

## **CHURCH OF ENGLAND NATIONAL SAFEGUARDING PANEL**

### **ANNUAL REPORT 2020**

#### **Introduction**

This report covers the work of the National Safeguarding Panel during the calendar year 2020. It was an unusual year with the need to adapt to the Covid 19 pandemic. The Panel held its first meeting of the year in person but since the March lockdown all other meetings were online.

The meetings continued with the approach adopted in 2019 with one safeguarding issue scrutinised in depth. Relevant people are invited to submit written information for in-depth consideration and attend the meeting to answer questions. The Panel make recommendations to the National Safeguarding Steering Group, which has oversight of national safeguarding within the Church. In addition, the Panel receives updates on the work of the National Safeguarding Team and developments in safeguarding in the Church.

Following the announcement of lockdown in March, a change was made for the May meeting. Instead of scrutinising an issue, Panel members took part in an online consultation on a policy issue. The Panel returned to scrutinising issues from the July meeting, although this is demanding in an online meeting. Following the success of the policy consultation, additional consultations were held on two other policies.

#### **New members and retirements**

During 2020 two expert members have joined the panel, Jasvinder Sanghera with expertise in adult safeguarding and Kevin Ball with expertise in children's safeguarding. Roger Singleton retired from the Panel, having completed his term of office. We welcomed Jonathan Gibbs as the new lead bishop and Debbie Sellin and Viv Faull as new deputy lead bishops.

#### **Associate**

Tim Bonnett provided research support to the Panel throughout 2020 with detailed briefing and systematic follow up of recommendations. Tim was recruited as the safeguarding advisor to the lead bishop and thus a new associate will start in post in early 2021. Tim's support to the Panel, and his willingness to do so even when in his new role, was invaluable.

#### **Subjects examined**

The panel seeks to examine issues at a time when it can influence the thinking of the Church and therefore have impact. Below is a summary of the issues and key recommendations. The Chair writes a regular blog and more information on the meetings can be found at <https://chairnsp.org/>

## ***Safeguarding Adults***

The February meeting focused on safeguarding adults. While there is considerable focus of discussion safeguarding of children, adults are a very significant part of the workload of Diocesan Safeguarding Advisors. For example, the figures collated for 2017 detailed 1,257 reports related to children and 2,030 related to adults.

Key issues identified included the importance of the Church looking outward to community and statutory resources and not seeking to resolve everything itself. Appropriate referrals need to be made, and having a good knowledge of local resources and well-developed links enable better responses to adult safeguarding situations. There needs to be a recognition that all adults can be vulnerable at different times and that church is a place that people approach with their vulnerabilities.

Training is essential with an emphasis on ensuring it is appropriate to the different roles within the Church.

## ***Redress***

In February 2020 General Synod passed a motion to set up a formal redress scheme for victims of abuse within the Church. The Panel scrutinised the progress at its meeting in July. We heard from David Walker, Bishop of Manchester, Paul Stevenson, Deputy Official Solicitor to the Church Commissioners and Colin Perkins, National Policy and Development Lead on redress.

The Panel concluded that developing a redress scheme is a complex undertaking and should be done thoroughly. The Church urgently needed to find the funds to take the work forward. Victims and survivors have waited a long time for the Church to agree on the need for a redress scheme. Having recognised the need, the Church should put in place some interim arrangements to meet immediate unmet needs.

After an initial pilot, a support scheme has been established to provide help to survivors in urgent and immediate need. It is part of the Church's duty of care to survivors affected by Church-related abuse. This is not a redress or compensation scheme; that is being developed separately and work has begun.

## ***Following up panel recommendations***

In September the Panel reviewed recommendations made at previous meetings. Using an action tracker, drafted by the Panel's associate we considered what progress had been made.

The Panel were pleased to see that since the March 2019 discussion there have been significant changes to the training programme. There will be a greater focus on the context in which those undertaking the training work or volunteer. The aim of the

training should be to change behaviour in relation to safeguarding, rather than it just be an administrative requirement. This is encouraging and in line with the recommendations of the Panel. We noted that training on safeguarding of children is well developed, but more should be included around adult safeguarding. We welcomed the commitment to working more with survivors on developing training programmes.

Recommendations from the Panel have been fed into the Clergy Discipline Measure Working Group chaired by Tim Thornton, Bishop at Lambeth. The Panel will schedule a discussion at a meeting in 2021 to test out whether our recommendations from meetings in 2019 have been incorporated into new proposals for dealing with safeguarding concerns.

The Panel heard that prevention is integrated into training, including for clergy leadership where the emphasis is on embedding safeguarding into their work. It was suggested that there is still a need for more emphasis on prevention. Some of the good work that is being done is not well publicised, and more could be done to link up safeguarding in the Church with Church schools. The introduction of compulsory sex and health education in schools provides an opportunity to do this.

### ***Past Cases Review 2***

In October we considered the Past Cases Review 2 (PCR2) project. The aim of the project is to ensure that any file that could contain information regarding a concern, allegation or conviction in relation to abusive behaviour by a living member of the clergy or church officer, (whether still in that position or not) will have been identified, read and analysed by independent safeguarding professionals.

