

GENERAL SYNOD

Update from the National Safeguarding Team

Summary

This report summarises the current position and future developments in respect of the main workstreams the National Safeguarding Team is responsible for.

Content of paper

This paper commences with a foreword from Bishop Jonathan Gibbs and provides updates to the General Synod of the following workstreams of the National Safeguarding Team:

- Learning and Development
- Safeguarding Guidance
- IICSA Recommendations 1 and 8
- Past Cases Review 2
- National Redress Scheme
- Interim Support Scheme
- Survivor Engagement
- Information Sharing
- Safe Spaces
- National Safeguarding Casework Management System
- Learning Lessons Reviews

Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs, Bishop of Rochester and Lead Bishop for Safeguarding

Zena Marshall, Interim National Director of Safeguarding

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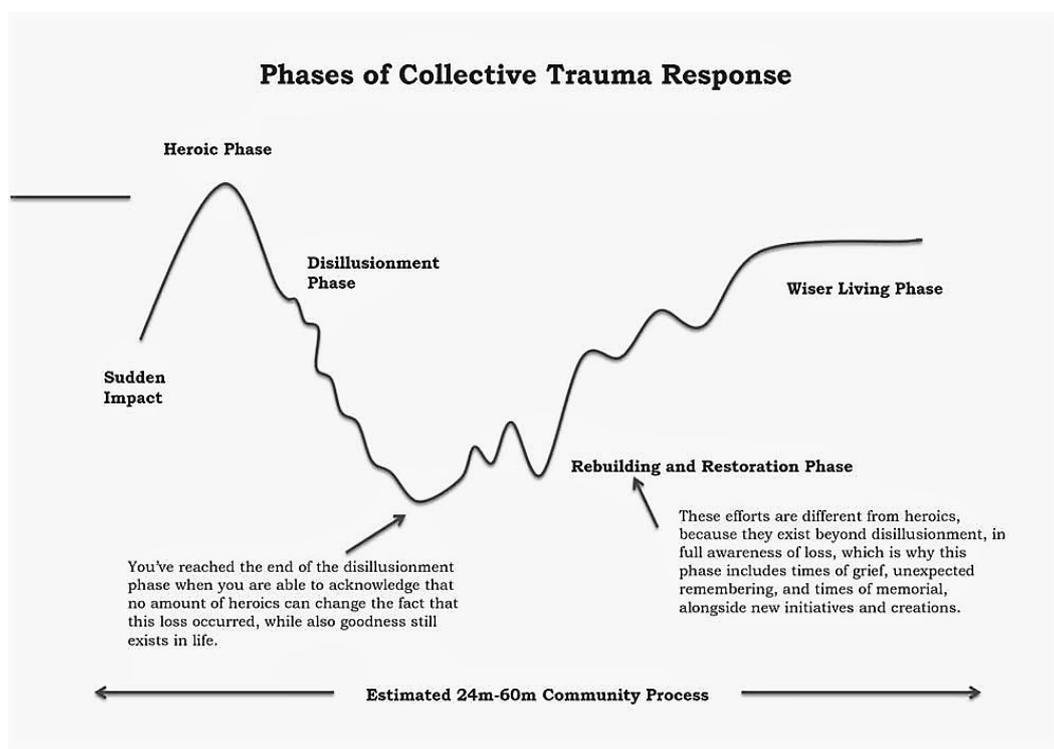
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1. Foreword and introduction from Bishop Jonathan

