

GENERAL SYNOD**Update: Review of the Independent Safeguarding Board Phase One**

1. In June 2023, the Archbishops' Council ended the contracts of the members of the Independent Safeguarding Board (ISB). ([Statement from Archbishops' Council on the Independent Safeguarding Board | The Church of England](#)) On 9 July 2023, some members of the Archbishops' Council gave a presentation to the General Synod on developments relating to the ISB, and answered questions from members. During this session, the Archbishop of York announced that an independent review should take place to look into what had happened with the ISB.
2. Since the July Synod, the Archbishops' Council have instructed Sarah Wilkinson, a senior barrister from Blackstone Chambers, to conduct this review. An announcement was made on 11th September ([Leading public law barrister to head review into Independent Safeguarding Board | The Church of England](#)). This included a link to the Terms of Reference which are enclosed with this paper in Annex A.
3. The Archbishops' Council has asked Ms Wilkinson to establish a clear account of the events from the conception, design and establishment of the ISB until the announcement of the termination of contracts of members, establish and identify the reasons for the action to terminate, and identify lessons to be learned based on the findings.
4. Ms Wilkinson has been corresponding with and interviewing key people to inform her review, and plans to move from the evidence-collecting phase to the analysis and write-up phase in mid-October.
5. Ms Wilkinson has been instructed to complete her review by the end of November 2023. The Archbishops' Council will publish the review in full as soon as possible thereafter. That is a tight timeframe, but has been chosen to ensure that the report is available to inform the work of Professor Alexis Jay on the [Future of Safeguarding](#).
6. A press release was issued on 5 October 2023 stating that Ms Wilkinson had set a deadline of 31 October 2023 for the submission of evidence to the Review.
7. Following the agreement of the Archbishops' Council, Professor Jay has been appointed:
 - a. To provide options and recommendations for forming an independent safeguarding scrutiny body for the Church of England;
 - b. To make any recommendations for how further independence of safeguarding might be achieved; and,
 - c. To make any other recommendations that are necessary or appropriate.
8. Professor Jay will finish her report by the end of the year. This is most likely to take the form of an options appraisal, but with a direct recommendation as to a preferred model for the new body.
9. Correspondence relating to Professor Jay's work should be routed via the [Future of Safeguarding](#) website.
10. All correspondence for Ms Wilkinson relevant to the ISB review should be sent to isbinvestigation@blackstonechambers.com

William Nye
Secretary General
October 2023

Annex A

Terms of Reference for the ISB Review

1. Sarah Wilkinson, (“the Reviewer”) and Rhys Jones (“Assistant to the Reviewer”), both barristers at Blackstone Chambers, have been instructed by the Archbishops’ Council to conduct an independent review (“the Review”):
 - a. to use best efforts to establish a clear account of the events from the conception, design and implementation of the ISB, until the announcement of the termination of contracts;
 - b. to use best efforts to establish and identify on the balance of probabilities the reasons for the action to terminate the contracts of the ISB members;
 - c. to identify lessons learnt based on the findings in (a) and (b).
2. The review will not reinvestigate the data breach which was reported to the Information Commissioner’s Office on 27 July 2022.
3. A report on the review will be submitted to the Archbishops’ Council on or before 30 November 2023 (“the Report”).
4. The Report will be published.
5. Any documents shared with the Reviewer for the purposes of the Review may be published in the Report unless subject to paragraphs 5(a) and 5(b):
 - a. confidentiality for documents or any part of a document is requested from the Reviewer by the provider of the documents; or
 - b. the relevant part of the document is legally privileged.
6. Any documents shared with the Reviewer for the purposes of the Review will not be shared with anyone else during the Review unless specific permission to do so is granted by the document owner.
7. Interviews may be conducted in person or online.
8. Interviewees will be granted anonymity in the Report if requested and if practical to do so (i.e. their names are not already in the public domain in connection with the ISB).
9. Any information provided anonymously to the Reviewer will be considered but may be given less weight if it cannot be independently verified by the Reviewer.
10. Transcripts of interviews will be retained by the Reviewer and not provided to the Archbishops’ Council.
11. A right of reply will be given to individuals identified in the Report (Maxwellisation). Individuals will be given a draft of the report and asked to comment on any conclusions drawn about them. It is likely that drafts will be provided in the week commencing 13 November 2023 and that comments will need to be returned to the Reviewer within 7 days.
12. All correspondence relevant to the Review should be sent to the Reviewer at isbinvestigation@blackstonechambers.com