

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.

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January 2023

**Published by the General Synod of the Church of England
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1. Safeguarding Programme

- 1.1. The Safeguarding Programme is one of the highest priority programmes in the Church of England. The programme, as part of the ongoing work of the National Safeguarding Team, aims to help successful achievement of the key NST business case objectives:
 - Prevention and Improvement
 - Responding well to victims and survivors of church related abuse
 - Ensuring effective safeguarding practice
- 1.2. These objectives all feed into the key mission of making the Church of England a safer place.
- 1.3. The current focus of the Programme team is on improving stakeholder engagement to make it more relevant and targeted and implementing benefits management framework to define the outcomes we're trying to achieve and agree value measure criteria. The team will also be involved in the prioritisation journey that NST is embarking on to help streamline resources into the most important areas of work that aid achievement of Archbishops' Council's key strategic objectives.
- 1.4. The 5 projects in the programme are at different delivery stages:

1.4.1. National Redress Scheme:

- Stage: Define (moving into Plan & Design)
 - Overall risk: High (this reflects complexity of the projects and decisions that are yet to be made)
 - Risk to achievement of benefits: Medium
 - Scope creep risk: Low
 - Budget risk: High (as currently there's little clarity about sources of funding and a financial model, which is being worked out)
- 1.4.1.1. In October 2022, the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse published its final report. As part of that report, it recommended that HMG establish a national government-funded redress scheme for victims and survivors of child sexual abuse. The House of Bishops, Archbishops' Council, and National Safeguarding Steering Group, have agreed a response which was published on 12th January 2023.
 - 1.4.1.2. The Church of England remains fully committed to the delivery of a redress scheme for victims and survivors of child sexual abuse within the Church, as well as survivors of other forms of Church-related abuse.
 - 1.4.1.3. The Church is currently in the process of developing national proposals for redress which aim to include financial compensation, psychiatric, therapeutic, spiritual and emotional support, acknowledgment of wrongdoing on the part of the Church, apology, and support for rebuilding lives. The Church wishes conscientiously to take into account the views of its redress scheme project board which brings together victims and survivors and other stakeholders in a process of co-design.

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- 1.4.1.4. The Church plans to continue to develop its own redress scheme, rather than seeking to participate in the national scheme which the Inquiry recommends, but in the development of that scheme will carefully consider the Inquiry's suggested approach. We are taking this approach because there is not yet any response from the Government to IICSA's suggestion of a national scheme; and because we assume that any such national scheme would only cover child sexual abuse, rather than the wider scope of different forms of abuse, for both children and vulnerable adults, which the Church's scheme is intended to cover.
- 1.4.1.5. An important element of redress and reparation is subsidiarity, namely the desirability that reparation should be made as near as possible to the original harm. In order to give effect to this principle, the project team will bring forward proposals for legislation to provide that relevant institutions and organisations within the Church of England – for example PCCs, DBFs, and cathedrals - should contribute to financial redress along with the national Church where they are reasonably able to do so (including via recourse to any insurance policy they have to cover such costs), and to put in place a framework for the operation of the redress scheme including some guiding principles which should apply.
- 1.4.1.6. Subject to the approval of the relevant member bodies, the AC will bring forward legislative proposals to the General Synod for first consideration in July 2023.

1.4.2. IICSA 1&8 Regional Model:

- Stage: Deliver
 - Overall risk: Low
 - Risk to achievement of benefits: Low
 - Scope creep risk: Low
 - Budget risk: Low
- 1.4.2.1. IICSA Recommendation 1 concerns the change in role from Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor to Diocesan Safeguarding Officer. The Officers will have authority to make safeguarding decisions independently of the diocesan bishop; and their work will be professionally supervised and quality assured by the National Safeguarding Team. Recommendation 8 concerns the continuation of independent external audit of safeguarding in dioceses, cathedrals and other Church organisations. In addition to these recommendations, the project includes a pilot of a regional model of delivery; the development of a Safeguarding Quality Assurance Framework and National Safeguarding Standards; and the provision of a methodology to enable dioceses and cathedrals to determine the resources required to deliver safeguarding activity to a good standard.
- 1.4.2.2. The IICSA Recommendations 1 & 8 / Regional Model pilot has been live since September 2022 and will last until February 2024. Legislation changes required to deliver Recommendation 1 will be heard for the

