

GENERAL SYNOD

Report from the Clergy Conduct Measure Implementation Group

Introduction

1. The Implementation Group for the proposed Clergy Conduct Measure presents this report on its work since the General Synod met in July 2021.

Background

2. At the July 2021 group of sessions General Synod received and took note of the final report of the Lambeth Working Group on the reform of the Clergy Discipline Measure (“CDM”). The CDM provides a range of procedures for handling allegations of serious misconduct against clergy in the Church of England.
3. The report (GS2219) recommended the replacement of the CDM with legislation that would provide for a system to investigate and determine a broader range of clerical behaviour than simply serious misconduct (e.g. grievances/minor complaints), and without the use of formal legal proceedings in every case. It also set out other areas of reform.
4. The report and debate on the floor of Synod identified a number of areas where further work is needed, and this is being carried out by the Implementation Group.

Membership

5. The membership of the Group is listed in Annex ‘A’. As well as its core membership the Group has agreed to engage wider ‘consulting members’ on specialist topics as the need arises.

Work

6. The Group’s work began in late summer with preparation for the first meeting which took place in person at Lambeth Palace on the 1 October.
7. The Group has identified **eight key areas** for consideration:

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- The creation of a 'track' system that distinguishes between different levels of seriousness, including considering whether there should be a distinction between different types of misconduct.
 - The procedure for allocating cases to a track system.
 - Definitions of 'misconduct' and 'grievance' etc.
 - The procedure for determining whether allegations of misconduct should be referred to a tribunal.
 - Limitation periods.
 - Penalties.
 - Legal aid.
 - Interface between safeguarding procedure and disciplinary procedure.
8. The Group has made substantial progress on a number of the above issues and its work will continue in the intervening period before the next meeting which is to take place on the 24 November 2021.

Timetable

9. The Group will need to consult with interested bodies, such as the House of Bishops, the NSSG, the Church Commissioners and the Archbishops' Council, as well as its various consulting members in the early part of 2022. The intention is to hold a panel discussion event for Synod members at the February 2022 group of sessions when an outline of the Group's proposals at that point will be provided and then to present quite detailed legislative proposals in July 2022 with First Consideration of a new Measure at the next available opportunity.

The Right Reverend John Inge
Bishop of Worcester
Chair

October 2021

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Appendix A

MEMBERSHIP

The Right Reverend John Inge, Bishop of Worcester (Chair)

The Venerable Mark Steadman, Chief of Staff to the Archbishop of York

The Reverend Canon Simon Butler, parish priest and Prolocutor of the Lower House for the Province of Canterbury

Professor Joyce Hill, academic, former university Pro-Vice Chancellor and member of the House of Laity

Peter Collier QC, Vicar-General of the Province of York

The Reverend Ruth Oates, Unite Faith Workers

The Reverend Sally Theakston, Chaplain to the Bishop of Norwich

Stuart Jones, Registrar of the Dioceses of London and Norwich

Supported by staff from Lambeth Palace and the Legal Office, Church House