding policies and procedures).

18. The Church is committed to making changes and improvements to the way that it manages all complaints against members of the clergy. We endorse the proposals of the CDM working group to replace the Clergy Discipline Measure ("CDM") 2003 with a new set of provisions, which will place emphasis on the standard of conduct which is required of clergy and which will also make provision for the handling of poor practice or capability. This new approach will make specific provision for matters which have a safeguarding element.

Recommendations 3 and 4: These recommendations relate to the Church in Wales.

Recommendation 5: Information-sharing between the Church of England and the Church in Wales

The Church of England and the Church in Wales should agree and implement a formal information-sharing protocol. This should include the sharing of information about clergy who move between the two Churches.

Recommendation 6: Information-sharing between the Church of England, Church in Wales and statutory partners

The Church of England, the Church in Wales and statutory partners should ensure that information-sharing protocols are in place at a local level between dioceses and statutory partners.

19. The Church of England and the Church in Wales welcome these recommendations. The two churches will now seek to strengthen information sharing arrangements by putting in place an information sharing protocol and sharing agreement as swiftly as is practicable. We will also request that the House of Bishops policy 'Personnel Files Relating to Clergy' (2018) is amended to provide for the sharing of copies of blue files. We also request that template information sharing agreements are developed which may be adapted and used by dioceses on a local level with statutory partners such as local authorities.

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Recommendation 7: Support for victims and survivors

The Church of England and the Church in Wales should each introduce a Church wide policy on the funding and provision of support to victims and survivors of child sexual abuse concerning clergy, Church officers or those with some connection to the Church. The policy should clearly set out the circumstances in which different types of support, including counselling, should be offered. It should make clear that support should always be offered as quickly as possible, taking into account the needs of the victim over time. The policy should take account of the views of victims and survivors. It should be mandatory for the policy to be implemented across all dioceses.

20. The NSSG, House of Bishops and Archbishops' Council wholeheartedly accept this criticism. We will work tirelessly to repair the wrongs of the past and improve the experience for victims and survivors. Work will continue with the development of a redress scheme and with the interim pilot scheme. We are currently engaging with a number of survivors in urgent need and some emergency payments have already been made even while we are setting up the pilot scheme. The scheme has attracted a great deal of interest since the publication of the IICSA report and it is clear that we will need both to manage expectations about this and to begin early discussions with the Church Commissioners and others in the church about further funding for the interim scheme as well as about the longer term redress scheme. Prompt action and adequate resourcing of this work will be crucial to rebuilding trust among victims and survivors as well as in the wider Church and public.

Recommendation 8: Auditing

The Church of England should continue independent external auditing of its safeguarding policies and procedures, as well as the effectiveness of safeguarding practice in dioceses, cathedrals and other Church organisations. Audits should continue to be conducted regularly and reports should continue to be published.

21. The NSSG, House of Bishops and Archbishops' Council remain committed to the vital programme of 5 yearly independent audits which began in dioceses in 2015. The next phase of independent scrutiny of diocesan safeguarding work is due to start in 2021. A project plan will be produced to implement this recommendation.

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APPENDIX A – Background and report summary

Background

The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse published their final Investigation Report into the Anglican Church on October 6th 2020. The report concerns the extent to which the Church of England (and the Church in Wales) protected children from sexual abuse in the past. It also examines the effectiveness of current safeguarding arrangements. A public hearing took place in July 2019 which forms much of the evidence the Inquiry has relied upon and refers to throughout. This report also draws on the previous two case studies from the Anglican Church, which related to the Diocese of Chichester and Peter Ball and the subsequent interim report published in May 2019. The National Safeguarding Steering Group (NSSG), on behalf of the Archbishops' Council, published a response to the 2019 report, and the most recent progress update against those recommendations was taken to Synod in February 2020, along with the motion which gained unanimous support for redress and more work with victims and survivors.

Report summary

The Inquiry's report sets out the background of the Anglican Church and current safeguarding policies, practice and known facts. It highlights the total number of convicted child sex offenders associated with the Church from the 1940s until 2018 (390). It also notes recent data showing that in 2018 there were 449 child sexual abuse concerns recorded, more than half of which related to church officers. The report makes eight recommendations, six of which relate to the Church of England. In addition to the recommendations, the body of the report tells also highlights a number of key areas where improvement is vital to make the church a safer place for all. These key themes are summarised below.