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second time at General Synod in February 2023. Three Safeguarding Leads are piloting the professional supervision and quality assurance of the Safeguarding Advisor/Officers' work in the 13 dioceses and 11 cathedrals involved in the pilot, and are exploring the regional and central delivery models. Ongoing evaluation of the pilot is providing evidence of the emerging benefits and disbenefits. We expect decisions to be made in Q4 of 2023 about the model to be rolled out nationally, based on the 12-month pilot evaluation report. The 'Roles and Responsibilities' guidance will be updated to reflect to the new model once approved.

- 1.4.2.3. A procurement process is under way to identify an organisation to audit safeguarding in Church bodies (Recommendation 8). Audits are expected to begin in Q4 of 2023 and to be completed by the end of 2028.
- 1.4.2.4. The draft National Safeguarding Standards and Safeguarding Quality Assurance Framework are currently being tested and refined by pilot dioceses and cathedrals, before wider consultation takes place with other interested parties.

1.4.3. Information Sharing:

- Recommendation 5: Closure
- Recommendation 6: Plan & Design
- Overall risk: Medium
- Risk to achievement of benefits: Medium
- Scope creep risk: Low
- Budget risk: High

1.4.3.1. *Recommendation 5 – Information sharing agreements between the Church of England and the Church in Wales*

1.4.3.1.1. The Information Sharing Framework, supported by two Information Sharing Agreements (one for safeguarding and one for HR information) have been signed by all but 3 of the relevant participating bodies, i.e., dioceses, cathedrals, and bishops' offices.

1.4.3.1.2. In 2023 a three-part guidance package will be available to support the practical implementation and day to day use of the Framework and Agreements, so that information sharing is lawful, timely and necessary.

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

1.4.3.2.1. A Police National Data Sharing Agreement is now agreed to enable routine information sharing channels with dioceses, cathedrals and bishops' offices and promote effective safeguarding. This national agreement is currently being signed by all relevant legal church bodies.

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- 1.4.3.2.2. Regarding the remaining statutory partners, continued stakeholder engagement has evidenced a strong reticence to work solely with the Church of England/Church in Wales, with a preference for working with all faith groups as one “agency.” The volume of external stakeholders and the absence of an overarching national governance body will prolong the project period and cause complexity in approach at both regional and local levels. The design and planning stage of this project is being re-evaluated to achieve the aim of the recommendation with differing evidence-based principles and approaches.

1.4.4. National Safeguarding Casework Management System:

- Stage: Delivery
- Overall risk: High
- Risk to achievement of benefits: Medium
- Scope creep risk: Low
- Budget risk: High

1.4.4.1. 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.

1.4.4.2. To date, 13 Dioceses and the NST have access to the software and are using it to record all information pertaining to new cases. These dioceses are Blackburn, Bristol, Birmingham, Ely, Coventry, Oxford, Salisbury, Sheffield, Newcastle, Southwell and Nottingham, Leeds, Southwark and Europe. There has been excellent feedback about the system functionality, training, support and the project team delivery.

1.4.4.3. In December 2022 the Archbishop’s Council approved a project request for additional funding to support the continued rollout of the systems across remaining diocese and cathedrals. The project expects to complete in July 2024.

1.4.5. Past Cases Review 2:

- Status: Closed

1.4.5.1. The Past Cases Review 2 (PCR2) was conducted in all Church of England dioceses, Lambeth and Bishopthorpe Palaces and the National Safeguarding Team, between 2019 – 2022. The review was commissioned by the Archbishops’ Council in 2019 as part of the overall commitment to improving the way in which the Church responds to safeguarding allegations and concerns.