- 1.1. The main body of this report will cover the work-streams currently being undertaken by the National Safeguarding Team. The purpose of this introduction is to set this work within the broader context of safeguarding in the Church of England by reflecting on a number of questions, including: Where have we come from? Where are we trying to get to? Why does everything seem so difficult? Finally, how can we best move forward? I offer these reflections after almost two and a half years in the role of Lead Bishop for Safeguarding and as I prepare to hand on this role to someone else early in 2023.
- 1.2. *Where have we come from?* Over the last few years, the Church of England has been forced to face up to the awful failures that have been highlighted by IICSA and other reports at both national and local levels. The Church, both corporately and in the actions of its leaders, all too often betrayed the very people it was supposed to nurture and protect, by failing to prevent abuse and to respond compassionately and effectively when abuse was disclosed. There was a massive collective failure to understand the reality of abuse and this was exacerbated by the actions of individuals who were often more concerned to protect reputations than to care for victims and survivors. We are still dealing with that legacy, with the hurt and suffering that it caused and with the need to find the best way to provide redress to victims and survivors.
- 1.3. At the same time, much has been done to try both to improve the Church's response to safeguarding concerns and disclosures of abuse. There has been a significant increase in the amount of resource that has been put into safeguarding at national and diocesan levels, and clergy and parishes overall are now much more aware of what is required to ensure good safeguarding locally. Training has been updated and expanded to improve the quality of safeguarding at every level. I am very aware of how much time and effort this has required and am enormously grateful for the commitment of people at every level of the Church's life to this vital task.
- 1.4. *Where are we trying to get to?* All of this is happening because we all share the desire to see our Church and our churches become the safest and healthiest possible communities, where every single person is nurtured and protected, enabling them to experience the love of God and the fullness of life that Jesus came to bring. We also want to ensure that those who have been abused receive compassionate care and appropriate redress. These are the shared goals of us all, and especially of those who seek to serve the Church locally and nationally in the work of safeguarding.
- 1.5. *Why does everything seem so difficult?* Nevertheless, we recognise that there remain a number of significant challenges still to be addressed, including the following:
 - 1.5.1. The experience of people who disclose abuse or safeguarding concerns is still not always what it should be, including how they are supported through the difficult process of reporting abuse or concerns. New guidance has been issued about this, but it is not consistently embedded within the life of our Church. In addition, proper redress for past wrongs is not yet in place. These collective failures and omissions on our part continue to compound the trauma of victims and survivors.
 - 1.5.2. The experience of those who are the subject of allegations and concerns is also still not consistently as good as it should be. In part, this relates to how well existing guidance is followed at a local level. It is also connected to the operation of other processes, such as the

Clergy Discipline Measure, and the NST is contributing to the review of these. Again, we need to recognise that this can be deeply traumatising for those affected.

- 1.6. *How can we best move forward?* These issues combined with the failures of the past, inevitably mean that the whole atmosphere around safeguarding is often highly charged, and this can result in people quite understandably expressing their concerns in very strong and emotionally powerful terms. When people have been abused, when they feel betrayed, when they are fearful and angry, then it is only natural that this should be expressed in how they speak and act. We need to recognise and understand that, and to learn to respond accordingly with care and compassion, rather than simply react to people's anger and pain. The most important thing that can help us to learn how to respond more appropriately is for us to listen to the experience of victims and survivors, and to allow their experience to shape how we do things. In other words, we need to become more trauma-aware, to allow our response individually, and collectively to become more trauma-informed.
- 1.7. One aspect of this, helpfully explored by Carla Grosch-Miller in her book "Trauma and Pastoral Care" (Canterbury Press, 2021) is to recognise the path that those who have experienced trauma often travel. (*The book deals particularly with the experience of collective trauma, such as the Coronavirus pandemic – see diagram below*).



This process can begin with a response of denial to the experience of trauma and an attempt to "sort things out" quickly. Eventually, however, the reality of the experience begins to hit home and a time of disillusionment and anger can follow. Only once the full reality of the trauma has been accepted can there be any possibility of rebuilding and restoration, but where this does happen then there can be a slow move towards a new and different future.

- 1.8. I believe that the Church of England is going through (and needs to go through) a process something like this. We have had to face up to the horror of abuse in our midst, and have responded with both denial and a commitment to "sort things out quickly". However, the reality is more deep-seated and it will take much longer than we hoped to bring about both healing and lasting change. I believe we are at the moment working our way through a period

of anger and disillusionment, as well as one of change and development. That is painful and difficult, but it is also inevitable and necessary, as we deal with the past and prepare for a new and better future. We must keep going, recognising that there will be mistakes and setbacks along the way but above all remaining committed to the task of making the Church of England as safe and healthy a place as it can be for every single person, made in God's image and infinitely loved by the One who made us. I would ask you to read the rest of this report, and to engage with the work it describes, in that same spirit.

