

## National Safeguarding Team Update

### Introduction

1. This is to provide an update to General Synod on the activity of the National Safeguarding Team (NST).

### Overview of paper

2. This paper includes updates the following workstreams:
  - Interim Support Scheme
  - Case Review of Survivor Supported by ISS
  - Learning Lesson Reviews (LLR)
  - Past Cases Review 2 (PCR2) recommendations
  - Safeguarding Learning
    - Framework Revision
    - Leadership Safeguarding Pathway
    - Senior Leadership Safeguarding Pathway
    - Risk assessment
    - National Safeguarding Standards – Standard 5 Learning Supervision and Support
    - Safeguarding pastoral principles
    - Developing a greater focus in the church on the safeguarding of children and young people
    - Domestic abuse
  - House of Bishops' Safeguarding Guidance/Safeguarding Code of Practice
    - Safeguarding Practice reviews
    - Managing Safeguarding Concerns and Allegations
    - Responding Well to Victims and Survivors of Abuse
  - Partnerships Updates
    - National Safeguarding Casework Management System (NSCMS)
    - Survivor engagement
    - Safe Spaces
  - IICSA Recommendations 1 and 8 / Regional Model Project

### Actions Points

3. The General Synod is invited to note the report.

**Alexander Kubeyinje**  
**National Director of Safeguarding**

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**1. Interim Support Scheme**

- 1.1. The Scheme was originally set up as a pilot to provide short-term assistance with immediate and urgent needs for survivors whose life circumstances have been significantly affected both by Church-related abuse they had suffered, and the Church's subsequent responses to their disclosures.
- 1.2. The Scheme is intended to address immediate and urgent needs by providing short-term assistance in putting a survivor's life back on track. The Scheme can provide a range of options including therapeutic support and other forms of assistance such as rehabilitation, besides essential items for those in financial crisis.
- 1.3. The Scheme has continued to develop over time and has recently had staff resources increased to enable the Scheme to be administered in a more effective and timely manner.
- 1.4. Up until the end of May 2023 the Scheme has provided assistance to 68 victims and survivors of Church abuse.

**2. Case Review of Survivor Supported by ISS**

- 2.1. The Independent Safeguarding Board (ISB) received a referral from a victim of Church Abuse requesting a case review. The victim at the centre of this review has been in receipt of support from the ISS since its inception in the autumn of 2020. The ISB make a number of recommendations that are specific to the individual's case but also makes a number of recommendations that are specific to the scheme.
- 2.2. Immediate action has been taken to address the requirement for a case management group for the individual's case that was subject to the review.
- 2.3. The wider recommendations will be addressed as part of the longer term development and improvement of the scheme.

**3. Learning Lesson Reviews**

- 3.1. The independent lessons learnt review into the Church of England's handling of allegations against the late Revd Trevor Devamanikkam was published on 11 May 2023.
- 3.2. The review was commissioned by the National Safeguarding Team, NST, and carried out by Jane Humphreys, a Senior Social Care Consultant, and previous Director of Children's and Adult's Services with a career spanning more than 30 years.
- 3.3. Its purpose is to identify both good practice and failings in the Church of England's handling of the allegations, including its safeguarding practice, in order that the Church can take steps to enhance and improve its response to allegations of abuse and thereby ensure a safer environment for all.
- 3.4. The reviewer concludes that, although Trevor Devamanikkam was not convicted of the offences against him, the survivor was sexually abused by him. The reviewer makes a number of recommendations for the Church including about lessons learnt reviews and responding well to survivors; as well as the need for clear guidance to all clergy and Church officers as to what they should do and who they should take advice from if copied into an allegation of abuse.
- 3.5. The National Safeguarding Steering Group accepted the recommendations from the review, which are being responded to and implemented.
- 3.6. The independent learning lesson review led by Keith Makin has had several developments in recent months. In April, the reviewer made a report to the Police in relation to matters **that had** come to light during the review. This development has regrettably had an impact on the planned timeline for the review. The reviewer is

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now able to work on the next phase of the review, which will allow victims and survivors to review the report, which will be followed by the representation stage. The reviewer continues to provide updates to victims and survivors who have contributed to the review. Both the reviewer and the National Safeguarding Team are aware the distress that this is likely to cause the victims and survivors, their families, and others affected by this case and are truly sorry for this.

