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Diocesan Synod Safeguarding Report

1.0 National Safeguarding Update

1.1 Threshold Changes to Disclosure and Barring (DBS) Checks impacting the Diocese and Parishes

The DBS eligibility criteria for people working in Regulated Activity with children in England, Wales and Northern Ireland changed on 1 September 2026 with the removal of the supervision exemption. This change follows recommendations made by the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA). From this date, workers and volunteers who teach, supervise, instruct or care for children will be considered to be undertaking regulated activity if they do so weekly; or four or more times within a 30-day period; or overnight, between 2.00am and 6.00am.

This applies **regardless of whether they are supervised** by another individual.

The National Safeguarding Team has recommended that dioceses, cathedrals and parishes review all child-facing roles to ensure that the appropriate DBS checks are carried out for new appointments, renewals and, where necessary, existing postholders. The Diocese has decided that all existing child-facing roles that now meet the revised eligibility criteria should complete a new DBS check that includes a **Children's Barred List** check.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Team have instructed parishes to review the roles of individuals who work with children and young people, including those whose activities are normally supervised, to determine whether they are now undertaking regulated activity. Where a role meets the criteria for regulated activity, the individual will need to obtain a new Enhanced DBS check with a Children's Barred List check, even if they already hold an Enhanced DBS certificate without the barred list.

Synod should note the financial implications arising from this change. The cost of new DBS checks for volunteers is £7.08 and the change will create the need for additional DBS checks to be carried out for those who now come under the new guidance. It is not known how many roles the change impacts at the time of writing. However, the DBS have recently reduced the cost of paid DBS checks by £8.50 so this will cancel out some of the additional cost associated with the new guidance.

1.2 Survivor Redress Scheme

Redress Church of England is the name of the Redress Scheme for victims and survivors of Church of England abuse. The purpose of the Scheme is to acknowledge harm the abuse has caused and the impact on people's lives. The Scheme aims to offer meaningful recognition to victims and survivors. It also demonstrates the Church of England's commitment to acknowledging and responding to past safeguarding failings. Eligible applicants to the scheme could be offered a financial payment as well as other forms of individual non-financial redress.

It is anticipated that the Church of England revised *Redress Scheme* will be fully open before the end of 2026 subject to the completion of the remaining governance, operational and legislative requirements. A formal review of the Scheme's readiness will take place in November.

"**The Survivors Trust**" has been appointed to deliver a redress helpline, which will provide practical and emotional support to victims and survivors who are considering, or preparing an application to the scheme.

Heather Baucher has been appointed to lead the Scheme's independent appeals process. *The Appeal Authority* will oversee appeals independently, helping to ensure decisions are fair, transparent and consistent.

The *Redress Project Team* is running monthly information and guidance sessions for potential applicants. These sessions give victims and survivors an opportunity to find out more about the scheme, understand how the application process will work, and ask questions ahead of launch.

Any survivor of church related abuse do not have to wait for the Redress Scheme to open before seeking financial and therapeutic support from the Church of England. This input was previously provided by the Interim Support Scheme. This service was replaced on the 1 October 2026 by the *Survivor Support Fund*. This fund can assist with grants for basic needs, signposting as well as grants of up to six months of therapy at a time.

1.3 National Safeguarding Restructure Update

The Church of England is moving forward with its intention to achieve greater safeguarding independence. At the heart of the proposals, which received overwhelming approval by the General Synod in February 2026, is the creation of a new safeguarding authority that will operate independently of the Church. This new authority aims to be legally established by the end of this calendar year, with the transfer of national safeguarding responsibilities to follow, gradually in time, thereafter.

Dame Christine Ryan has recently resigned her post as independent chair of the Safeguarding Structures Programme Board. A link to her last update can be found here: Safeguarding Structures Reform Programme Newsletter Summer 2026.

A spokesperson from Archbishop's council responded to the resignation including the following statement:

"The Programme Board will now continue this important work at pace. It remains on target to meet the key programme milestones for 2026, including launching a standardised complaints process by the end of the year. The transition to the new arrangements will take place in a careful, measured way to ensure there is no impact on day-to-day safeguarding delivery as we continue to strengthen Church safeguarding.

2.0 Diocesan Safeguarding Update

2.1 Diocesan Safeguarding Team

The Diocesan Safeguarding Team (DST) is currently experiencing significant pressures due to unplanned sickness absence from one of our Diocesan Safeguarding Advisors (DSA) and the Director of Safeguarding. In addition, there is an ongoing impact from a particularly busy period for casework and duty cover over the late summer. Caseloads are currently high, before taking into account the potential

redistribution of the absent DSA's 14 cases. A short-term plan has been agreed with the Diocesan Secretary and the Regional Safeguarding lead. The aim is to maintain the quality and effectiveness of the Diocese' safeguarding work, through the prioritisation of statutory and core safeguarding activity and create additional capacity for the team to catch up.

Summary of proposed measures

1. Pause routine chronologies. The case management system will continue to have functionality to print off chronological notes if required.
2. Pause routine patchwork visits except where necessary alongside a safeguarding concern.
3. Deliver new PSO inductions in groups rather than 1-2-1.
4. Use a casework tracker to identify cases that can be closed and for prioritising work during this particularly busy period.
5. Reduce attendance at external meetings including wider children's and adults' boards and partnership meetings.
6. Pause peer supervision for 3-month period.
7. Temporarily pause face-to-face non leadership training. People will be directed to the nationally available online version (which aligns with other dioceses).
8. Postpone the DSAP meeting currently scheduled for September until December as agreed with the DSAP chair.
9. Increase one of our DSA's hours by 0.2 and the Safeguarding trainers' hours by 12 days between November and December 2026. This will create additional capacity for case work, PSO inductions and duty cover.
10. Consider additional temporary DSA support through agency procurement.

These measures will provide protected capacity for the team to manage the current workload, support one another, and reduce the risk of the pressures becoming unsustainable. We will keep the arrangements under review and adjust them, as necessary.

2.2 Diocesan Safeguarding Conference

The 5th annual safeguarding conference was held on24th September 2026 at St Luke's Church in Southsea. The conference focussed on adults at risk, with an interesting and relevant range of external and internal speakers. Initial review of evaluations is extremely positive. A full report will be received at DSAP in December.

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