

GENERAL SYNOD

National Safeguarding Team Update

Introduction

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

Overview of paper

1.1. This paper includes updates the following workstreams:

- NST Directors Update
- Learning Lesson Reviews (LLR)
- 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

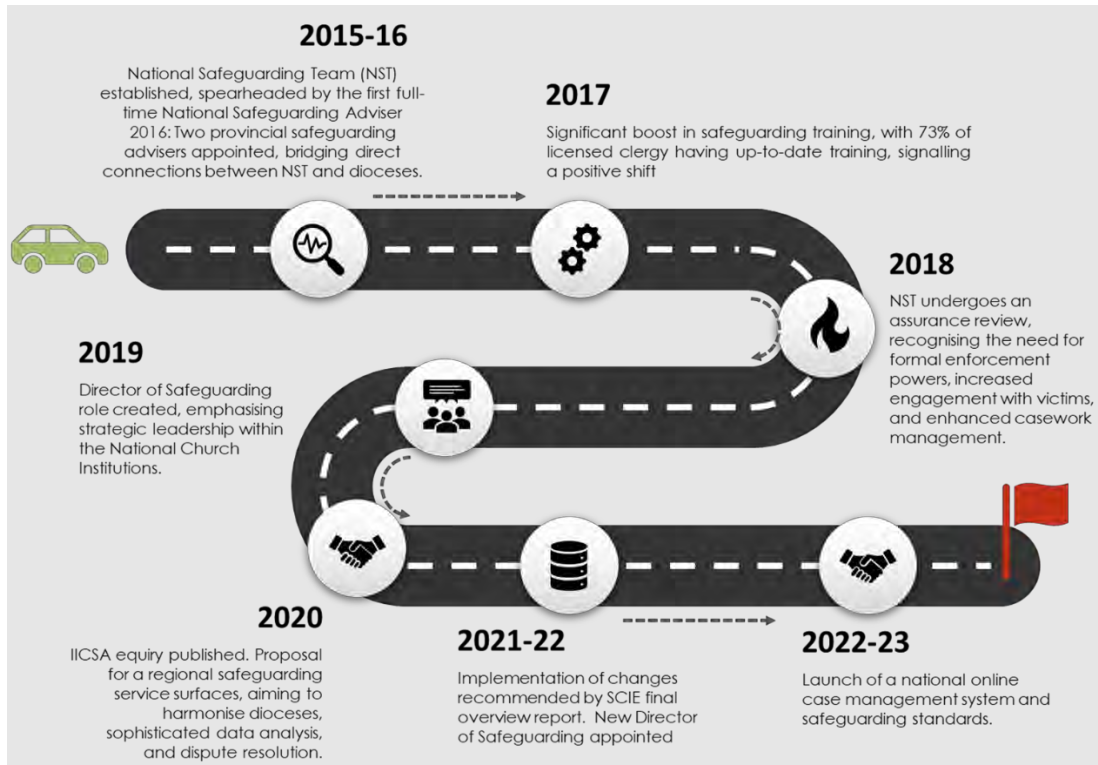
Alexander Kubeyinje
National Director of Safeguarding

January 2024

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NST Directors Update

I thought it might be helpful to give a brief overview with some reflection on the travel of the National Safeguarding Team. There has been many highs and lows however we must remind ourselves of our starting point even though we acknowledge there is much more to do.



Some of the areas of strengths and successes have been as follows:

- Better engagement with Victims and Survivors
- A focus on hearing the voices of victims and survivors.
- A passionate and growing workforce with diverse skills
- Recognised National Training Programme
- Focus on casework training and policy development.
- Emerging innovation and transformation pathfinder and new casework management system

Some areas for development

- Silo work/need for improved communication.
- Less Bureaucracy and greater clarity on governance and decision making.
- Greater consistency in safeguarding
- Lack of performance metrics
- Trying to avoid Negative publicity.
- Address the culture fearfulness from staff.
- Building a culture of trust

Focus for 2024

- Achieving excellence, raising standards
- Innovation and transformation

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- Helping and protecting
- Increasing accountability
- Making the most of our insights and intelligence
- Making people feel Safe and secure.
- Unlocking potential —Effective systems and resources
- More collaboration with to include all stakeholders and partners.