2. Learning and Development

- 2.1. The *Safeguarding Learning and Development Framework 2021* was approved by the National Safeguarding Steering Group, and published, in April 2021. The expectation of Church bodies was that the Framework would be fully implemented by January 2022. The Framework can be found on the E-Manual in the safeguarding section of the Church's website.
- 2.2. Safeguarding learning and development has reached a point of stability. The focus of the National Safeguarding Team (NST) in this area for the coming year is on ensuring consolidation of learning, reviewing implementation, and gathering feedback on the impact that the various pathways within the Framework are having. A national survey is being prepared to be sent to all dioceses and cathedrals to gather information on the Framework's implementation covering all pathways delivered within these Church bodies. The Senior Leadership Safeguarding Pathway (SLSP) is being evaluated, in greater depth, separately.
- 2.3. Whilst most safeguarding learning pathways are on-line or delivered locally by dioceses, the NST's delivery of safeguarding learning continues to focus upon the Senior Leadership Safeguarding Pathway which is delivered to the senior leadership teams of dioceses, cathedrals and other Church bodies. Delivery of this Pathway started in May 2021, with all cohorts finishing the Pathway by the end of 2022. In addition, the NST is delivering the *Link Person Pathway*, *Support Person Pathway* and the specific Senior Leadership Pathway for Diocesan Directors of Ordinands and Assistant Diocesan Directors of Ordinands.
- 2.4. An important development in November 2021 was the introduction of the Domestic Abuse pathway to help promote a positive response to domestic abuse both within the Church itself and communities served.
- 2.5. The National Safeguarding Team continues to receive very positive feedback in relation to the pathways within the Safeguarding Learning and Development Framework. Often, reflections from participants on the *Leadership Pathway* in particular are shared with us as examples of how impactful and thought provoking the Pathway has been for participants.
- 2.6. Work is also progressing on the roll out of the *Professional Development and Advanced Safeguarding Learning Programme*. To date this has been aimed primarily at safeguarding professionals within the Church and has comprised learning events on:
 - facilitation skills for diocesan safeguarding trainers
 - developing trauma informed practice
 - spiritual abuse and healthy cultures.

All have been delivered by national experts in their fields.

2.7. The focus for the remainder of the year is on the delivery of an offer to members of the wider Church who wish to enhance their safeguarding understanding and skills alongside their safeguarding colleagues. Upcoming events include *working with and responding to trauma*, and *identifying and responding to grooming*, both being delivered in June and July 2022. In the remainder of 2022, there will also be sessions on:

- What is and how can we use motivational interviewing?
- Creating a dialogue with survivors.
- Forgiveness.
- Challenging conversations.
- Safe-Uncertainty” in safeguarding.

3. Safeguarding Guidance

Work continues to support dioceses, cathedrals and other Church bodies in their embedding of recent House of Bishops’ Safeguarding Guidance.

3.1. Safer Recruitment and People Management

This Guidance was approved by the NSSG in April 2021, and came into effect in January 2022. Work will commence later this year to evaluate how well this Guidance is being implemented, and how well the implementation programme worked.

3.2. Responding Well to Victims and Survivors of Abuse

This Guidance was approved by the NSSG in September 2021 and came into effect in April 2022. Work is underway to support the implementation of the Guidance, including the development of a range of materials that dioceses and other Church bodies can use, and models of good practice. A base-line position will be established this year so that progress with implementation can be evaluated after a further 12 months.

3.3. Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults

This was approved by the House of Bishops in December 2021. The implementation of this Guidance has been supported by the delivery of a comprehensive learning pathway on spiritual abuse and healthy cultures.

3.4. Moving forward, new safeguarding policies will take the form of Safeguarding Codes of Practice following the introduction of the Safeguarding (Code of Practice) Measure 2021. This amended the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016. The 2021 Measure replaces the duty under the 2016 Measure to have due regard to safeguarding guidance with provision for a safeguarding code (or codes) of practice. A code may impose requirements on relevant persons as well as giving advice to them.

During 2022/23 the priorities will be:

- *Managing Risk*
- *Learning Lessons Case Reviews*
- *Revision of Responding to, assessing and managing safeguarding concerns or allegations against Church officers.*
- *Revision of the Safeguarding in Religious Communities guidance.*

4. IICSA Recommendations 1 and 8

- 4.1. **IICSA Recommendation 1** stated that the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor role should be become an Officer role with greater authority for decision making on safeguarding matters. (Please refer to the separate papers GS 2269 AC42 – First Consideration – July 2022 and GS 2269X AC42 Explanatory Notes which address the amendments to the legislation required to make the change from Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor to Diocesan Safeguarding Officer). It also stated that the work of the Officer should be professionally supervised and quality assured by the National Safeguarding Team. We are taking this work forward through a pilot project in which participating dioceses and cathedrals will enable their Safeguarding Advisors to operate as Officers and to trial the new supervision and support arrangements. As part of this, we will be trialling a “regional model” and “central model”, to determine whether there are benefits to taking a regional approach to implementing Recommendation 1.
- 4.2. The dioceses and cathedrals involved in the pilot, known as “Pathfinders”, have been split into three groups: the South West (the dioceses and cathedrals of Truro, Exeter, Salisbury and Bristol); the Midlands (the dioceses and cathedrals of Gloucester, Worcester, Birmingham and Lincoln); and a central group (comprising Blackburn Cathedral, York Minster, the Diocese of Newcastle and the Diocese of Chichester and Chichester Cathedral). Three Safeguarding Leads have been appointed to the NST to provide supervision, quality assurance and support for these groups.
- 4.3. The pilot is expected to begin in September 2022 and last for 18 months. After this, a recommendation about the model to be rolled out nationally will be made. We anticipate it will take a further 18 months to onboard other dioceses and cathedrals in respect of the model/s finally agreed on.
- 4.4. **IICSA Recommendation 8** was that the Church continues to have independent external safeguarding audits of dioceses, cathedrals and other Church organisations and publishes the reports. We are in the early stages of a procurement process to identify an independent audit provider to audit all dioceses and cathedrals and both palaces over a five year period. We expect these audits will begin in autumn 2023.

