

NATIONAL SAFEGUARDING PANEL

Terms of Reference (DRAFT)

Version Date: July 2024

1. Governance

The National Safeguarding Panel (NSP) is appointed by the Archbishops' Council (AC) and reports to the National Safeguarding Steering group (NSSG). This is done through the chair of the NSP who is a member of the NSSG.

2. Aim and Purpose

The National Safeguarding Panel operates as an independent advisory body, led by the Independent Chair. Its composition and Terms of Reference are determined by the Archbishops' Council. The panel's primary role is to provide advice to the Church of England, through the Archbishops' Council, on safeguarding policy and practice.

Whilst the NSP has no executive functions or separate legal personality, it operates as an extension of the Archbishops' Council and is funded by the Archbishops' Council. Importantly, the panel maintains its independence, offering rigorous scrutiny, challenging existing practices, and providing valuable advice. Its focus lies primarily in policy and practice areas and has no role regarding individual safeguarding cases.

The panel provides its functions by

- a. Offering high level strategic advice and guidance on policies and practice around safeguarding to the National Safeguarding Team (NST) to ensure that the Church of England meets accepted best practice.
- b. Considering and reflecting on the National Safeguarding Team's annual work plan and make recommendations for priorities. It will also consider papers on matters prepared by the NST.
- c. Undertaking in-depth consideration of key areas of concern and proposed safeguarding developments and ensure appropriate input to the National Safeguarding Steering Group.
- d. Developing a proactive and constructive support and challenge with the NST and those who are delivering and providing direct services.
- e. Providing independent support, scrutiny and challenge to the Church of England for its work on safeguarding including examining existing and proposed policies in depth and the regular analysis of the data compiled in the areas of
 - Prevention through promotion of safeguarding,
 - Responding to current concerns or disclosures,
 - Responding to non-current concerns or disclosures,
 - Support for Survivors
- f. Ensuring that victims and survivors are heard and suitably consulted in topics covered by the remit of the NSP.
- g. Offering a fair and balanced perspective on safeguarding matters, mindful of individual lived experiences.
- h. Examining the outputs of the INEQE audits which are being conducted in dioceses and cathedrals, building a picture of any themes that are emerging and to consider any recommendations in the light of these audits.

- i. The Chair will provide regular reports on its work and present an annual report to the National Safeguarding Steering Group.
- j. The panel is multiagency and multid denominational and will determine a work programme. The chair is responsible for this programme in consultation with panel members.

The Panel does not undertake case reviews nor provide an advocacy service.

The work of the panel is subject to the policies of the National Church Institutions.

3. Quoracy and Voting

The focus of the National Safeguarding Panel's work is safeguarding policy and practice, offering recommendations, advice and scrutiny. As no decisions are made by the panel which affect the operational elements of safeguarding within the Church of England, no quoracy is required.

4. Composition of the panel

No	Role
1	Independent Chair
1	Safeguarding representative of Methodist Church
1	Safeguarding representative of Catholic Church
2	Members with expertise in children's safeguarding
2	Members with expertise in adult safeguarding
1	Member with experience of working with offenders
3	A combination of representatives of survivor organisations and individual members of the Survivor Network with lived experience of abuse.
1	Member of clergy currently active as a Parish representative

5. In Attendance

The following Church representatives have right of attendance at the NSP meetings:

Role
Lead Bishop on Safeguarding
Deputy Lead Bishops on Safeguarding
Representatives of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York
National Director of Safeguarding

6. Panel Support

The Panel will be provided with an Associate and Administrative Support subject to separate appointment and employment processes from that of the Chair of the Panel.

7. National Safeguarding Team

The Panel are kept informed of NST operations and will ensure complementarity exists with current workstreams across the Church of England. The panel can ask for policy writers to attend to speak to papers and to answer questions.

8. Remuneration for NSP Members

The role of the Chair is a remunerated position. Panel Members are entitled to claim any reasonable expenses incurred in line with the National Church Institution policy.

9. Recording of meetings- retention/management of recordings

Meetings held online will be recorded to enable efficiency and accuracy of minutes. They will be promptly deleted once the minutes have been approved.

10. Declarations of interest/Conflict of interest

All members should declare any interests before scrutiny commences. There will be a register of interests held by (TBC) and members will be required to ensure the register is up to date.

11. Risk Register

The National Safeguarding Panel will maintain a risk register which will be reviewed regularly and as a minimum annually.

12. Complaints

The NSP has adopted the external NCI complaints policy as it relates to volunteers. All NSP complaints in the first instance should be referred to the Panel Associate.

13. Meeting Arrangements

The panel will meet up to 6 times a year. The panel will normally meet in person in London to allow access for panel members from all over the country. One business development meeting will be held per year on-line.

14. Members

Members should adhere to the seven Nolan principles of public life:

1. Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

2. Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

3. Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

4. Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

5. Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

6. Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

7. Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

15. Recruitment

Vacant positions will be advertised externally and recruited through an appropriate and transparent process. This process will always include survivor representation.

Membership Tenure will be reviewed when the new chair is in role¹

Extensions to Membership Tenure will be reviewed when the new chair is in role.

16. Appointment

The Chair or Vice Chair should be a survivor member with lived experience of abuse. The Chair should indicate at least 6 months' before the end of their 3 year term if they wish to continue for a further 2 years to ensure timely recruitment when required.

New member Support – Induction Process

All new members will be offered a full induction programme including meeting with key members of the Panel and the National Safeguarding Team and ensuring access to appropriate resources.

Date of next review – February 2025

The NSP recognise this is a time of transition as the Church of England considers its response to the Wilkinson and Jay review. During that time, the work of the NSP should continue, with its mandate as set out in the terms of reference. However, the NSP recognises that this mandate will almost certainly change at some point in the next couple of years.

¹ Both the membership tenure and extensions to membership tenure will be reviewed once the new chair of the NSP has been appointed. Updates to this section will appear in the next iteration of these Terms of Reference.