

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
 - 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
 - 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. General Synod is invited to note the report.

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National Director of Safeguarding
November 2023

1. Interim Support Scheme (ISS)

- 1.1. The ISS was developed to support victims and survivors in urgent and immediate need of support and was established three years ago. During this time the scheme has provided financial support to eighty-three victims and survivors.
- 1.2. The ISS continues to develop, with a refreshed terms of reference being agreed by the Archbishops' Council in September 2023.
- 1.3. The former Independent Safeguarding Board in their Mr X report made nine recommendations; five recommendations are specific to the Scheme. These five recommendations are being progressed to develop and enhance the management of the scheme and the experience of the applicants.

2. Learning Lesson Reviews

- 2.1. The NST currently have one ongoing LLR which is the John Smyth QC review led by Keith Makin.

3. Update statement from Keith Makin Lead Reviewer.

- 3.1. The report for the Learning Lessons Review regarding John Smyth QC has been drafted. Victims have had the opportunity to read this, for them to comment on factual accuracy and to ensure that appropriate steps have been taken to preserve their anonymity. New material has recently been provided by Church Officers which is being considered for inclusion in the report.
- 3.2. The next phase of the review is the representations process, where those criticised in the review will be given advance notice of this and provided with an opportunity to respond. The review team has agreed to conduct this phase of the process on behalf of the Director of Safeguarding, subject to varying the terms of the Lead Reviewer's contract, and this is in progress.

4. Past Cases Review 2 (PCR2) recommendations

- 4.1. The National PCR2 report was published in October 2022, making twenty-six recommendations which form the basis of the PCR2 recommendations delivery plan.
- 4.2. The PCR2 Recommendation were scrutinised at the July National Safeguarding Panel (NSP) meeting. The Panel session focused on the implementation of the national recommendations. The Panel were joined for the session by staff from the National Safeguarding Team (NST) working on the recommendations and by a Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel Chair and a Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) to look at the impact of the recommendations at a Diocesan level. The NSP made twelve recommendations which focused on scrutiny and oversight, survivor impact, assessing overall impact and ensuring consistence in the diocese.
- 4.3. PCR2 identified 383 new safeguarding cases across the Dioceses, which needed further investigation. The NST are working with the Dioceses, collating and analysing the outcomes of these cases.
- 4.4. The National Safeguarding Steering Group has oversight and governance responsibilities for the delivery of these recommendations and oversight of the outcomes of the newly identified cases.

Safeguarding Learning**5. 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 January and February 2024, should go to the National Safeguarding Steering Group in March 2024 and to General Synod in July 2024. These dates have shifted since the last update due to changes to the timing of other NST workstreams which have subsequently impacted the timeline approval for the revised Framework.

6. Leadership Safeguarding Pathway

6.1. The 2023 iteration of the Leadership Pathway was released to all dioceses and cathedrals on 14 April 2023. The release has been supported by several workshops to introduce those involved in the facilitation of the Pathway to the content. Engagement with facilitators and safeguarding teams is ongoing to assist in the understanding of the new materials. This engagement now includes a masterclass to explore and develop further understanding of the models and activities referenced within the pathway.

7. Senior Leadership Safeguarding Pathway

7.1. The new iteration of the pathway is due to be delivered from March 2024 and consists of two in-person sessions over the course of a 6–8-month period. This learning pathway has been developed with focus on the National Safeguarding Standards, whilst also taking into consideration the key learning points from the evaluation of the previous SLSP.

8. Risk assessment

8.1. 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, we continue to work with safeguarding advisers as these new templates are implemented to ensure they fully met practice needs.

9. National Safeguarding Standards – Standard 5 Learning, Supervision and Support

9.1. The documentation for standard 5 is complete and quality assurance visits will begin in November 2023. . Where diocese or cathedrals are engaged with Safeguarding Leads as part of the IICSA Regional Model Pilot their quality assurance will be undertaken by their designated safeguarding lead. For all others quality assurance will be undertaken by the National Safeguarding Learning and Development Managers.