5. Past Cases Review 2

- 5.1. Since the previous General Synod, all local independent diocesan reports have now been submitted and approved by the Project Management Board. The last of the expected reports was received by the project team at the end of April 2022.
- 5.2. The original timeframe for PCR 2 in all contexts was affected by Covid restrictions.
- 5.3. In the case of the Diocese in Europe, travel restrictions imposed during the Covid-19 have meant that while the work has started it has not yet been able to complete the necessary research for PCR2. The Diocese will report on its findings as soon as it can.
- 5.4. The project team has analysed the findings of the 45 independent local reports received, with a total of over 800 local recommendations being made. These findings and recommendations cover a variety of areas and have been consolidated into eleven main themes that will feature in the final PCR2 report, along with recommendations.

- 5.5. The national report is being drafted with the assistance of a Stakeholder Group and an Editorial Group with oversight from the PCR2 Project Management Board.
- 5.6. Two Survivor Workshops have also been held to seek feedback on the expectation of the report from a survivor and victim perspective, in particular the ongoing delivery and future governance of any recommendations.
- 5.7. The NSSG now needs time to consider and ultimately approve the national report. Once this process is complete, a publication date will be identified and shared with the dioceses – it is anticipated this will be in early Autumn. The work involved in building the report from 45 independent local reports and findings is significant.
- 5.8. Dioceses will decide on a timescale and format for publishing local findings. Many have advised they are intending to do so at the same time as the publication of the national report, but this is a local decision.
- 5.9. At the time of writing the project team is working towards completion of the full final report to be submitted to the Project Management Board at the end of June. Once approved by the Board, the NSSG will consider the report and advise on a timescale for publication.

6. National Redress Scheme

- 6.1. The setting up of the National Redress Scheme is a complex project. It is taking time to establish, but it is important to get it right. The Scheme is in development stage and the Project Board and the Victim and Survivor Working Group continue to meet on a regular basis to work out and define objectives, benefits and key areas of policy.
- 6.2. Two of the seven members of the project's Victim and Survivor Working Group are members of the Project Board to ensure that the voices of the Working Group are heard and given appropriate weight throughout the development of the Scheme. The Victim and Survivor Working Group's feedback has been positive and its members regularly share their views on the development of the Scheme.
- 6.3. Current work is focused on defining the scope of the Scheme, identifying likely levels of demand, considering models for the assessment and provision of financial awards and models for delivering the scheme.
- 6.4. Work will also be carried out on the assessment and implementation of non-financial redress such as accessing therapy and facilitating apologies and pastoral and spiritual support. This work is summarised on the following webpage: [Redress Scheme | The Church of England](#).

7. Interim Support Scheme

- 7.1. The Interim Support Scheme (the Scheme) began supporting survivors in October 2020. It was set up as a pilot, intended to respond to the urgent and immediate needs of survivors (but not to provide them with continuous support) and running until the implementation of the Redress Scheme. Decision panels to consider applications meet fortnightly to consider the applications on a case-by-case basis, in line with the Scheme's Terms of Reference (ToR).
- 7.2. The ToR, originally approved by the Archbishops' Council in September 2021, established that the maximum period of support available to survivors would extend to two periods of six

months. After the Scheme was considered as the scrutiny item at the National Safeguarding Panel (NSP) meeting of March 2022, the NSP made several recommendations which included extending the therapeutic support provision, where this was required, beyond these two existing six-month periods.

- 7.3. A detailed proposal was presented to the Archbishops' Council meeting of May 2022, requesting an amendment to the Scheme's ToR. As a result of this decision, the Scheme's panel may now, taking into consideration the views of a survivor's professional psychiatric adviser, exercise its discretion in approving therapeutic support to applicants beyond the existing two six-month support periods.
- 7.4. To date, 49 victims and survivors have received an offer of assistance from the Scheme. Further victims and survivors continue to approach the Scheme for assistance.