- 3.7. The National Safeguarding Team has arranged continued support for victims through a specialist Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA).

#### **4. PCR2 recommendations**

- 4.1. Three workshops were held in March with Dioceses and Cathedrals to consider progress of the implementation of the national and local recommendation and share good practice.
- 4.2. The progress of the recommendations will be scrutinised by the National Safeguarding Panel in July 2023.

#### **5. Safeguarding Learning**

##### **Framework Revision**

- 5.1. The Safeguarding Learning and Development Framework is about to be redrafted, for approval in 2024 and implementation from 1 January 2025. This revision to the Framework will not introduce widespread changes but rather seek to maintain the excellent progress which has been made to date within safeguarding learning whilst offering some updates and further information. The draft revised Framework will be circulated for consultation in November 2023, should go to the National Safeguarding Steering Group in January 2024 and to General Synod in July 2024.

##### **Leadership Safeguarding Pathway**

- 5.2. The 2023 iteration of the Leadership Pathway was released to all dioceses and cathedrals on 14 April 2023. The release has been supported by a number of workshops to introduce those involved in the facilitation of the Pathway to the content. The structure of the Pathway remains the same with learning taking place across pre- and post- session work, two sessions spaced two weeks apart and a post-course evaluation task to be completed six weeks after the second session. The ratio of participants to facilitators also remains unchanged.

##### **Senior Leadership Safeguarding Pathway**

- 5.3. The new iteration will be launched in early 2024 with the first session planned as in-person delivery. Work is currently underway to develop the content which is being informed by the formal evaluation of the current Senior Leadership Safeguarding Pathway which is due to be published in May 2023.

#### **6. Risk assessment**

- 6.1. Following training at the end of 2022, guidance and revised risk assessment and planning documents were launched in April 2023. The focus of this work has been to situate risk assessment within the context of the Church and ensure a consistent approach is adopted across all dioceses and cathedrals. There have been several changes made with risk assessment and planning in terms of language to support collaboration and ensure focus upon the Church context.

#### **7. National Safeguarding Standards – Standard 5 Learning, Supervision and Support**

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7.1. The National Safeguarding Standards are due to go to the NSSG for approval in May 2023. The documentation for standard 5 is complete and once approved quality assurance visits to dioceses and cathedrals will commence in order to explore the implementation progress and delivery of the Safeguarding Learning and Development Framework. Pilot sites have been identified and we hope to complete the pilot quality assurance visits during June and July 2023 before proceeding to visit all remaining diocese and cathedrals from September 2023 onwards.

## 8. Safeguarding pastoral principles

8.1. Initiated by the theology and safeguarding group we are co-producing some *safeguarding pastoral principles* using the Living In Love and Faith Pastoral Principles to enable safe and brave conversations on safeguarding. They will speak to the recognised fear and anxiety around safeguarding across the church to enable better more respectful and open dialogue, articulating safeguarding as a gospel imperative and human right. The aim is to have these available in Autumn 2023.

## 9. Developing a greater focus in the Church on the safeguarding of children and young people

9.1. We are engaged in a series of collaborative initiatives on enabling a strengthening of both the voice and safeguarding, of children and young people (CYP) across the activities of the Church. This involves reiterating and making more accessible existing materials and working with the National Ministry Team alongside Strategy and Vision on integrating safeguarding in the national programme for new leaders of CYP.

## 10. Domestic Abuse

10.1. Following the publication of the PCR2 report in 2022 there has been a focus on Recommendation 26, asking us as Church to ensure we are raising awareness of domestic abuse across our communities. To support our response to Recommendation 26 we first need to understand our culture, behaviours, knowledge, and skills in terms of recognising and responding to domestic abuse. With colleagues that have been involved in the work in the Diocese of Melbourne and the Cumbria research project, we have developed a baseline survey which will allow us to further understand our current culture, behaviour, skills, and knowledge in terms of recognising and responding to domestic abuse. This survey is due to be piloted in early May 2023 with a number of volunteer dioceses, and the findings reported to the NSSG.