10. Safeguarding pastoral principles

10.1. Feedback and observations on exploring safeguarding within the Church reinforces a ‘debilitating’ effect of thinking and talking about safeguarding even amongst those who are otherwise strong and competent to talk about almost any other subject. Consequently, the revised approach in developing the SGPP takes a strong person-centred approach. The working group is paying particular attention to the requirement for this tool to achieve a safe space for groups to have a meaningful and quality conversation about safeguarding.

10.2. The timescale for the roll out of the SGPP has moved into February 2024. This accommodates the launch and familiarity of the National Safeguarding Standards

which will be discernible in the tool thereby supporting indicators towards a healthy culture.

11. Developing a greater focus in the Church on hearing the voice of, and the safeguarding of children and young people (CYP)

11.1. The National Safeguarding Team now has an allocated person working alongside the Ministry Development and Vision and Strategy Teams. This enables us to be more responsive and active in supporting the development of a healthy safeguarding culture for our children and young people (CYP). There is a shared commitment to safeguarding children's discipleship through holding their wellbeing; and recognising safeguarding as part of the scaffold we put around our CYP. Additionally, a current area of focus is collaborating on integrating safeguarding into initiatives on managing volunteering among leaders of CYP, and leaders who themselves are under 18 years.

12. Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) Support and Learning – National Working group

12.1. A national working group has been established working on four identified priorities. Role and Recruitment is the first priority, which will update the role description and offer tools to recruit and retain PSOs. Subsequent priorities will address issues regarding the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard; having a central repository of resources; and extending the learning opportunities for PSOs. The work of the group will run from July 2023 through to June 2024.

13. Domestic Abuse

13.1. In response to recommendation 26 of PCR2 the domestic abuse working group delivered six recommendations to NSSG in July, focusing in strengthening partnership with specialist services, increasing discussions surrounding DA in church communities and ensuring effective recognition and response to DA within the church.

13.2. The report utilised data gathered within an internal study which highlighted that only 37% of people felt DA was present in their church, with 3 in 5 respondents feeling we could do more to raise awareness of DA. Recommendations from this analysis draw on data that training improves individuals confidence in responding and recognising DA; this data has highlighted that more needs to be done to ensure clergy and senior leaders are actively undertaking and engaging with this training.

House of Bishops Guidance/Safeguarding Codes of Practice

14. Managing safeguarding concerns and allegations

14.1. The National Safeguarding Team (NST) is working on the revision of the ["Responding to, assessing and managing safeguarding concerns or allegations against church officers"](#) guidance, which will be replaced with a new Safeguarding Code of Practice.

14.2. The Code will outline five different pathways – for the management of cases involving clergy, employees, elected roles (e.g. PCC members), 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. The Code will also include guidance on the management of risk in the Church community.

- 14.3. The consultation for the new Code will be live between 23rd October and 30th November. The consultation will be open to all Bishops, the Standing Committees of the House of Clergy and the House of Laity, Diocesan Secretaries, Archdeacons, DSAP Chairs, Deans, Cathedral Chief Operating Officers and Safeguarding Leads, and Diocesan and Cathedral Safeguarding Advisors. Consultation with victims and survivors will also be carried out, and a number of victims and survivors have been involved in the development of the draft Code. Discussions with a number of past respondents to safeguarding concerns or allegations have also informed the development of the draft Code.
- 14.4. The intention is for the new Code to be approved by the National Safeguarding Steering Group (NSSG) in March 2024, ahead of approval from the General Synod in July 2024. This will then be followed by an implementation period of 6-9 months.