Culture, power and deference

The report points to the culture of the Church as a highly significant factor in abuse occurring. It states that 'the culture of the Church of England facilitated it becoming a place where abusers could hide. Deference to the authority of the Church and to individual priests, taboos surrounding discussion of sexuality and an environment where alleged perpetrators were treated more supportively than victims presented barriers to disclosure that many victims could not overcome'. The report goes on to highlight the problematic culture of clericalism 'which meant that the moral authority of clergy was widely perceived as beyond reproach. In the context of child sexual abuse, the Church's neglect of the physical, emotional and spiritual well-being of children and young people in favour of protecting its reputation was in conflict with its mission of love and care for the innocent and the vulnerable'. 'Power was vested chiefly in the clergy, without accountability to external or independent agencies or individuals. A culture of clericalism existed in which the moral authority of clergy was widely perceived as beyond reproach. They benefited from deferential treatment so that their conduct was not questioned, enabling some to abuse children and vulnerable adults.' This analysis was noted in IICSA's first report and is further evidenced by cases considered at the hearings last year. As IICSA notes, 'A further recent change means that the advice of safeguarding staff should not be ignored by senior clergy if they do not like the advice they are given. Nevertheless, examples of this continuing to occur were found in the file sampling undertaken on behalf of the Inquiry'.

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The inquiry goes on to say 'lasting change will require more than platitudes. It will need continuous reinforcement of the abhorrent nature of child sexual abuse and the importance of safeguarding in all of the Church's settings'... 'Diocesan bishops have an important role to play, but they should not hold operational responsibility for safeguarding'. Changing culture has been one of the safeguarding priorities for the Church in recent years. Efforts to change the culture through training, stronger embedding of safeguarding within theology, safeguarding leadership, and the work of the casework team with senior clergy, have not been enough on their own to effect the required culture change. As the report notes, 'to be effective, the role of the National Director of Safeguarding requires overall responsibility for managing safeguarding within the Church and providing oversight of those operating at a diocesan level.' Meeting this cultural challenge moves beyond safeguarding, and addressing these issues is essential for the future of the Church.

Funding and Resources

The report says: 'Until 2015 the funding of safeguarding was piecemeal and insufficient. Since then, there has been a significant increase in funding of safeguarding activity at all levels of the Church (parish, diocesan and central) but from a very low base. There is still a disparity between needs and resources across some dioceses. Every diocesan safeguarding team requires sufficient resources to fulfil its essential functions, having regard to the size and needs of that diocese'. The report notes 'the Archbishops' Council has accepted that work is required to ensure safeguarding provision is consistent across the dioceses, but it has not yet established the means by which such consistency can be achieved'.

Response to Victims and Survivors

The report is clear and blunt regarding the Church's responses to victims and survivors: 'The Church has failed to respond consistently to victims and survivors of child sexual abuse with sympathy and compassion, accompanied by practical and appropriate support. This has often added to the trauma already suffered by those who were abused by individuals associated with the Church...Excessive attention was often paid to the circumstances of the alleged perpetrator in comparison to the attention given to those who disclosed they had been sexually abused or to the issue of the risk that alleged perpetrators posed to others...The primary concern of many senior clergy was to uphold the Church's reputation, which was prioritised over victims and survivors. Senior clergy often declined to report allegations to statutory agencies, preferring to manage those accused internally for as long as possible. This hindered criminal investigations and enabled some abusers to escape justice. In her review of the Peter Ball case, Dame Moira Gibb concluded that senior clergy placed more emphasis on the Church's high standing than on the welfare of victims and survivors.

The Church of England is yet to regain fully the trust of those who have been abused. It has been slow to find ways to engage effectively with victims and survivors or to learn from their experiences. There is work underway on redress and the responding well policy, but we must acknowledge that this has not been done quickly enough, or with enough attention given to the views of victims and survivors themselves. We will seek feedback from victims and survivors through ongoing engagement on the implementation of the IICSA response, in particular recommendation 7.

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APPENDIX B – Expanded Joint Response to Recommendations from the National Safeguarding Steering Group, the House of Bishops and the Archbishops’ Council

Recommendation 1: The structure of safeguarding in the Church of England. There are two parts to this recommendation:

Part 1: The Church of England should create the role of a diocesan safeguarding officer to replace the diocesan safeguarding adviser. Diocesan safeguarding officers should have the authority to make decisions independently of the diocesan bishop in respect of key safeguarding tasks, including:

- i. escalating incidents to the National Safeguarding Team, statutory authorities and the Charity Commission;*
- ii. advising on the suspension of clergy in safeguarding matters;*
- iii. investigating and/or commissioning investigations into safeguarding incidents;*
- iv. risk assessments and associated plans for church officers and members of the congregation; and*
- v. supporting complainants in safeguarding - related issues.*

Diocesan safeguarding officers should be employed locally, by the Diocese Board of Finance. The diocesan safeguarding officer’s work should be professionally supervised and quality assured by the National Safeguarding Team. The National Safeguarding Team should set the broad requirements for anyone applying to be a diocesan safeguarding officer (adapting as required the existing requirements in respect of diocesan safeguarding advisers).