8. Survivor Engagement

- 8.1. Victims and survivors have continued to make valuable contributions to the work of the NST and enable the Church to learn from their experiences and participation. In addition to the National Redress Scheme working group, survivors are involved in the PCR2 project, consultation for the Clergy Conduct Measure (CCM) reform, development of training materials, safer recruitment and other panels.
- 8.2. The Partnerships and Engagement Lead continues to balance the work of current survivor engagement workstreams with the planning for the survivor engagement framework. The NST will run a national anonymous survey later this year to hear from any victims and survivor of abuse, including those who have not engaged with the Church previously, about how they would like to engage to develop a survivor engagement framework.
- 8.3. Alongside the final stages of developing a survivor engagement page as part of the Church of England website (where the link to the survey will be hosted), work is moving forward via colleagues in the digital team to use the 'Salesforce' platform to securely store the details of individuals who consent to participate in survivor engagement work. Survivors have particularly noted personal data security as a key area of importance to support their involvement. The process, though time consuming, aims at ensuring people's personal information is protected.

9. Information Sharing

- 9.1. *Recommendation 5 - Information sharing agreements between the Church of England and the Church in Wales*

The Information Sharing Framework supported by the two information sharing agreements (one for safeguarding information and one for HR information – People System Project) are in the process of being signed by the relevant participating bodies (dioceses, cathedrals, and bishops' offices).

The training specification is being developed which will ensure an effective short training package supports the implementation, embedding and use of the Information Sharing Framework and agreements.

9.2. *Recommendation 6- Information sharing agreements between the Church of England, Church in Wales, and statutory partners*

A draft information sharing agreement with the police is now complete and consultation within the police and the Church of England has begun.

In terms of other statutory agencies, work with the National Association of Safeguarding Partners (TASP), who work with local Children and Adults Safeguarding Partnerships (the statutory arrangements for joint working and information sharing between local authorities, police, health services and others) continues. The Project team is presenting at the July TASP meeting.

10. Safe Spaces

- 10.1. The Safe Spaces service is an ecumenical project with the Catholic Church in England and Wales. The two Churches formed a charitable company 'Safe Spaces England and Wales' (SSEW) which is responsible for commissioning the Safe Spaces service, currently being delivered by Victim Support. Safe Spaces is a free and independent support service, providing a confidential, personal and safe space for anyone who has been abused by someone in the Church or as a result of their relationship with the Church of England, the Catholic Church in England and Wales or the Church in Wales. The service is provided nationally through the Safe Spaces helpline and Live Chat for as long as service users feel they need it and it is deemed to be helpful.
- 10.2. Rocket Science Labs have been undertaking an independent evaluation of the Safe Spaces service and providing interim reports for the internal team to take learnings from mid-pilot. Evaluators have reviewed service data and surveys undertaken by Victim Support, as well as their own independent surveys with service users and service staff. The one year report was received by SSEW Directors at their meeting in December 2021 which indicated that the service is being generally well received and is proving beneficial to those who have used it. The report included a number of positive accounts, with service users reporting feeling listened to, empowered and supported. A final report will also be produced at the end of the pilot in autumn this year, which will be published and made publicly available as part of SSEW's commitment to transparency and contributing to learning in this area.
- 10.3. As the pilot will conclude in Sept 2022, discussions have begun regarding arrangements for a tender process for the next phase of the service.

11. National Safeguarding Casework Management System

- 11.1. The Archbishops' Council has committed to creating a National Safeguarding Casework Management System, for use by the National Safeguarding Team (NST), dioceses and cathedrals of the Church of England.
- 11.2. Since our last update in February 2022, we continued to experience some recruitment challenges and some minor technical issues which impacted the project. However, we have been able to strengthen the team and mitigate technical issues and aim to commence the rollout of the new system to our phase 1 participants at the end of June 2022.
- 11.3. We aim to make the system available to the majority of dioceses and cathedrals by the end of 2022 and all legacy data migrated by March 2023.

12. Learning Lessons Reviews

12.1. The NST have three ongoing independent Learning Lesson Reviews, Trevor Devamanikkam, John Smyth and William Scott Farrell. All three of these reviews are progressing well and the William Scott Farrell was published in late May. The Graham Gregory LLR was published on 15 February 2022 and was positively received by the victims who had courageously contributed to the review.