

GENERAL SYNOD

MAKIN REVIEW

Executive Summary

Ahead of the General Synod's debate on the Makin review on 10 February, this paper:

- Reminds the General Synod of the Makin review
- Explains the work that has been done to review the cases of those mentioned in the review
- Explains the process for responding to the review; and
- Reminds the General Synod of the work that has been undertaken since 2015 to improve safeguarding in the Church of England, and the work that is still under way.

Victims and Survivors

1. In the light of the Makin review, it is vital that we recognize together the trauma of all victims and survivors living with a legacy of abuse. Such recognition is needed in the context of both the widespread past failure within the Church to respond well to disclosures of abuse, and, in some instances, of the deliberate cover-up of that abuse. We know that some victims and survivors have been re-traumatized in recent months as further cases of abuse have been brought to light, particularly with the publication of the Scolding and Makin reviews.
2. The work of the Redress Scheme, currently under development, is needed to create proper structures and processes for apology to be made and for appropriate forms of redress to be offered. (The latest update on the Redress Scheme can be found [here](#).) Work to improve the policies, processes, and structures necessary for a safer Church now is ongoing, and aspects of that work are set out here and elsewhere. However, we know that such work can never take away the pain of victims and survivors or offer adequate recompense or assurance of change to them. In setting out here what has changed or is currently changing, we do not seek to minimise the horror of what has happened, only to signal the strength of our commitment as a Church both to humbly repent and to do better.
3. The new survivor engagement framework, developed following extensive engagement with survivors, will be launched on 6 February.

Makin review

4. The [Independent review into Church's handling of Smyth case](#) by Keith Makin was published on 7 November. The Church's response, led by the Bishop of Stepney and the Director of the National Safeguarding Team included:

"We are deeply sorry for the horrific abuse inflicted by the late John Smyth and its lifelong effects, already spanning more than 40 years.

The review concludes that Smyth is arguably the most prolific serial abuser to be associated with the Church of England. We know that no words can undo the damage done to people's lives both by him and by the failure of individuals in the Church and

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other institutions to respond well. We are also aware that the time the review has taken, which the reviewer addresses, as well as the details now in the public domain have been retraumatising for survivors

We highlight the comment in the review from a deceased cleric (David Fletcher) who was aware in the 1980s, along with others, of the extent of the abuse: 'I thought it would do the work of God immense damage if this were public'

We are appalled that any clergy person could believe that covering up abuse was justified in the name of the Gospel, which is about proclaiming Good News to the poor and healing the broken hearted. It was wrong for a seemingly privileged group from an elite background to decide that the needs of victims should be set aside, and that Smyth's abuse should not therefore be brought to light.

Every member of the Church is responsible for a culture in which victims are heard, responded to well, and put first: there is never a place for covering up abuse"

5. Since publication, the Bishop of Stepney and Director of the National Safeguarding Team have met with victims and survivors of Smyth at a facilitated webinar and have corresponded with some individually.
6. It has also been clear that the report, and the media reporting of the report, has been triggering for many survivors. Safe Spaces England and Wales has reported increased demand for their services, and Diocesan Safeguarding Teams likewise report the stress on victims and survivors. Safe Spaces, supported by the National Safeguarding Team, has put in place additional services to ensure this demand is met, and the NST and Safe Spaces are monitoring support regularly.
7. The Makin review started in 2019 and was published in November 2024. The total cost of the report which includes the lead reviewer, assistant reviewer, review analyst and the lead reviewers' legal costs (subject to any final invoices which may be received), amounts to £1,052,000.

Case review

8. The NST, along with the relevant dioceses, is examining if there is any immediate safeguarding risk following the criticisms made of individuals in the report. They are also considering any new evidence in the report to assess if there is any ongoing safeguarding risk and if there is evidence to support any disciplinary process with regard to those individuals, where they are still under the authority or oversight of the Church of England. The NST has previously considered some evidence that was available from other sources and is now reviewing all decisions that were previously made, alongside examining whether there is any new evidence in the Makin Review which also needs to be considered.
9. The NST is following a four-stage process as set out publicly in the link here [Steps currently being undertaken in response to the Makin review | The Church of England](#). Stage one is an initial assessment of risk, examining if anyone criticised in the review is an immediate safeguarding risk of harm to others. This work is being undertaken by DSOs, CSOs and the NST. It is important to note that if someone is considered not to

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be an immediate risk that this does not exclude them from consideration under stages two, three or four of the process.

