

Southwell and Nottingham General Synod member calls for safeguarding changes

Expenditure by the Church of England's National Safeguarding Team (NST) has risen from under £1.1 m in 2016 to more than £2.3 m in 2020. During the same period, the number of full time equivalent staff in the NST has risen from 6.2 to 17.2.

The information was provided to Synod members in response to a question from the Revd Canon Dr Tim Bull (St Albans).

Responding to the information, Gavin Drake, one of four lay members of the General Synod from Southwell and Nottingham, thanked the Chair of the Archbishops' Council's finance committee, Canon John Spence, for the increase in spending on safeguarding, but asked what "safeguards" were in place to ensure that the money was being spent "wisely and effectively".

"The National Safeguarding Team's slogan is 'promoting a safe church'", he said. "I think our national effort should not be 'promoting a safe church' but 'mandating a safe church'".

In response, Canon Spence said: "with regards to safeguarding, I think we have been responding to events over the past five years and we have increased the budget radically. There needs to come a point where we stand back and have an independent look at its effectiveness and I would suggest that that moment may be coming."

Gavin Drake is the Director of the Jill Saward Organisation, which campaigns against gender-based violence. He has tabled two Private Members Motions (PMMs) on safeguarding which may be called for debate if they are signed by more than 100 members of the General Synod.

The first PMM calls for a Measure – statute law – to give a new or existing national body "the authority to investigate, intervene, and if necessary to direct a particular course of action in cases where bishops or dioceses are not managing safeguarding cases appropriately, effectively, safely, or in line with the House of Bishops' safeguarding guidance."

The second PMM concerns the second national review of past cases (PCR2) which is currently being undertaken by dioceses throughout the Church of England. It calls for the publication of anonymised data showing how many cases flagged by the independent reviewers as showing cause for concern had previously been looked at by the Church of England and given the all-clear.

"The primary responsibility for ensuring that the C of E's safeguarding is effective lies with the Church," Gavin Drake said. "PCR2 gives us the opportunity to review whether our safeguarding checks and balances are effective."

Archbishops' Council consults on roadmap to Net Zero Carbon

The chief officers of National Church Institutions, bishops, diocesan secretaries, archdeacons and cathedral deans are amongst a select group of people being consulted over plans for a "road map" to "achieving net zero by 2030". The plan was requested by the Synod in February 2020.

The Bishop of Norwich, the Right Revd Graham Usher, Lead Bishop for the Environment, published an information note for Synod members setting out the consultation.

"Environmental work will be a theme of many Synod sessions, with issues as varied as Faculty rules, biodiversity, investment and evangelism", he said. "Our hope is that this early sight of a key piece of work will give both old and new members of Synod assurance that this issue is a key priority for all parts of the Church."

- **View the consultation at drakene.ws/nzconsult**

Timetable unveiled for Clergy Conduct Measure

Detailed legislative proposals for the replacement of the Clergy Discipline Measure will be unveiled in July 2022, the Bishop of Worcester, the Right Revd John Inge, has said. An outline of plans will be given to Synod members in February as part of a panel discussion.