## 11. House of Bishops Guidance/Safeguarding Codes of Practice Safeguarding Practice Reviews

11.1. The Safeguarding Practice Reviews (formerly known as Learning Lessons Case reviews) is a separate item on this agenda and is the first document to come forward to be issued as Safeguarding Code of Practice under Section 5A of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure (2016). Section 5A replaces the former rules under which safeguarding guidance has been issued. These Codes of Practice must be approved by General Synod. It was approved by the NSSG on the 25 May, and was live on the Synod website 31 May, allowing three weeks for it to be called in for debate.

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11.2. The document sets out a clear and detailed process for carrying out independent Safeguarding Practice Reviews in order to maximise the organisational learning from particular cases.

## **12. Safer Recruitment and People Management guidance**

12.1. The evaluation of how this guidance has been implemented commenced in June with a survey sent to dioceses for onward distribution to parishes, cathedrals, and Bishops' offices. The results of this survey will be analysed over the summer when fieldwork will also be commencing. A report will be written for NSSG in November, with a review of the guidance taking place in 2024. It is anticipated a revised document will come to Synod in February 2025 for approval as Code.

## **13. Safeguarding in Religious Communities guidance**

13.1. This guidance will be reviewed over the last six months of this year, and a revised version is anticipated to come to Synod for approval as Code in July 2024.

## **14. Managing safeguarding concerns and allegations**

14.1. Work is underway to develop the Code of Practice that will replace the existing House of Bishops' guidance on managing safeguarding concerns and allegations against Church Officers. The new Code will be released for consultation in September-October 2023, with the view of it being taken to the National Safeguarding Steering Group for approval in November 2023 and to the General Synod in February 2024.

14.2. The new Code will outline five different pathways – for the management of cases involving clergy, employees, elected roles, volunteers, and deceased respondents. Within these pathways, differentiation will be made between allegations of direct abuse and those circumstances where someone has not followed safeguarding requirements.

## **15. Responding Well to Victims and Survivors of Abuse**

15.1. The "Responding Well to Victims and Survivors of Abuse" guidance came into effect in April 2022 and outlined the minimum requirements for dioceses and other Church Bodies with regard to the provision of support to victims and survivors of abuse within the Church of England.

15.2. Between October - December 2022, all 42 dioceses in the Church of England completed a survey. The aim of this exercise was to gather baseline data on what the picture of support to victims and survivors currently looks like across the Church. A summary of the baseline survey findings will be published on the Church of England website in May. The intention is for the survey to be repeated in 2024, to enable comparison and an assessment of progress.

15.3. To support the implementation of the guidance, an Implementation Group was set up in July 2022, which brings together a number of victims and survivors and safeguarding professionals from dioceses, cathedrals, parishes, and the National Safeguarding Team. The Group will continue to meet until December 2023 and will take forward on a number of initiatives.

## **16. Partnerships updates**

### **National Safeguarding Casework Management System (NSCMS)**

16.1. The Archbishops' Council has committed to creating a National Safeguarding Casework Management System, for use by the National Safeguarding Team (NST),

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dioceses and cathedrals of the Church of England. In July 2021, the House of Bishops agreed to undertake best endeavours to support the adoption of the National Safeguarding Casework Management System by all dioceses and cathedrals when they are invited to join.

- 16.2. The MyConcern safeguarding system provided to 13 Dioceses and the NST continues to work well and receive excellent feedback. A support function has been established with NCIs' Data Services to solve any problems or queries that the Diocese may have with the system.
- 16.3. The project is now focussing on the planning of phase 2 which will see the rollout of the system to the remaining dioceses. The project website has been updated with documents which support the dioceses in understanding some of the detail of the project and the requirements of them in the process of taking on MyConcern. All dioceses were invited to attend engagement sessions in Q1 of this year. These sessions outlined the steps of the project and requested submission of further information from dioceses to the project for planning purposes. Extensive written resources have also been prepared for dioceses and cathedrals. The attendance rate of the engagement sessions was high, and the team continues to follow up directly with Dioceses and Cathedrals to walk through their specific circumstances and arrangements for onboarding. The team welcomes support from Diocesan Bishops to ensure adoption of the system and the improvement of safeguarding case recording.