The NSSG, House of Bishops and Archbishops’ Council welcomes the recommendation to replace Diocesan Safeguarding Advisors with Diocesan Safeguarding Officers. As the inquiry notes, the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor Regulations 2016 (DSA regulations 2016) have already been amended to make clear that a DSA may refer to statutory services without the agreement of the Diocesan Bishop. We will request that Canon C30 and the associated DSA regulations are amended to accommodate the change to Diocesan Safeguarding Officer and strengthen and clarify further that safeguarding decisions are made by the DSO, not by clergy. The regulations will also set out the independence of the DSO by making clear that they must be supervised by the National Safeguarding Team. This supervision arrangement must include casework decision making, which will therefore be independent of the diocese. A resolution / escalation policy will be required to resolve disagreement about casework decisions or other matters. In addition, we will request that the amended regulations provide for a consistent job description for all Diocesan Safeguarding Officers.

As the report endorses, the National Safeguarding Team has proposed a regional leadership structure with regional safeguarding advisers to provide a point of escalation for disputes and professional supervision for DSAs. They will also monitor and seek to provide consistency between dioceses and to lead work on survivor engagement. Such a proposal may help to provide the level of oversight which was previously lacking. The report concludes ‘there is a lack of challenge in decision-making; there remain areas of insufficient oversight.’ The NSSG, House of Bishops and Archbishops’ Council agree that DSOs – not clergy – are best placed to decide which cases to refer to the police or social services, and what action should be taken by the Church to keep children safe. We further agree that Diocesan bishops have an important role to play, in particular to help congregations and clergy to understand safeguarding and to make it a priority, “intrinsic to

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the beliefs” of the Church of England, but they should not hold operational responsibility for safeguarding decision making.

Although the report speaks positively about independence in safeguarding decision-making, it does not lay out a clear proposal for a structural change to the overall management and oversight of safeguarding. The Archbishops’ Council and the House have though already agreed to the principle of independence in safeguarding. IICSA do not give a clear steer on how to achieve this, beyond the specific recommendations on DSOs, and supervision and oversight from the national team. We accept and support this, but also recommend going beyond this, to establish an independent structure of oversight for the national safeguarding team. We will need further work on the details of how to do this, which is likely to require legislation for a new structure. This would entail establishing a new trustee body responsible for safeguarding, to take over responsibility from the Archbishops’ Council. Arrangements for funding the new body, either by dioceses through apportionment, or from the Church Commissioners’ distributions, will need to be agreed; so will the precise relationships between the new trustee body, the other NCIs, the House of Bishops, and the General Synod.

Given IICSA’s recommendation that Diocesan Safeguarding Officers should continue to be employed by Diocesan Boards of Finance, we propose that plans are drawn up with urgency for moves to independent supervision and oversight for DSAs/ DSOs and an independent oversight structure for safeguarding. DSOs would not be employed by the new independent body, but their professional supervision and quality assurance would be undertaken through the National Safeguarding Team. In the meantime, given the urgency of making progress, we recommend that an interim arrangement is put in place, whereby a small number of independent professionals are recruited. This group could in the relatively short term provide additional independent oversight of safeguarding, thus showing our commitment to independence. Then as the necessary legislation passes, this group could form the nucleus of the new independent trustee body. Taking into account the inquiry’s recognition that dioceses are the ‘building blocks’ of the Church of England, we support the local employment and deployment of DSOs, with quality assurance and supervision from the national team.

We will request that Canon C30 and the associated DSA regulations are amended to accommodate this recommendation, and that plans are drawn up with urgency for moves to independent supervision and oversight for DSAs/ DSOs and an independent oversight structure for Safeguarding. This work will involve engagement with victims and survivors for their views and input.

It should be enshrined in policy that those who are volunteers and who do not follow the directions of diocesan safeguarding officers should be removed from responsibility of working with children.

The NSSG, House of Bishops and Archbishops’ Council accept the principle of this recommendation, that those in voluntary roles within the Church of England must follow House of Bishops safeguarding requirements, including any directions given by Diocesan Safeguarding Officers. The National Safeguarding Team will seek to incorporate this principle into the current work to revise national safeguarding policy. This work will require consideration of:

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- Who is considered a volunteer
- How 'working with children' will be defined
- The lines of accountability required, including who would be responsible for removing a volunteer from work with children.