10. Running alongside the work of the NST and dioceses at stages one and two, is a secondary process, which includes a Review Panel, chaired by an Episcopal Lead. The panel, which includes both church and independent representatives, takes a view in relation to what actions may be needed in relation to anyone criticised within the report who holds authority to exercise ministry. This secondary process will include disciplinary or other consequences relating to, e.g., any failures of leadership, moral accountability, or reputational risk. Following the review meetings, the Chair of the panel will write to the individual to advise them of the outcome of the process, but also to inform them that a final decision will not be shared until stage four of the process is completed.
11. Stage four is a robust external scrutiny stage of those decisions by an independent barrister. If a decision is taken to make a Complaint against a clergy office holder under the Clergy Discipline Measure (CDM), it is at this point that the criticised person will have the opportunity to have input into the process.
12. It is important to note that the NST's initial responsibility is to examine safeguarding risk. Their work may then lead to other processes including capability or disciplinary, which hold people to account for failures of safeguarding, conduct, or other aspects of leadership responsibility, or for actions which have caused reputational harm. It is for each diocese to come to a decision using disciplinary, capability, or other appropriate processes.
13. This work is underway, with a large number of safeguarding assessments already having taken place. The NST aims to complete the process by General Synod in February but there is a possibility that this stage of the process may not be concluded by that time of February General Synod. Victims and survivors have been informed of this and it is highlighted in the most recent Makin Methodology update

Responding to the Makin review

14. Following publication of the Makin Review, staff have begun to consider its recommendations and the Church's next steps. A detailed briefing, which will include proposals for achieving the recommendations, timeframes, and oversight will be presented to the National Safeguarding Steering Group on 23 January 2025. At the same time, the NSSG will formally receive the Makin Review, discuss the recommendations, and give direction in relation to the proposals presented. Oral updates will be provided to the General Synod after this meeting.
15. As part of this work, the National Safeguarding Team will develop a process for victims and survivors to participate in the consideration of the Makin recommendations. There is a balance to be found between speed in terms of responding to the report and survivor participation in terms of appropriately involving victims and survivors. The NSSG will consider all options and ensure victims and survivors, particularly those affected by Smyth, are aware of these opportunities.

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16. Safeguarding in the Church of England has changed so much since the time at which John Smyth was able to perpetrate the horrific abuse detailed in the Makin review. I thought it would be useful for the General Synod to have a – not comprehensive – list of operational and legislative changes that have happened over the last decade, which are helping make the Church a safer place. These are set out in the attached. These include those changes that have been introduced in response to the recommendations of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse. The attached also includes those changes that are currently being considered by the General Synod. I also draw the attention of the General Synod to GS Misc 1402 on the response to the Scolding Review.
17. These changes have been supported by the Archbishops' Council and the House of Bishops and implemented by the National Safeguarding Team, diocesan safeguarding teams and our essential network of Parish Safeguarding Officers. I pay tribute to the work they do.
18. As the Charity Commission's website says, "protecting people and safeguarding responsibilities should be a governance priority for all charities".
19. A safer Church is our collective responsibility, and I look forward to discussing with you how we can continue to create a culture that achieves this.

Joanne Grenfell, Bishop of Stepney and Lead Bishop for Safeguarding

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GENERAL SYNOD**ANNEX: SAFEGUARDING REFORMS SINCE 2015:
REFORMS COMPLETED, REFORMS IN THE PIPELINE AND REFORMS TO FOLLOW****Summary**

The Church of England is in a better position than it was a few years ago, although it started from a relatively low base compared to some other institutions. Safeguarding is now generally understood to be a matter of collective accountability, with everyone taking appropriate responsibility. But there is further to go to ensure that everyone plays their part to the best of their ability.

In 2015, the Archbishops' Council established the National Safeguarding Team (NST). The Archbishops' Council plays a coordination role by resourcing and facilitating improved safeguarding policies and practice. Recognising the need for further improvement, the Council appointed a National Director of Safeguarding in early 2019 and, following the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), restructured the NST to drive this change. The Church has fully accepted the IICSA recommendations.

The NST, as part of the Archbishops' Council, is responsible for developing and delivering national policy, training, and casework. It supports dioceses and cathedrals and provides national resources to assist parishes. NST develops and delivers services/ policies with involvement from victims, survivors and safeguarding teams, across the church. The primary objective of all safeguarding efforts is to make the Church of England a safer place, ensuring that safeguarding matters are handled efficiently and transparently, with a focus on prevention, protection of children and adults, the wellbeing of victims and survivors and a level of independence that ensures professional delivery.