1.4.5.2. The national report was published in October 2022, supported by a media briefing delivered by a panel of Bishop Jonathan Gibbs (Safeguarding Lead Bishop and Chair of the National Safeguarding Steering Group), Bishop Mark Sowerby (Chair of the PCR2 Project Management Board),

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John Bakker (a survivor with lived experience) and Alexander Kubeyinje (National Director of Safeguarding).

- 1.4.5.3. Executive summaries of Diocesan reviews were also published on this date, with varied national and local media coverage.
- 1.4.5.4. Survivors and victims who have not previously reached out to the church have also subsequently contacted safeguarding teams, as a result of the publication at both a national and diocesan level. This is seen as a very positive outcome for PCR2.
- 1.4.5.5. There has been an enormous amount of work involved and the national report and local executive summaries could not have been delivered without the contributions of so many. The review of over 75,000 files is the most significant review ever conducted by the Church of England.
- 1.4.5.6. Conclusions and recommendations in the national report were drawn from the analysis of the 800 plus recommendations and the findings in the 45 individual reports.
- 1.4.5.7. As a result of this review 383 new safeguarding cases relating to children and vulnerable adults were identified. These cases are being monitored and reviewed by each Diocese to ensure the relevant safeguarding action has been taken.
- 1.4.5.8. The 26 recommendations contained in the national report form the basis of the implementation plan, that will be overseen by the National Safeguarding Steering Group.
- 1.4.5.9. The recommendations from the Diocesan reviews will be monitored by the local Diocese Safeguarding Advisory Panel or the equivalent.

2. Interim Support Scheme

- 2.1. The Interim Support Scheme was introduced in the summer of 2020, to provide urgent, emergency support for survivors of Church-related abuse. Since August 2020 the Archbishops' Council has paid £1,229,423.07 through the Scheme, which has benefited 62 survivors.
- 2.2. The Interim Support Scheme is in the process of reviewing its capacity as the numbers of applications have increased. As a result, there has been an impact on the ability of the team to respond in a timely way.
- 2.3. At times, victims and survivors have expressed some frustrations towards members of the NST about the operation of the scheme. However, the NST does not make the decisions but processes the paperwork for independent panels to decide on applications.
- 2.4. More work is needed this year to improve process and communications.

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3. Learning & Development

- 3.1. The Safeguarding Learning and Development Framework sets out a series of learning pathways on safeguarding for people across the Church – with different pathways for people in different roles. The core pathways build on one another and progress from Basic Awareness, through to Foundation, Leadership and Senior Leadership levels. Additional learning pathways include those for specific roles (such as those holding Permission to Officiate, Parish Safeguarding Officers, Support and Link Persons), Safer Recruitment and People Management, and Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse. A number of the pathways are accessible via e-learning and to date there are over 200,000 users of the national safeguarding training portal. All of the core and additional learning pathways have been externally accredited. There is also an advanced curriculum of continuing professional development activities developed for those holding the role of Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor / Cathedral Safeguarding Advisor or Safeguarding Trainer. Some of these learning opportunities have also been opened to wider audience across the Church.
- 3.2. We want to learn from the experience of those using the pathways. We issued a Safeguarding Learning and Development Framework Implementation Survey, to all dioceses and cathedrals to be completed between July and October 2022. The survey looked at how the learning pathways were being implemented including whether they were being implemented with full fidelity to the model, the number of people completing them and, in some cases, the impact they were having on culture, practice, leadership and values. We received a very positive response; the full report of the survey will be going to the National Safeguarding Steering Group (NSSG) in March 2023. Throughout 2023 the NST will be working towards revisions to the Learning and Development Framework and the learning pathways contained within.
- 3.3. The National Safeguarding Team led 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence in November and December 2022; all the events were well attended and well received. A working group will be set up to take forward Recommendation 26 of PCR2 (“All church bodies to raise awareness of domestic abuse, including the understanding of the harmful impact of domestic abuse on children”) as domestic abuse is such a significant issue for church communities (as in other communities). This working group, including external partners and survivors, will work to develop resources and training to ensure we are equipped to respond to domestic abuse. It will complete its work by July 2023. The Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse online learning module was launched in November 2021 and has been externally accredited by the Continuing Professional Development Accreditation Service. The Implementation Survey results showed that 55% of responses say that the online module has had either a positive or very positive impact on improving the understanding of domestic abuse. When looking at just those who have delivered the module in-person, 100% of them state that the module has had a positive or large positive impact. Whilst the working group is underway the requirement that PCC members complete this training continues.