Recommendation 2: Revising clergy discipline

The Inquiry's second recommendation focuses generally on the Clergy Discipline Measure, and specifically on its ineffectiveness as a mechanism for dealing with Safeguarding complaints. The process is lengthy and does not take risk into consideration. It had already been accepted following the previous IICSA report that the Measure needed revision and in 2019, a working group was set up to determine what was required to replace it.

The Church of England should make changes and improvements to the way in which it responds to safeguarding complaints (whether related to allegations of abuse, or a failure to comply with or respond to the Church's safeguarding policies and procedures) to:

- *disapply the 12-month time-limit for all complaints with a safeguarding element brought under the Clergy Discipline Measure;*
- *reintroduce the power to depose from holy orders where a member of the clergy is found guilty of child sexual abuse offences;*
- *introduce a mandatory 'code of practice' to improve the way that safeguarding issues are handled across the Clergy Discipline Measure and capability procedures, including a framework for responding to issues that do not amount to misconduct;*
- *make clear that penalty by consent must never be used in relation to such complaints;*
- *ensure confidentiality agreements are not put in place in relation to such complaints; and*
- *ensure that those handling such complaints are adequately and regularly trained.*

The Church is committed to making changes and improvements to the way that it manages all complaints against members of the clergy. The NSSG, House of Bishops and Archbishops' Council endorses the proposals of the CDM working group to replace of the Clergy Discipline Measure ("CDM") 2003 with a new set of provisions, to be accompanied by a mandatory code of practice or similar, which will place emphasis on the standard of conduct which is required of clergy and which will also make provision for the handling of poor practice or capability, rather than misconduct. This new approach will make specific provision for matters which have a safeguarding element, and requires careful thought to a comprehensive and workable definition of safeguarding for this purpose. The new system will make improved provision for the way in which the Church addresses discipline and capability. The new system will also provide for early allocation of complaints to a different track depending on seriousness, for example 'grievance' and 'serious misconduct'.

The proposed CDM reform, set out above, will disapply the 12-month time-limit as recommended.

- *reintroduce the power to depose from holy orders where a member of the clergy is found guilty of child sexual abuse offences*

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The NCI legal office is requested to bring forward legislation in advance of any change to the CDM to reintroduce this power.

The abolition of provision for penalty by consent is proposed for all cases, whether there is a safeguarding element or not. We support the proposal for a replacement provision which enables respondents to acknowledge their misconduct early in the process, reducing the need for victims and survivors of abuse and vulnerable adults to be subject to the delay and trauma of a tribunal process. Under this proposal, where there is an early admission of serious misconduct (which would include safeguarding-related complaints where appropriate) any penalty will be subject to the independent oversight of the chair of a disciplinary tribunal.

The existing code of practice published by the Clergy Discipline Commission provides that all penalties and tribunal determinations should be published. The CDM 2003 expressly provides that any decision is made public. The proposed replacement must take the same approach and must stipulate that confidentiality provisions must not be used.

The NCI Legal Office has taken steps to introduce new training for those who handle complaints in dioceses in connection with the special measures which may be required, which continues to be developed. The NCI Legal Office is requested to prepare proposals as to how regular formal training may be facilitated across the Church. We further request that any Designated Officer undergoes appropriate specific training on handling cases which involve vulnerable people and victims and survivors of abuse.

Recommendations 3 and 4

These recommendations relate to the Church in Wales.

Recommendation 5: Information-sharing between the Church of England and the Church in Wales

The Church of England and the Church in Wales should agree and implement a formal information-sharing protocol. This should include the sharing of information about clergy who move between the two Churches.

The Church of England and the Church in Wales welcome this recommendation. It should be noted that information sharing already takes place between the two churches. The Church of England provides a 'Current Clergy Status Letter' (CCSL) and episcopal reference to the receiving bishop within the Church in Wales, which will include information about any safeguarding concerns and the Church in Wales has a similar process. Both organisations will work together to ensure a standard reciprocal process is established. The two churches will now seek to strengthen information sharing arrangements by putting in place an information sharing protocol and sharing agreement as swiftly as is practicable. We will also request that the House of Bishops policy 'Personnel Files Relating to Clergy' (2018) is amended to provide for the sharing of a copy of a Church of England clergy file with the Church in Wales when a member of clergy takes a position in the Church in Wales, and the Church in Wales will do the same with any relevant policy changes required on their side.