The Panel supported the need for openness and honesty regarding the findings and limitations of the process. It concluded that findings should be shared with other Christian denomination to share the learning as well as the Church of England learning from other churches. There must be a survivor strategy to ensure support is available when outcomes are available. We expressed a view that we hoped that a further review would not be necessary but that there needs to be ongoing audit processes to ensure compliance with safeguarding procedures in the future.

### ***Questioning the Archbishops***

In December both Archbishops attended the Panel meeting to answer questions. A wide range of issues was discussed with Panel members raising issues that we have previously considered. These included what has gone well in safeguarding in the Church, the recommendations of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, the development of the redress scheme, prevention, race within the Church and the

impact of the pandemic.

### ***Independent Inquiry Child Sexual Abuse***

The panel has been regularly updated on the Church's response to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse. Following the publication of the second report into the Church of England in October 2020, the Panel will consider the Church's response to its recommendations at a meeting in early 2021.

### **POLICY CONSULTATIONS**

#### **1. Reviews of major cases**

These reviews are commissioned by the Church to understand what happened in relation to safeguarding failures in order to learn lessons for the future. A draft document had been circulated and a structured conversation took place to gain the thoughts and views of Panel members. Others within the Church are also being consulted before a final draft will be presented for considered for approval by the National Safeguarding Steering Group.

#### **2. Safer recruitment**

Running through our discussions was the importance of ensuring that processes are rigorous with regards to safeguarding. There needs to be comprehensive and detailed documents for paid employees while those for volunteers should be shorter but equally rigorous.

### **Future plans**

The Panel expects to continue to hold its meetings via Zoom for at least the first half of 2021. It is hoped that before the end of the year we will be able to resume meeting in person.

Possible subjects for meetings in 2021 include following up on the recommendations of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), further update and discussion on proposals to reform the Clergy Discipline Measure, sharing good practice in safeguarding in religious organisations, tackling racism and the impact of the pandemic on safeguarding.

## **Annex**

### **National Safeguarding Panel**

#### **Terms of reference**

The National Safeguarding Panel is an independent panel led by the Independent Chair. Its Terms of Reference and composition are determined by the Archbishops' Council.

It will:

1. Provide high level strategic advice and offer guidance on policies and practice in safeguarding seeking to ensure that the Church of England meets accepted best practice.
2. Provide scrutiny and challenge to the church for its work on safeguarding including examining existing and proposed policies in depth and the regular analysis of the data compiled in the areas of
  - Prevention through promotion of safeguarding,
  - Responding to current concerns or disclosures,
  - Responding to non-current concerns or disclosures,
  - Support for survivors.

The panel will determine a work programme. Outside of meetings the Chair will consult with three representatives of the panel regarding items for the agenda. These to include one survivor representative, one person from the Church of England, and one representative of the expert members.

The panel will consider and comment on the National Safeguarding Team's annual work plan and make recommendations for priorities. It will consider papers on matters prepared by the National Safeguarding Team. It will undertake in-depth consideration of key areas of concern and proposed developments and ensure appropriate input to the National Safeguarding Steering Group. The Director of Safeguarding will ensure that the Chair is kept informed of its work.

The panel can ask for Church personnel to attend to speak to papers and to answer questions. The panel will ensure complementarity with the church's work with survivors. However, the panel does not have a role in relation to individual cases. Specific approaches or enquiries will be referred to the Director of Safeguarding.

The Chair will provide regular reports on its work and present an annual report presented to the National Safeguarding Steering Group. Role of Independent Chair In addition to chairing the panel, the Chair will work closely with the Director of

Safeguarding in preparation of agendas and to ensure the effective functioning of the panel. The Chair will maintain oversight of key business, attending other meetings as and when required and will meet panel members outside the meeting as required.

#### Composition of the panel

- Independent Chair - externally recruited with 3-year term renewable for a further maximum of 2 years
- 2 representative members one from each of the Catholic and Methodist churches
- 3 survivors of church abuse from organisations that support survivors

#### **Five independent expert members**

- 2 members with expertise in children's safeguarding
- 2 members with expertise in adult safeguarding
- 1 member with expertise in working with offenders

The following Church representatives will be "in attendance" at the Panel's meetings: lead and deputy lead bishops on safeguarding; representatives of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York; and the Director of Safeguarding.

#### **Membership of the panel 2020**

Meg Munn Independent Chair

Henry Lewis Methodist Church representative

Chris Pearson Catholic Church representative

Graham Wilmer Lantern Project

Jo Kind MACSAS (Minister and Clergy Sexual Abuse Survivors)

Phil Johnson MACSAS

Roger Singleton Independent expert (left the Panel September 2020)

Amanda Edwards Independent expert

David Cooper Independent expert

Donald Findlater Independent expert

Jasvinder Sanghera Independent expert

Kevin Ball Independent expert (from September 2020)

Jonathan Gibbs Lead Bishop

Debbie Sellin Deputy Lead Bishop

Viv Faulkner Deputy Lead Bishop  
Daphne Green Archbishop of York representative  
Tim Thornton Archbishop of Canterbury representative