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- 3.4. Other key priorities for learning and development in 2023 include embedding the knowledge and skills from the recent risk assessment training completed with safeguarding advisers through the development of a risk assessment practice handbook, and the introduction of a quality assurance framework to evaluate the delivery of local training.

4. Safeguarding Codes of Practice

- 4.1. The Safeguarding (Code of Practice) Measure 2021 came into effect in March 2022. This means that safeguarding policy and guidance currently being developed will be part of a Safeguarding Code of Practice, which Church Bodies will have to a duty to comply with. The General Synod will be asked to approve each part of the new Code.
- 4.2. The first piece of guidance that will form part of the Code focuses on Learning Lessons Case Reviews (LLCRs), and will be brought to the General Synod for approval in July 2023. As with “Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews” and “Safeguarding Adults Reviews” in the statutory sector, LLCRs are one element in developing a learning culture which is essential for effective safeguarding. Their purpose is to seek to prevent or reduce future abuse by learning lessons from current and non-recent cases. A draft of this guidance was circulated for consultation during October 2022. Further consultation with victims and survivors has taken place, ahead of a final version being brought to the National Safeguarding Steering Group (NSSG) in March 2023.
- 4.3. Work is also underway to develop the part of the Code that will replace the existing House of Bishops’ guidance on managing safeguarding concerns and allegations against Church Officers. Initial engagement has highlighted that the main weakness of the existing guidance is that it comprises a single process to be followed in all circumstances. The new version will outline different pathways – for clergy, employees, elected roles and volunteers. Within these roles, differentiation will be made between allegations of direct abuse and those circumstances where it is alleged that someone has not followed safeguarding requirements. The revised guidance will be released for consultation in June-July 2023, with the view of it being taken to the NSSG for approval in September 2023 and to the General Synod in February 2024. Prior to formal consultation, co-design and testing work will be carried out with different stakeholders, including victims and survivors, Safeguarding Advisors, members of clergy and past respondents.

5. IICSA Final Report

- 5.1. The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) published its final report on 20th October 2022. The report covers 15 different investigation strands including the Church of England and Child Protection in religious institutions and settings. During the public hearings the Inquiry heard evidence from 725 witnesses including 94 who gave evidence as victims and survivors. The 458-page final report makes 20 concluding recommendations about a range of issues including Mandatory Reporting, Redress and the introduction of new Child Protection Authorities for England and Wales.

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- 5.2. The Church of England published an initial response to the report on 20th October 2022, and a further, more detailed, response on 12th January 2023 which is [available here](#).