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. Work is ongoing to support the implementation of the guidance, and an Implementation Group is in place to oversee and take forward this work.
- 15.2. Based on the [findings](#) of a baseline survey carried out in October-December 2022, a number of new areas of activity have been identified. These include providing a technical note clarifying how to identify regulated and registered therapy providers and the difference between registered and accredited providers, and undertaking further “discovery” to identify models of best practice regarding the provision of Support Persons.
- 15.3. Alongside these initiatives, work is ongoing to produce a range of materials that can help simplify and disseminate the content of the guidance. A written summary has been produced and is now available on the [Church of England website](#). A series of short videos is currently in development and will accompany the written summary.

Partnerships updates

16. National Safeguarding Casework Management System (NSCMS)

- 16.1. The system is currently being used by 14 dioceses and the NST as early adopters onto the national system. These users continue to partner with the project team to improve and transition the system into business as usual by:
- Aligning safeguarding practices to a standard set of guiding principles and providing feedback on ways of working to embed best practice;
 - Reviewing the configuration of the system to ensure that data is recorded in a way that enables future national reporting requirements;
 - Providing feedback and testing support for software enhancements; and
 - Providing support and advice to the next Phase 2 participants.
- 16.2. There are now two representatives from the User Group on the Project Board who continue to form an important part of the governance for the MyConcern product. We are grateful for the ongoing support of this group and their positive advocacy of the system throughout the church.
- 16.3. There will be between 32-34 instances of participants to onboard during Phase 2 of the project. All Phase 2 participants have now engaged with the Project Team and most have engaged in initial risk assessments to establish their specific requirements for transitioning to the new system. These dioceses, cathedrals and

participants are in the process of planning their onboarding pathway and securing the resources needed.

- 16.4. There are a few dioceses who are still working through how the relationship between themselves, and their cathedral will work if they take a shared instance of the system. The project team continues to provide information and support to help inform these decisions. Some dioceses are finding the preparation for migrating existing casework onto the system more onerous than originally anticipated. For some this means the lead time for onboarding is taking longer than originally planned, for others the resourcing of this task is causing a challenge. The Project Team is working through a revised data migration strategy to ascertain any ways in which further support and automation can be applied to relieve some of these challenges.
- 16.5. There are still some parts of the system to be developed and deployed to the user base, including integration with the People system. Integration has been delayed since summer 2022 while matters relating to the People system are resolved. Further work is being done to establish the impact this will have both on current users and project resources.
- 16.6. The purchase of TSC (the company providing MyConcern) by TES has required some additional work on the contractual arrangements. Work is ongoing with support from the NCI Legal Office.
- 16.7. The project has also been pleased to welcome Bishop Philip North to the Project Board.
- 16.8. The project has transitioned to its new SharePoint site which all safeguarding professionals can access for support throughout the onboarding process. This can be found at: [NSCMS Project \(sharepoint.com\)](https://nscmsproject.sharepoint.com). The project team may be contacted via nscms@churchofengland.org

17. Survivor Engagement

- 17.1. Survivor engagement continues to be central in the work of the NST involving different workstreams, including the implementation of IICSA recommendations.
- 17.2. These work areas include:
 - The implementation of Responding Well to Survivors Guidance
 - The National Redress Scheme Working Group (including sub groups and representation in the Project Board)
 - Interim Support Scheme
 - Safe Spaces Advisory Committee
 - Seal of the Confessional working group and reference group
 - Domestic abuse working group
 - Safeguarding learning and development courses
 - Procurement of safeguarding audit provider
 - Staff recruitment panel
- 17.3. In addition to ongoing engagement, and thanks to our partnership with a range of survivors groups, a notable number of survivors took part in consultations, such as the national survey for the Redress Scheme (57 individuals) and the Seal of the Confessional consultation (32 individuals), enabling these work areas to capture the views of victims and survivors.
- 17.4. The National Director for Safeguarding has committed to meet with survivors and representatives of survivor groups twice a year. Two meetings took place in July, and further meetings will take place in November. This is part of an ongoing commitment from the National Director of Safeguarding and the Lead Bishop for

Safeguarding (Bishop Joanne Grenfell) to directly listen to the views of victims and survivors. The same open approach was also utilised in July to facilitate a dialogue between victims, survivors and survivor groups and trustees of the Archbishops Council.