## 17. Survivor Engagement

- 17.1. Victims and survivors continue to be involved in many different work areas across the NST, providing valuable insight and learning. These work areas include the national Redress and Interim Support Schemes, the Responding Well to Survivors Guidance implementation group, the Domestic Abuse working group, the revision of Managing Allegations guidance, safeguarding training delivery, communications, staff recruitment and wider consultations. An [annual report](#) was published in January 2023 that provides an oversight of how survivors' perspectives have been informing the NST's work.
- 17.2. Nine survivors of church-based abuse are currently involved with work relating to the Seal of the Confessional. Two survivor representatives are part of the [working group](#), chaired by Bishop Joanne Grenfell, and a further seven survivors are participating in a reference group with whom the working group can have a dialogue on the issues arising from its work.
- 17.3. An anonymous consultation survey went live in May providing a space for survivors and victims of Church-related abuse to express their views in relation to the Redress Scheme. The results will help develop an accessible and easy to navigate scheme, which ensures the personal journey for survivors through the application process is survivor-focused and user-friendly.
- 17.4. 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. 179 individuals with lived experience of abuse responded, including those who have not engaged with the Church previously. A report is being prepared based on the learning from this survey, outlining next steps to develop the framework with survivors. Once complete, the report will be published online on the survivor engagement [webpage](#).

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17.5. Progress on the report has been slowed by the increase in operational survivor engagement activity and the support required for this. Project planning and capacity management is ongoing to ensure the appropriate resources and processes are in place to support current and future survivor engagement work.

**18. Safe Spaces**

- 18.1. The independent evaluation of the two year pilot of Safe Spaces was [published](#) on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2023. The evaluation was carried out by Rocket Science, an independent research and evaluation company, who were engaged to assess the pilot of Safe Spaces which ran from 2020 until the autumn of 2022. The independent report supports the decision to continue the service after its initial pilot period.
- 18.2. The Safe Spaces service is now being delivered by First Light, who have been successfully supporting Safe Spaces clients since the new service launch on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023. As previously, the service provides emotional support and advocacy for victims and survivors via a national helpline, email, and live chat.
- 18.3. Clients using the service prior to the 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023 had the option to transfer over to the new service delivered by First Light, and around 40 clients ultimately transferred. Those that chose not to transfer were provide options including referral to other support services. Some cases were also supported through to case closure, if appropriate.
- 18.4. New Safe Spaces staff received training from NST staff and Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA) staff about Church processes and governance. Staff also participated in a workshop delivered by victim and survivor representatives from Safe Spaces England and Wales (SSEW).
- 18.5. The service presently has around 74 open cases, which includes service users who transferred from the previous provider, and new cases since January 2023.
- 18.6. Safe Spaces England and Wales (SSEW), the charitable company set up by the Church of England and the Catholic Church in England and Wales to commission and oversee the Safe Spaces service continues to monitor the delivery of the service. One Director/Trustee has stepped down (Bishop Debbie Sellin), and a new Director/Trustee appointed (Bishop Julie Conalty).
- 18.7. Work is underway by SSEW to appoint independent evaluators for the 3 year contract period with First Light.

**19. IICSA Recommendations 1 and 8 / Regional Model Project**

- 19.1. With regard to IICSA Recommendation 1 (Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor role becoming Diocesan Safeguarding Officer, their work to be professionally supervised and quality assured by the NST), the evaluation of the first six months of the pilot with the Pathfinder dioceses and cathedrals will shortly be completed and taken to the May meeting of the NSSG.
- 19.2. One of the workstreams in this project has been the further development of a set of National Safeguarding Standards. The pilot dioceses and cathedrals have been doing further work on these, and during May the draft Standards will be consulted on across the Church.
- 19.3. With regard to IICSA Recommendation 8, we are commissioning a second round of independent audits of cathedrals, dioceses, and palaces. We have undertaken a procurement process and a preferred supplier has been identified. Contractual negotiations will now take place. If, and when, these negotiations are successfully concluded, an announcement will be made.