As forementioned in the beginning of the report a lot of work has been undertaken however there is still much more to be done. Please not this is just some of the work undertaken there is much more that has been done.

Some of the key areas of work to for 2024

Alexis Jay review is anticipated to be concluded later this month. We are still awaiting the Makin review. Redress and CCM will have a lot of work and attention this year.

Learning Lesson Reviews

The NST currently have one ongoing LLR which is the John Smyth review led by Keith Makin. Keith Makin made the following statement in January 2024.

“I would like to take this opportunity to thank victims for their courage, time, and detailed input to the review and more recently in meetings with me. I recognise the impact that the duration of the review has had on victims, their families and others involved in this case.

Concerns have been expressed that I may have been put under pressure to delay publication of this report, I can confirm this is not the case. Several factors have contributed to the time taken reaching this current stage, including varying the terms of my contract. This will enable me to carry out representations, where those criticised in the review will be given advance notice of this and provided with an opportunity to respond.

I can confirm that my report is now being prepared for this process and I anticipate this will commence in March 2024.”

The NST continue to offer additional resources and financial support to ensure the report is received by the end of April with a view to publication as soon as possible after that date.

We are mindful of the significant length of time the review has taken and the continued impact that this is having on victims and survivors who have contributed to the review, advocacy and therapeutic support continue to be offered to victims and survivors that have contributed to the review.

In the January meeting of the National Safeguarding Steering Group, there was a review of the progress of the implementation of the recommendations of past reviews and report and noted the progress that has been made.

Interim Support Scheme

The Interim Support Scheme has now been in place for three years and has helped over one hundred victims and survivors with urgent and immediate needs.

The updated terms of reference for the Scheme were launched in October 2023 alongside new documents for applicants and advocates as part of the continuous development of the scheme.

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Safeguarding Learning

Framework Revision

The Safeguarding Learning and Development Framework is currently under revision. As part of this revision, we are listening to feedback in terms of resource, capacity and impact across dioceses and cathedrals. This is not anticipated to cause a delay of the revised document being considered by National Safeguarding Steering Group in March 2024.

Leadership Safeguarding Pathway

The new Leadership pathway has been out for now six months and is being used across dioceses and cathedrals. Feedback on its use is ongoing and we are taking on board this feedback as part of the overarching Learning and Development Framework revisions. There have been some very constructive comments to the materials, and this has developed a range of responses including specific masterclasses on models such as Social Graces or greater explanatory resources.

Senior Leadership Safeguarding Pathway

The first delivery of the senior leadership safeguarding pathway (SLSP) will commence in February 2024 and run into Spring 2025 in its first phase. This new iteration brings local senior leadership team members together for two, one-day in-person sessions at a local venue. The collaborative delivery model being used will see each of the two sessions in the model being co-facilitated between the National Safeguarding Team and a local representative. The bespoke engagement and learning which this approach offers can be exponential. There is only a small handful of locations yet to be finalised. The delivery of this iteration will also be tracked through the e-learning portal enabling a record of and easy access to these details by participating diocese and cathedrals.

Risk assessment

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 meet practice needs.

National Safeguarding Standards – Standard 5 Learning, Supervision and Support

Standard 5 Learning, Supervision and Support, outlines how the NST will observe, and quality assure Leadership training across Dioceses and Cathedrals. Quality assurance visits commenced in 2023 with a pilot quality assurance document. The pilot phase will run until June 2024 initially but will then become an embedded part of annual Quality Assurance Framework undertaken by the Learning and Development Managers and Safeguarding Leads.

Safeguarding pastoral principles now Pastoral principles for safeguarding

The title of this work has been changed to Pastoral Principles for Safeguarding (PPSG) to better reflect its focus. Commissioned by the Theology and Safeguarding Group they will review the materials at their in-person event on 26 January 2024. This is part of its testing phase with those already familiar with this work. Following this an edited version will go to several neutral testers across safeguarding and church officers.

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

In conjunction with the National Ministry Team, HR, as well as Strategy and vision, we are working with Salisbury Diocese to develop a volunteer management resource. Care is being taken to ensure that it properly incorporates safer recruitment, safeguarding, and the support of young people as volunteer leaders, which is an important aspect of this initiative. The aim is to incorporate the learning from this phase into the pilot volunteer recruitment initiative planned for early 2024.

Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) Support and Learning - National Working group

The review of the PSO role has generated some helpful refinements to the PSO role description. The National group is now working on a welcome pack to incorporate the range of helpful strategies identified to enable better recruitment and support of PSOs. A task and finish group of the National working group is developing a video for Parochial Church Councils and PSOs on the benefits and ease of the Safeguarding Dashboard. This follows careful exploration with its developer and participating Diocese as to how this resource can and does make the PSO role both more easily manageable and effective. The video is planned to be completed by March 2024.

Domestic Abuse

The online training offer in relation to Domestic Abuse is to be updated as part of the wider updates to the Learning and Development Framework as a whole and will be completed by the end of the year. The online offer will mirror the in-person delivery. Resources are being developed alongside the training to support parishes, which will include seven short videos aimed at supporting conversations around different aspects of Domestic Abuse. In support of the annual 16 Days of Activism against domestic abuse in November 2023, the NST partnered with Mother's Union in their Rise Up Campaign to promote a greater understanding of domestic abuse within a church setting. The NST have also partnered with Restored to share resources with parishes, links to resources are available via the Church of England safeguarding website.

House of Bishops Guidance/Safeguarding Codes of Practice

Managing safeguarding concerns and allegations

The formal consultation for the draft Safeguarding Code of Practice on Managing Safeguarding Concerns and Allegations, as well as the revised Safeguarding (Clergy Risk Assessment) Regulations, closed on 15th December. The NST is currently in the process of reviewing the feedback received during the consultation period.

The new Code of Practice will replace the current House of Bishops' guidance "Responding to, assessing, and managing safeguarding concerns and allegations against Church Officers," whilst the revised Regulations will replace the Safeguarding (Clergy Risk Assessment) Regulations 2016

The intention is for the National Safeguarding Steering Group (NSSG) to consider approval in March 2024, ahead of being presented to the General Synod in July 2024. The revised Regulations will be presented for consideration for approval to the House of Bishops in May 2024, ahead of General Synod in July. If approved, this will be followed by an implementation period of six-nine months.

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Responding Well to Victims and Survivors of Abuse

The “Responding Well to Victims and Survivors of Abuse” Implementation Group concluded its meetings in December 2023. The National Safeguarding Team will continue to monitor the implementation of the guidance and support dioceses and other Church Bodies to further develop this area of practice and meet requirements.

During 2023, the Implementation Group oversaw and coordinated:

- the delivery and analysis of a baseline survey, to understand where each diocese was with the implementation of the guidance;
- the production of materials that help summarise the guidance and make it more accessible to victims and survivors of abuse;
- actions to ensure that materials and resources on the safeguarding of children and young people become more accessible to Church Bodies;
- the production of guidance for diocese of how to develop their local survivor support and engagement strategies;
- the need to ensure that the National Safeguarding standards included standards around survivor support and engagement;
- the production of guidance regarding the difference between regulated and unregulated therapy providers, to ensure that only appropriately registered and qualified providers are used across the Church.

A series of videos summarising the “Responding Well to Victims and Survivors of Abuse” guidance has been produced and published on the Church of England website, in the Safeguarding E-Manual. The aims of the videos are to ensure that the content of the guidance is made more accessible to victims and survivors and that messages around healthy cultures and survivor-centred responses to disclosures of abuse are disseminated and embedded more meaningfully across the Church. We strongly encourage all members of the General Synod to watch these videos and share them within their local Church community.

In January 2024, the NST were scrutinised by the National Safeguarding Panel in relation to the implementation of the Guidance. The discussion enabled the NST to demonstrate progress across several areas of work, as well as support the on-going development of work by the NST in relation to monitoring impact and outcomes of work.

Partnerships updates

National Safeguarding Casework Management System (NSCMS)

Around half of dioceses and cathedrals are now managing their safeguarding casework on the new case work management system (MyConcern). The feedback from participants has been positive. Participants note how the national system helps streamline case management and made a positive impact on their working practices.

The Archbishops’ Council has initially agreed to fund participant costs up to end of 2023. Charging for MyConcern will start for all participants from January 2024. Participants coming online thereafter will be charged on a pro-rata basis.

The National Safeguarding Steering Group have reviewed their decision about the scope of the migrated data and agreed that all live cases need to be migrated (electronic and paper) along with a reference list for all closed cases. This decision has been received incredibly well. Stakeholders are relieved at the reduction in workload for data preparation, as well as being extremely thankful to the project team and board for listening and working with them.