- 17.5. As previously advised, 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 autumn of 2022, asking victims and survivors how they would like to work with the NST to develop this. Progress on the resulting report has been affected by the increase in operational survivor engagement activity in recent months and the support required for this. Nevertheless, further work has been possible over the summer and learning from this survey will be published online on the survivor engagement [webpage](#) shortly.
- 17.6. Although survivor engagement is undertaken by staff across the NST, there is currently only one role dedicated to this work. As a result of the increased activity in this area, a clear need for a business support role has been noted, and funding for a 0.6 FTE band 5 support post was identified in May 2023 from underspend elsewhere within the NST. Recruitment to this post (currently fixed term to June 2025) is taking place in a very challenging market, and it is currently being advertised for the second time.

18. Safe Spaces

- 18.1. The Safe Spaces service continues to be delivered by First Light, who have been successfully supporting Safe Spaces clients since the new service launch on 9th January 2023. As previously, the service provides emotional support and advocacy for victims and survivors via a national helpline, email and live chat
- 18.2. The service presently has around 81 open cases (data from July 2023), as compared with 71 during the previous quarter. The webchat service, launched in April 2023, remains the most frequent mode of contact for eligible clients.
- 18.3. 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. The new Director/Trustee (Bishop Julie Conalty) confirmed in post as of June 2023, attended her first Board meeting in July 2023.
- 18.4. At the request of SSEW, a proposal was submitted by Rocket Science, an independent research and evaluation company, who were engaged to assess the pilot of Safe Spaces, for the independent evaluation of the 3 year contract period with First Light. The proposal was assessed and approved by SSEW Directors and members of the Safe Spaces Advisory Committee (which includes victims and survivors) in July, and Rocket Science have now been commissioned to provide this evaluation.

19. IICSA Recommendations 1 and 8 / Regional Model Project

- 19.1. The first report from an extensive round of interviews and focus groups with Pathfinder participants was submitted and accepted by the NSSG in May. This is a detailed report addressing: perceptions about important contextual factors influencing the Pilot; the forthcoming role change for Diocesan Safeguarding Advisors to Officers; experiences of the receipt and delivery of supervision; the organisation of Pathfinder groupings; and emerging findings about benefits and disbenefits of participation. This complements two earlier interim reports presenting key survey findings. Taken together, the reports provide important data from the early evaluation of the Pathfinder Pilot. The reports have been circulated to

Pathfinders and are now available from the project's SharePoint site. A further round of surveys, interviews and focus groups with pathfinder dioceses and cathedrals took place between July and September 2023. A second evaluative report is due to be presented to NSSG in November 2023, along with proposals arising from it concerning the national implementation of IICSA Recommendation 1 (the role of Diocesan Safeguarding Officer). It is planned that these proposals will be shared with the House of Bishops in March and May 2024.

- 19.2. The National Safeguarding Standards were approved by the NSSG in July 2023. The Safeguarding Standards are now available via the Church of England website, as well as through SharePoint. Members of the NST have collaborated with the NCIs' Legal Office to produce revised regulations relating to Diocesan Safeguarding Officers and Safeguarding (Clergy Risk Assessment). These will be presented to the House of Bishops and General Synod between March 2024 and July 2024.
- 19.3. In August 2023 we announced that INEQE Safeguarding Group will be undertaking the programme of Independent Safeguarding Audits, running from 2023 to 2028 (with audit visits taking place between 2024 and 2027). This is in response to recommendation 8 from the report by the Independent Enquiry into Child Sexual Abuse on the Anglican Church. During this period, dioceses and cathedrals will be audited jointly by independent external experts, and a series of reports produced to support dioceses and cathedrals to strengthen their safeguarding practice. Over the last few months INEQE have participated in a comprehensive induction programme, which included visits to dioceses and cathedrals, to familiarise them with the Church's culture, structures and mission.