Safeguarding in the Church of England has improved over the years due to the hard work and dedication of many safeguarding professionals, volunteers, and importantly, input and challenge from victims and survivors. Although the NST is relatively new, there is evidence of positive improvements in policy, practice, and guidance across the national Church. While much has been achieved, this paper will focus on key changes and ongoing work. It is acknowledged that there is still much more to be done. This paper aims to highlight some of the changes made in recent years to help the Church become a safer place.

1 Programmes of work that have been completed in the last few years:**a. The Safeguarding (Code of Practice) Measure 2021**

- The Safeguarding (Code of Practice) Measure 2021 came into force in March 2022. It provides for codes of practice that impose mandatory requirements on clergy, church office holders and other church bodies. This replaces the previous duty to have 'due regard' to safeguarding policies and guidance issued by the House of Bishops. Two codes have been issued: Safeguarding Practice Reviews, which provide a process for reflective learning by a Church body in order to improve the quality and impact of that Church's body's safeguarding activity; and

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the Learning and Development Framework which outlines mandatory training requirements. Four further Codes have been submitted for approval by the General Synod at this group of sessions (see section 3 below).

b. Safe Spaces

- The Archbishops' Council has established and funded Safe Spaces England and Wales service, jointly with the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales, to provide emotional support to victims and survivors of church-based abuse.

c. The Interim Support Scheme

- The Interim Support Scheme is a grant awarding scheme for victims and survivors of Church abuse who find themselves in urgent need of support. The Scheme is intended to give short-term help and support to survivors whose life circumstances are significantly affected because of the abuse that they have let suffered. The Scheme is designed to help in times of crisis and assist with immediate and urgent needs.

d. Safeguarding decision making (IICSA recommendation 1)

- The law has been changed to increase the responsibility of Diocesan Safeguarding Officers (DSO) to ensure that safeguarding decisions are made by those with a professional background in safeguarding, independent of a bishop.

e. A model for professional supervision

- A model for professional supervision to all Diocesan/Cathedral Safeguarding Officers through Regional Safeguarding Leads has been developed and funded. This was also a recommendation of IICSA. This approach supports consistency of practice and enables dioceses and cathedrals to identify good practice which could be adopted locally, improving services.

f. National Safeguarding Standards, Quality Assurance and Audit (IICSA Recommendation 8)

- The NST defined and built a collective understanding of what good safeguarding practice looks like in order to support parishes, dioceses and cathedrals to work towards a consistency of safeguarding practice and culture. The NST also designed a method to measure cathedral and diocesan progress through a Quality Assurance Framework and Independent Safeguarding Audits. INEQE Safeguarding Group were procured to deliver the Independent Safeguarding Audit Programme. This provides an external and expert perspective on the quality and consistency of safeguarding activity across the Church, as well as external accountability. The audits started in October 2023. The audit reports are published online as externally gathered evidence of safeguarding performance of these Church bodies and are available at [Church of England - Ineqe Safeguarding Group](#). The NST will be independently audited in July 2025. This formal audit programme

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follows on from a previous series of audits of dioceses and cathedrals carried out in 2016 to 2020 by the Social Care Institute for Excellence.

g. National Safeguarding Casework Management System

- National rollout completed in December 2024 with 97% of dioceses and cathedrals having adopted the system. The remaining 3% are scheduled to be trained and brought on board before April 2025. The system provides the ability to track perpetrator movement, improves casework management to reduce the risk of recurring abuse, and improves transparency and information sharing.

h. Past Cases Review 2 (PCR2)

- The aim of PCR2 was to examine records across the provinces, dioceses, and other church institutions, including the National Safeguarding Team, to establish if material contained allegations of abuse where the perpetrator was a member of the clergy or church officer. The purpose was also to identify both good practice and institutional failings into how allegations of abuse had been handled, provide recommendations leading to improvements in response to concerns and safeguarding practices, and help create a safer church environment for everyone.
- The final report was published in October 2022 and made twenty-six recommendations [past-cases-review-2-national-report.pdf](#). The recommendations were accepted, and progress is monitored via local Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panels, Chapters and the National Safeguarding Steering Group.

i. Information Sharing Framework (IICSA Recommendations 5&6)

- An Information Sharing Protocol, that is in line with current UK legislation and provides guidance to ensure the secure transfer and the justifiable legal purposes for information sharing has been developed. This is agreed and signed up to by all 42 dioceses in the Church of England, between the Church of England and the Church in Wales, and between the Church of England and the Church in Wales and all 46 police forces from February 2023.

