

GENERAL SYNOD**Safeguarding: national projects and workstreams****Summary**

1. This paper sets out the work being undertaken by the National Safeguarding Team and Lead Bishops for Safeguarding.
2. General Synod members are invited to take note of the workstreams and projects that are set out in this paper.

Overview of paper

This paper provides information about:

- Safeguarding Sunday
- Safeguarding Policy Development
- Independent Safeguarding Board
- Safeguarding Programme
- National Case Management System

Dr Jonathan Gibbs, Bishop of Huddersfield and Lead Bishop for Safeguarding
June 2021

GENERAL SYNOD

1. Safeguarding Sunday

- 1.1. Safeguarding Sunday – 10th October 2021 - is the chance, for local churches, to use their regular Sunday service to explore together what safer places look like, and to thank all those working behind the scenes to make our churches safer for all. There are already more churches signed up at this stage than all participants last year. The address for use on the day will be given by Bishop Jonathan Gibbs, the Church of England's lead safeguarding bishop. Whether a church can give just a few minutes or can dedicate their whole service, a range of resources are being developed for use in this event. This link [Safeguarding Sunday \(thirtyoneeight.org\)](https://www.thirtyoneeight.org) leads to more details and the resources already available.
- 1.2. Protecting vulnerable people is at the heart of the Christian message. Safeguarding Sunday is all about creating an opportunity for churches to show their communities that they take this responsibility seriously. Working in partnership with Thirty One Eight (31:8) the specialist safeguarding consultancy, the Church hopes to get as many churches as possible involved in this initiative. The key theme will be the fantastic contribution given to the Church by safeguarding volunteers and what these volunteers are doing to make Churches welcoming, safe places for all who wish to attend worship or any other aspect of Church life.

2. Safeguarding Policy Development

2.1. Safer Recruitment and People Management Guidance

The Safer Recruitment and People Management (SRPM) guidance was approved by the NSSG at its meeting in April. The discussion acknowledged that there are some church bodies who may need a longer lead in time to be able to implement the Guidance fully, and therefore it was agreed that full implementation was required by 1st January 2022. Alongside the Requirements (the "Must Do's"), the Guidance offers Good Practice Advice to help deliver those Requirements to a good level, and a toolkit that church bodies can use if they currently have nothing in existence. A project implementation plan has been set up and will be delivered by Clare Worrell and Deborah McGovern. This is aimed to help church bodies with any issues they may have in implementing the guidance, and includes workshops, drop-in sessions, videos, and tools and materials. The plan is being reviewed by a Working Group from a range of church bodies, and is due to formally launch on the 4th June 2021. This will be the first of the revised safeguarding Guidance to make full use of the new emanual, which will make it much easier for people to immediately find all the information they need on any given subject.

GENERAL SYNOD

3. Independent Safeguarding Board (ISB)

- 3.1. Descriptions of the roles for the ISB members have been completed and draft contracts are being drawn up. The members will not be employees of the Archbishops' Council, so it has been important to frame the relationship appropriately. The Legal Office has given invaluable support here.
- 3.2. The search for suitable candidates is in the hands of the Green Park agency and they are finding an encouraging level of interest among people with relevant experience. The process will lead to shortlisting and appointment of the Chair of the ISB and the Survivor Advocate in late July/early August, and the appointment of the third ISB member (chosen to complement the other two members) in September.
- 3.3. An Appointment Panel of suitably qualified people, including survivor representatives is being finalised.
- 3.4. Malcolm Brown and Deborah McGovern are the staff leads on this process, with support from the National Safeguarding Team, HR and Legal.

4. Safeguarding Programme

- 4.1. The IICSA report published in October 2020 made 6 recommendations for the Church of England, which reiterated the need for change in several aspects to strengthen our safeguarding arrangements. The IICSA recommendations were fully accepted by the Archbishops Council, House of Bishops and General Synod. The Church's commitments went beyond the IICSA recommendations with General Synod, Archbishops Council and the House of Bishops committing to a redress scheme for victims and survivors of church abuse and independent oversight for safeguarding.
- 4.2. To deliver this level of change on a national scale is a huge undertaking and to be delivered successfully requires the use of established programme and project management structures, hence the development of the Safeguarding Programme. The programme structure will co-ordinate the multiple projects that all relate to safeguarding.
- 4.3. The safeguarding programme will also include the existing Casework Management System and Past Case Review (PCR2) projects which contribute to the overall strategic objectives.
- 4.4. The development of the safeguarding programme will ensure the NST has the additional resources to deliver this level of change in the most cost-effective way. The programme focuses on good engagement with the dioceses and parishes to ensure that they are part of the changes required to ensure a safer church for all.
- 4.5. The Safeguarding Programme structure is now in place and the funding secured to delivery these vital projects and fulfil our commitment to improving our safeguarding

GENERAL SYNOD

arrangements.

5. National Case Management System

5.1. The NSCMS project will deliver a casework management system to cover all dioceses, cathedrals, and the National Safeguarding Team. The new system will support effective safeguarding practice, facilitate smoother information sharing between the Church's entities and will provide a strategic overview of types and number of cases, feeding into policy-making, risk management and prevention.

5.2. The project comprises of three elements:

- A National Casework Management System that will hold and enable access to information pertaining to church related safeguarding cases
- A standardised approach to recording, storing, accessing and managing data
- National level reporting and performance analysis of cases

5.3. Earlier this year, four potential system providers were invited to tender and the applications from each company were reviewed against quality and price criteria before a recommended supplier was selected. The full project proposal and preferred supplier were presented at the Archbishops Council meeting on the 11th May and the following was agreed:

1. Approval of the recommended provider of the NSCMS
2. Approval of the budget to fund implementation and initial subscription up to the end of 2023
3. Approval for the Project Team to develop a recharge model to start from the beginning of 2024 for the ongoing 'business as usual' costs.

5.4. The project team is very grateful for the continued support of members of the Project Board, the Safeguarding Advisor Reference Group and all others working with the team, in getting us to this stage of the Project.

5.5. Contractual work with the preferred supplier is currently underway, the project remains on target for the phased roll out previously planned. In phase one, (proposed for Autumn 2021) the newly procured system will be deployed in the National Safeguarding Team and with a few volunteer dioceses. This provides an additional opportunity to develop the system with users, add data to the system and build a robust training programme before rolling out to other dioceses in phase 2. The project team can be contacted by nscms@churchofengland.org.

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