

1<sup>st</sup> February 2025

## 8. Safeguarding in our diocese

This briefing note is addressed to members of Truro Diocesan Synod.

Members will note item 8 on the agenda for 1<sup>st</sup> February has been substituted to allow an opportunity to reflect on recent events in safeguarding. Whilst there is much that we may want to say about matters that have been reported nationally, and members will have the opportunity to do so, we do encourage you to also consider the local impact on safeguarding, particularly as it affects victims, survivors, and those who may want to make a disclosure. This note covers what has been happening nationally and at diocesan level, we rely on you to hear about safeguarding at parish level.

On 18<sup>th</sup> December 2024 the Bishops Diocesan Council made a statement regarding safeguarding in the Church of England, this was distributed widely in the diocese. The text is at the bottom of this paper. The Archbishops' Council has responded to this inviting further engagement. The Bishops Diocesan Council is meeting again next week, and it would be good if their thinking could be informed by Diocesan Synod - what do you think?

Members may be aware that General Synod is meeting from 10<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> February (full papers are available [here](#)) there are several very important safeguarding matters on their agenda. The key papers for safeguarding include regulations for risk assessments, work on the Clergy Conduct Measure and the item that is most likely to get traction in the media, the future arrangements for diocesan and national safeguarding teams, called "GS 2378 Future of Church Safeguarding" linked [here](#). We are NOT expecting members of Diocesan Synod to have read these papers, the last of them is 66 pages long, but we provide the links for information. There is a useful (much shorter) summary of the options in GS2378 [here](#) .

The last months have seen the publication of several reports into safeguarding in the Church of England, most significantly the "[Makin Report](#)" into abuse carried out by John Smyth and the "[Wilkinson Report](#)" into the Independent Safeguarding Board set up and then closed down by the Archbishops' Council.

It can be seen that the leadership and direction of safeguarding nationally is facing certain challenges, this is the context into which the Bishops Diocesan Council was speaking. This is also the context of the resignation of the Archbishop of Canterbury and more recently the Bishop of Liverpool. More importantly, it is also the context in which parish leaders and officers are leading safeguarding locally.

**We intend to create space at our meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> February to allow members to reflect their views on safeguarding. This can inform the further work of the Bishops Diocesan Council and will be heard by the members of General Synod present among us.**

**We are particularly interested to hear the views of members on promoting and protecting strong cultures of safeguarding at parish level, including how, if at all, the "national" picture makes a difference to that. Either in synod, or alongside it, we want to know what you expect from our leaders now, what will help you locally and what might get in the way?**

Statement of the Diocese of Truro “Bishops Diocesan Council” 18<sup>th</sup> December 2024

*Over the last three weeks the safeguarding failures of the Church of England have been laid bare yet again.*

*We are hearing clearly from survivors and victims of abuse in this diocese and beyond that the national church response is causing intense pain. It has deeply and repeatedly hurt the people we are here to serve and has demoralised those who are trying to do the right thing in parishes, schools, chaplaincies and other places.*

*As the Bishop’s Council we join our voice to Bishop Helen-Ann Hartley’s prophetic call for us to be a different sort of church. A church that does not seek first to protect itself, but which champions those who are most vulnerable. A church where people with power are clearly and consistently held accountable.*

*Fundamental changes to the way the church works have been recommended and accepted again and again, but too often real change has been delayed or denied. The House of Bishops and Archbishops’ Council appear to have failed to implement the recommendations made in numerous reports and reviews, and we call for urgent change and action to show that national leadership is ready and able to lead the changes required.”*