6. Survivor Engagement

- 6.1. Survivors' voices, experiences and participation have been valuable in many different initiatives and workstreams across the team, including the implementation of IICSA recommendations. Survivors are essential part of the work of the NST, including the national Redress and Interim Support Schemes, the Responding Well to Survivors Guidance implementation group, safeguarding training delivery, communications, staff recruitment and wider consultations.
- 6.2. Two survivors of church-based abuse are a part of the new Seal of the Confessional [working group](#), chaired by Bishop Joanne Grenfell. A further seven survivors will form a reference group with whom the working group can have a dialogue on the issues arising from its work
- 6.3. In parallel to ongoing engagement and coproduction work with victims and survivors of abuse, the National Safeguarding Team is committed to developing and implementing a survivor engagement framework with victims and survivors. A national anonymous survey took place in the summer and autumn of 2022, asking survivors how they would like to work with the Church to develop this. 185 individuals with lived experience of abuse responded, including those who have not engaged with the Church previously. Learning from the survey will inform a publicly accessible report, which will be published online on the survivor engagement [webpage](#).
- 6.4. In addition to a dedicated webpage in the Church of England's website, a monthly newsletter has been produced to communicate directly with all volunteer survivors engaging with the NST on the most recent developments, opportunities and news regarding engagement.
- 6.5. Additionally, a new email address has been set up for survivor engagement - engage.safeguarding@churchofengland.org.

7. Safe Spaces

- 7.1. 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.
- 7.2. The two year pilot of the service (delivered by Victim Support) came to an end in September 2022. SSEW, the Church of England and the Catholic Church in England and Wales are committed to the Safe Spaces service and a new procurement process was undertaken to identify a supplier for the next three years.

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- 7.3. The competitive procurement process for the new 3 year contract took place in September and October 2022. SSEW was supported in this process by members of the Safe Spaces Advisory Committee (SSAC). SSAC includes safeguarding advisors as well as victim and survivor representatives from both Churches. The successful provider, [First Light](#), is a trauma informed support and advocacy charity who have experience in supporting survivors of church related abuse and who already work with the Diocese of Truro.
- 7.4. While the procurement process took place, an interim arrangement was put in place to ensure continuity of service. The interim provision was provided by FearLess, an independent charity with experience of working with survivors of church related abuse. FearLess have been supporting new clients from September while Victim Support have continued to support existing clients to the service until the new provider takes over in January.
- 7.5. As of December 2022, work is underway with First Light to mobilise the service ready for 9th January 2023. Victim Support and FearLess are liaising with current Safe Spaces clients, who have the option to transfer to the new service delivered by First Light, take up alternative support through their current service provider, or close their case. Information is also being shared via the Safe Spaces [website](#).
- 7.6. The Safe Spaces pilot was subject to an independent evaluation by Rocket Science Labs. Interim reports shared with SSEW Directors and SSAC members include a number of positive accounts, with service users reporting feeling listened to, empowered and supported. Learning from the independent evaluation, as well as the views of victims and survivors, was used to refine the Safe Spaces service specification for the new three year contract. A final evaluation report has been produced which will be published and made publicly available as part of SSEW's commitment to transparency and contributing to learning in this area. Publication is expected in early 2023.

8. Learning Lessons Reviews

- 8.1. The two National Learning Lesson Reviews into the actions of the late John Smyth and Trevor Devamanikkam are both in the final stages.
- 8.2. The Makin review (on John Smyth) started consulting with victims and survivors who contributed with the review on the 9 January 2023. Once this is completed, it will be followed by the representations process involving individuals and organisations who will be named and criticised in the published report.
- 8.3. The Humphrey review (on Trevor Devamanikkam) starts the process of consulting with those criticised in the review in January 2023. At the survivor's request, we wish to clarify that he has not engaged with the review, but he will be sent the final report.
- 8.4. A timetable for publication for both reviews will be announced once these processes have been completed.

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9. New Lead Bishop of Safeguarding

- 9.1. It was announced on 16th January that Joanne Grenfell, the Bishop of Stepney in the Diocese of London, will become the new Lead Bishop of Safeguarding. She will formally start the role from April 2023. She takes over from Jonathan Gibbs, the Bishop of Rochester, whose term ends in March 2023.
- 9.2. The NST would like to thank Bishop Jonathan for his support over the last three years and his leadership of the National Safeguarding Steering Group and the response to the publication of the IICSA and PCR2 reports. He has been in post during a period of significant change and improvement in the approach to safeguarding within the Church.