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Recommendation 6: Information-sharing between the Church of England, Church in Wales and statutory partners

The Church of England, the Church in Wales and statutory partners should ensure that information-sharing protocols are in place at a local level between dioceses and statutory partners.

The NSSG, House of Bishops and Archbishops' Council supports this recommendation. As a non-statutory agency, it can be challenging to obtain necessary safeguarding information from statutory services, as the inquiry's work has highlighted. We welcome the opportunity to work with statutory partners to put information sharing protocols in place. We also request that template information sharing agreements are developed which may be adapted and used by dioceses on a local level with statutory partners such as local authorities.

Recommendation 7: Support for victims and survivors

A central finding of the IICSA report is that the needs of survivors and victims have been disregarded by the Church. This has manifested in several forms: that safeguarding allegations by survivors have not been taken seriously; in the investigation of allegations, the needs of the Church have been prioritised over victims and survivors; and also that the Church has not readily provided redress for those who have been harmed, thereby compounding the trauma and hurt they have experienced.

To address this, IICSA has recommended:

The Church of England and the Church in Wales should each introduce a Church wide policy on the funding and provision of support to victims and survivors of child sexual abuse concerning clergy, Church officers or those with some connection to the Church. The policy should clearly set out the circumstances in which different types of support, including counselling, should be offered. It should make clear that support should always be offered as quickly as possible, taking into account the needs of the victim over time. The policy should take account of the views of victims and survivors. It should be mandatory for the policy to be implemented across all dioceses.

The NSSG, House of Bishops and Archbishops' Council wholeheartedly accept this criticism. We will work tirelessly to repair the wrongs of the past and improve the experience for victims and survivors.

There has been ongoing work within the Church to start to address the issues identified by IICSA. Policies are currently being re-drafted to place victims and survivors' needs at the centre of the process, and to set out what victims and survivors can expect following a disclosure of abuse.

Policies

The 'Responding well to victims and survivors of abuse' policy, under revision, specifically addresses Recommendation 7's direction that the Church should have support services for survivors. This policy will specify a minimum level of support that all dioceses must provide to survivors (including counselling services). To ensure that the viewpoints of victims and survivors are incorporated, they have been consulted in the revision of the policy and the Church will continue to involve survivors in the next stages of development.

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The 'Learning Lessons Cases Review' policy is being developed to standardise how the Church commissions reviews of 'serious' safeguarding cases. The purpose of these reviews is to help improve the quality of safeguarding practice and make the Church a safer place for all. The policy includes a more survivor-centred approach to the process and stipulates that survivors' voices should be represented throughout the review. This includes input into terms of reference and appointment of independent reviewer.

Services

Safe Spaces: This service, commissioned by the Church of England and the Catholic Church of England and Wales, is run by the independent charity Victim Support. It is a confidential, free service for victims and survivors to access advocacy and other support delivered by trained professionals.

Interim Pilot Scheme: the pilot scheme, approved by the Archbishops' Council in September 2020, is designed to enable the Church to respond in particular to those victims and survivors' cases which are already known to the Church, where the victim or survivor is known to be in seriously distressed circumstances, and the Church has a heightened responsibility because of the way the victim or survivor was responded to following disclosure. Experience with these pilot cases will help inform the setting up of the Church's full redress scheme for victims and survivors of abuse as that is developed. Part of the value of a pilot scheme is that it will enable the Church to explore different ways of working and to learn important lessons for the future. The pilot scheme is not intended to replace the role of Dioceses to support initial survivor needs in cases reported to them. However, Dioceses will be encouraged to follow aspects of the pilot scheme such as the use of advocate support for the victim or survivor.

Redress Scheme

This service will develop national proposals for redress within the Church, including financial compensation, support for rebuilding lives, emotional well-being support and apology. The role of Redress Scheme Development Manager is presently being recruited.

Recommendation 8: Auditing

The report points out that "There is no national standard for the means by which dioceses monitor the state of safeguarding within parishes" and makes the following recommendation:

The Church of England should continue independent external auditing of its safeguarding policies and procedures, as well as the effectiveness of safeguarding practice in dioceses, cathedrals and other Church organisations. Audits should continue to be conducted regularly and reports should continue to be published.

The NSSG, House of Bishops and Archbishops' Council remain committed to the vital programme of 5 yearly independent audits which began in dioceses in 2015. A similar programme with cathedrals is due to complete in 2021. This process has enabled Dioceses and Cathedrals to receive an independent overview of their safeguarding effectiveness.

The next phase of independent scrutiny of diocesan safeguarding work is due to start in 2021 and a project plan will be developed to implement this recommendation.