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We anticipate completing all the onboarding process in the Diocese and Cathedrals and close the project by the end of 2024.

Survivor Engagement

Survivor engagement continues to be central in the work of the NST involving different workstreams, including the implementation of IICSA recommendations.

These work areas currently include:

- The implementation of Responding Well to Survivors Guidance
- The National Redress Scheme Working Group (including subgroups and representation in the Project Board)
- Interim Support Scheme
- Safe Spaces Advisory Committee
- Seal of the Confessional working group and reference group
- Safeguarding learning and development courses
- Safeguarding audit programme monitoring group
- Staff recruitment panels

An annual report about the activities and tasks victims and survivors were involved in 2023 can be accessed on the Church of England's webpage: [Survivor engagement | The Church of England](#)

In addition to ongoing engagement, and thanks to our partnership with a range of survivors' groups, a major consultation is currently taking place seeking the views and active involvement of survivors in the revision of the Code of Practice on Managing Safeguarding Concerns and Allegations.

The National Director for Safeguarding has committed to meeting with survivors and representatives of survivor groups twice a year. Two forums took 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 and survivors' groups and relevant organisations.

As previously advised, the National Safeguarding Team is committed to developing a national framework that will clearly outline how victims and survivors are heard and participate in the development of safeguarding work in the Church of England. Following the publication of the survivor engagement survey report and the views of 171 victims and survivors, the NST activated a plan to implement the results of the survey to ensure survivor engagement is inclusive, trauma-informed impactful and conducted in a consistent way.

By September 2024, three task and finish groups will be formed to complete specific parts of the framework. The Safety Group will co-produce with survivors a charter of principles about enabling victims and survivors to safely engage with safeguarding throughout the Church, prevent re-traumatisation and protect the working relationships of all those involved. The Inclusivity Group will address the issues of disability, equality and accessibility and the creation of a selection process for volunteer survivors, while the Impact Group will work on producing solutions on how to evidence the impact of survivor engagement on the safeguarding work of the Church.

Safe Spaces

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,

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the service provides emotional support and advocacy for victims and survivors via a national helpline, email, and live chat.

The service presently has around 85 open cases (data from November 2023), and a 100% response rate of contacts being responded to within 24 hours (or 48 hours where the service has been closed for a day). The rate of referrals where the client identified with the CofE denomination remains steady, making up 47% of open referrals. First Light continue to carry out engagement work with these Diocesan Safeguarding Teams, as well as other statutory bodies such as police forces across the country.

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 Directors, with the support of the Safe Spaces Advisory Committee are actively seeking to appoint a 5th and 6th trustee, both of whom will be independent, and one of whom will act as the Chair of the Board. The Directors have engaged the specialist charity recruiters Charisma to support the board in their search.

IICSA Recommendations 1 and 8 / Regional Model Project

Follow an extensive round of interviews, focus groups and surveys with senior clergy and employees in pathfinder DBFs and cathedrals, a twelve-month evaluative report was submitted to NSSG in November 2023. This provides feedback on the progress of the Pathfinder Pilot Project so far and gives a firm basis for the development of proposals for the national rollout of IICSA Recommendation 1. NSSG approved proposals for a national consultation in the first quarter of 2024, after which a plan will be submitted to the House of Bishops in time for national rollout, beginning before the end of 2024.

National Safeguarding Standards were formally launched by the Church in October 2023, following a national consultation earlier in the year. The Standards form the basis of the Independent Safeguarding Audit Programme, being conducted by INEQE Safeguarding Group on behalf of the Archbishops' Council. INEQE have worked closely with the NST, DBFs and cathedrals to learn about the Church of England's context and develop their approach to delivering independent safeguarding audits. The first audit visit will take place in January 2024 in the Diocese of Salisbury, covering both the DBF and the cathedral.

The draft Safeguarding (Clergy Risk Assessment) Regulations 2024 were submitted for national consultation alongside the Managing Allegations Code in late-2023. Draft Diocesan Safeguarding Officer Regulations have been produced and will be circulated as part of the IICSA Recommendation 1 consultation in the first quarter of 2024. It is anticipated that regulations will be approved by the House of Bishops and/or General Synod in summer 2024.