2. Ongoing work:

a. Casework

- The NST casework team is responsible for safeguarding investigations against bishops and deans as well as cases that are complex or high profile. The team provides supervision, advice and guidance on casework to dioceses and cathedrals. The team leads on National Safeguarding Practice Reviews and collate and disseminate learning from national and local reviews to inform and improve practice.

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- The casework team was part of the Past Cases Review 2, where past cases were reviewed by an independent reviewer. The case work team will be independently audited later this year.

b. Safer Recruitment and People Management

- Safer Recruitment Practice Guidance was published in 2015, which provided guidance and resources for the safer recruitment of church officers working with children, young people, and vulnerable adults. Refreshed guidance was published in 2021 which provided clearer direction in relation to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and recruitment processes and provided a wider catalogue of resources for parishes. A parish survey in 2024, whilst receiving a low response from parishes, suggested that despite the increased resources made available, parishes were struggling to apply practice guidance consistently. Further work is being undertaken to understand the barriers and to enable greater take up of safer recruitment practices; this has included in depth discussions and visits with dioceses and parishes. The revised document will be presented to General Synod in February 2026.

c. Learning and Development Framework

- The NST introduced a comprehensive package of learning and development for localised delivery in 2016. This focused on providing church officers with the skills to recognise and respond to safeguarding concerns. Additional training was offered to those in leadership and directed towards creating a healthy safeguarding culture in parishes. This approach was formalised in 2021 with the introduction of a Learning and Development Framework which made attendance at core training modules, and specialist modules for domestic abuse and safer recruitment, mandatory for clergy, and for church officers engaged in work with children, young people and vulnerable adults. The revised Learning and Development Framework became Code of Practice in January 2025, meaning that relevant persons had a duty to comply with the framework and could be liable for disciplinary action if they did not. Feedback heard during the General Synod debate in July 2024 evidenced widespread recognition of the importance of safeguarding training, as well as the positive impact for those who have attended.

d. Parish Safeguarding Dashboard

- The NST has entered into a partnership with the creators of the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard to incorporate the National Safeguarding Standards (NSS) within the questions parishes answer to evidence compliance with practice guidance and codes of practice. Whilst the NSS are not mandatory, and parishes are not therefore required to complete the questions, parishes are encouraged to see the Dashboard as an effective tool to use in order to understand their safeguarding culture. They may also use it to identify areas of good practice they

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may wish to promote, or areas they could focus on for improvement. The NST has access to all national data submitted by parishes against the Dashboard and is therefore able to utilise this to identify areas for additional resourcing and support as well as areas of strength.

e. Survivor Engagement and Participation.

- The Church of England is committed to learning from the past and ensuring victims and survivors of abuse have an active role and voice to ensure the Church of England is a safer place for all. The survivor and engagement participation continues to grow at a national level .
- A Survivor Engagement team and webpage were established in 2021. A National Survivor Participation Framework has been co-developed with survivors and finalised in 2024, and it will be launched on 6 February 2025. The focus of this workstream is to ensure victims' and survivors' voices are heard and their participation is helping develop better safeguarding processes and services.

3 This work is not complete. Further steps underway include:

a. In February 2025, the General Synod will be asked to approve:

- Regulations on independent risk assessments. These include a requirement for a bishop to take advice from the DSO before ordering a risk assessment. They transfer functions previously exercised by the bishop to the DSO.
- Codes of practice imposing mandatory reporting requirements for safeguarding disclosures and an updated process for managing safeguarding concerns and allegations, which take into account recommendations from recent reports, including the Makin report.
- The Clergy Conduct Measure, which contains a number of provisions to strengthen and better align the Church of England's disciplinary and safeguarding provisions.
- Managing Allegations Code of Practice. This document will replace existing practice guidance and deliver specific pathways for clergy, employees, elected members, volunteers and parishioners who have a criminal conviction and who wish to attend public worship. It also provides a new pathway for where failure to act is seen as a learning and development need. For clarity, where it is evidenced that the person should have known, or the failure to act could have or did result in serious harm, the individual would follow the pathway relevant to their role. The Code of Practice also introduces a clear pathway and role for when Human Resources/Employer should take the lead on managing behaviours.
- The response to the Wilkinson and Jay reports on the future of church safeguarding which will set out proposals for moving to independent scrutiny of

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safeguarding and ask the General Synod to agree a model for governance of safeguarding operations.

In addition, the forthcoming Redress Scheme will offer financial redress and other forms of redress for abuse perpetrated by someone representing the Church of England.

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