

# Future of safeguarding



**On 11 February 2025, General Synod debated and voted on two proposed models (labelled model 3 and model 4) for future structures of safeguarding in the Church of England. Members approved a motion (amended) that endorses model 3 as the way forward in the short term and calls for further work as to the legal and practical requirements necessary to implement model 4.**

“That this Synod:

(a) thank all those involved in Church safeguarding, particularly the victims and survivors who give so generously of their wisdom and experience, often at great personal cost, and parish safeguarding officers who make sure that safeguarding is a priority in every level and all those who support them in dioceses;

(b) affirm its commitment to greater independence in safeguarding in the Church of England;

c) thank the Response Group for its work for greater independence in safeguarding in the Church of England; and, noting the significant reservations around model 4 in paragraph 62 of GS 2378 and the legal advice from VWV dated 31st January 2025, endorse model 3 as the way forward in the short term and call for further work as to the legal and practical requirements necessary to implement model 4;

(d) lament and repent of the failure of the Church to be welcoming to victims and survivors and the harm they have experienced and continue to experience in the life of the Church.”

# What does this mean?

An external scrutiny body will be set up, which would oversee various scrutiny, audit and review functions including an end-stage complaint process.

Most functions (except policy development) currently delivered by the National Safeguarding Team (NST) will be transferred, to an external employer. The functions would include training and education, managing complex cases, lessons learnt reviews, engaging with survivors, collaborative working with partners to enhance safeguarding measures and monitoring and accountability, to ensure safeguarding practices are consistently applied across the church.

Further work is necessary to implement model 4, which would involve the transfer of safeguarding teams in dioceses and cathedrals to the same external employer as the NST.

No-one's role is yet directly affected, and work on structural reorganisation cannot happen until a great deal of detailed policy development is complete, and the legislative processes are implemented where required.

## Initial work during 2025 will include:

- Testing an end-stage complaint process through commissioning a charity partner to deliver.
- Establishing consistent local complaint handling processes.
- Working with the National Safeguarding Panel, others to plan how best to carry out scrutiny of policy. The National Safeguarding Panel members include an independent chair, survivors, experts in safeguarding and a member of clergy currently serving in a parish.
- Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel (DSAP) are currently advisory panels; they are to be reconfigured as local scrutiny panels. The panels will scrutinise safeguarding delivery in the diocese and cathedral. DSAP independent chairs will be given regulatory enforcement powers to request and access information from the diocese.

