

## Amending Canon 42

Dear synod members,

Our meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> September will see and hear the *proclamation of the promulgation* of an amending canon of the Church of England, that's really one to be able to tell your grandchildren about...

Behind this arcane bit of church legalese there is something very important.

Back in 2014 the then Home Secretary Theresa May announced an independent inquiry into child sexual abuse. The inquiry was prompted at least in part by revelations and scandals relating to high profile individuals and organisations, think the BBC and Jimmy Saville. This inquiry eventually became IICSA and the scope of the inquiry included looking into, reporting and making recommendations regarding safeguarding in the Church of England. The main (now archived) website for IICSA is [here](#) and there is a comprehensive "Wikipedia" page on the inquiry [here](#).

The report into the Church of England was published in October 2020, you can find the full report [here](#). If you are an office holder - ordained, reader, church warden or other officer, then I do recommend reading this report, it isn't an easy read by any means and it is long, but it is a sobering assessment of how we have loved God and loved our neighbour, and how well we have protected and nurtured those whom Jesus places at the centre of our calling. If you want a paper copy then let Church House know and we can happily print one off for you.

The report comes to 45 conclusions regarding the Church of England and then makes 8 recommendations, the Church of England immediately accepted the conclusions and recommendations in full.

It is worth reproducing the first conclusion here:

### D.1: Conclusions in respect of the Church of England

1. The Church of England failed to protect some children and young people from sexual predators within their midst. In the past, the system of child protection was under-resourced. Safeguarding personnel were at times ignored and their advice overlooked, in favour of protecting the reputation of clergy and the Church. During the Inquiry's hearings, senior leaders in the Church apologised for its actions, recognising that failings identified by this investigation and other reviews were "*profoundly and deeply shocking*".

That's the first *conclusion*, the first *recommendation* is to change the role of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor in the diocese (that's Andy Earl for us, it used to be Sarah Acraman).

The change is that in some circumstances it will be for the safeguarding team to make a key safeguarding decision, not for a bishop, archdeacon or diocesan secretary. For instance, whether to report to the national safeguarding team or the

**DIOCESE of TRURO**  
**Diocesan Synod**

---

Charity Commission, to investigate or commission investigations or conduct risk assessments, and crucially responsibility around suspending clergy where there are safeguarding concerns. To reflect these changes the inquiry recommends changing the name of the diocesan safeguarding lead from “advisor” to “officer”.

It may look like a trivial change, but you can see that behind it is something very important. Safeguarding professionals will make key safeguarding decisions. In this diocese we have operated on this principle since at least January 2020.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor is a role that is described in the canons or laws of the Church of England, so changing the name means changing the canon law, that is one of the things that the General Synod did in July and which the Chair of our synod in September will proclaim.

The full text of the amending canon is below, there isn't a vote on the day at Synod but you may want to spare a prayer for those whom the Church has failed in the past, and for those who rely on our leadership today.

Simon Cade  
Diocesan Secretary

**GENERAL SYNOD OF THE CHURCH OF  
ENGLAND AMENDING CANON NO. 42  
(SAFEGUARDING)**

1. Canon C 30 (safeguarding) is amended as set out in paragraphs 2 and 3.
  - 2 (1) For paragraph 1(1) substitute—

“(1) The bishop of each diocese shall appoint a person (to be known as the “diocesan safeguarding officer”) to have responsibility in the diocese, independent of the bishop, for the professional leadership on and management of matters relating to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults.”
  - (2) In paragraph 1(2)—
    - (a) for “advisors”, in each place it appears, substitute “officers”, and
    - (b) for “advisor” substitute “officer”.
  - (3) In paragraph 1(2), after paragraph (b) insert “;  
(c) make provision for the professional supervision of diocesan safeguarding officers, and for the quality assurance of their work, by the body responsible for overseeing the implementation and operation of the code under section 5A of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016”.
3. In paragraph 3(1)(a), before “persons” insert “bodies or”.
4. The amendments in paragraph 2 come into force in relation to each diocese on the day specified in relation to that diocese in the certificate given by the Archbishops’ Council to the bishop of the diocese and the diocesan board of finance, except in so far as is necessary for enabling the making of regulations under paragraph 1 of Canon C 30 (as amended by paragraph 2 of this Amending Canon).