

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

CHURCH OF ENGLAND NATIONAL SAFEGUARDING
PANEL



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Independent Chair, National Safeguarding Panel

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	2
Background	3
Panel Development.....	3
Panel Support and Capacity	3
Panel Membership Working Group	4
Learning Together Working Group	5
2025 Panel Scrutiny Sessions.....	5
January: NSP considerations arising from the publication of the Makin review into John Smyth	5
March: Engagement with Victims and Survivors of Abuse.....	7
April: INEQE Safeguarding Audits.	8
June: IICSA Recommendations 1 and 8 (Regional Safeguarding Model).....	8
July: Future Safeguarding Structures and NSP Membership	10
October: Business Meeting and Scrutiny on Safeguarding Training and Developm.....	12
November: NSP Review and Planning	13
Appendix A – National Safeguarding Panel Devolved Budget	144
Appendix B – National Safeguarding Panel Terms of Reference.....	14

CHURCH OF ENGLAND NATIONAL SAFEGUARDING PANEL (NSP)

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

FOREWORD

I am pleased to present the 2025 annual report of the National Safeguarding Panel (NSP), marking my first full year as Chair. This report details our work over the past year, highlighting significant developments and our commitment to robust scrutiny.

I extend my gratitude to the Vice Chair, Jane Chevous, all independent members, clergy, and staff for their dedication during a period of ongoing uncertainty. Special thanks go to Maxi Leigh, David Cooper, and Sally Hodges, who concluded their service this year, for their valuable contributions to making the Church safer.

This report outlines the new strategies we have adopted to strengthen safeguarding policies, practices, and culture. It reviews our progress, achievements, and challenges, and sets out our plans. While we recognise our strengths, we remain vigilant and have conducted a thorough review to identify areas for improvement. We are now acting on these recommendations to ensure our arrangements are robust and sustainable.

I am confident in the NSP team's ability to advance our priorities and deliver high-quality safeguarding assurance for the Church of England.

Nazir Afzal OBE

Independent Chair

The Church of England, National Safeguarding Panel.

BACKGROUND

The National Safeguarding Panel (NSP) was created in 2014 to provide strategic safeguarding advice to the Archbishops' Council and House of Bishops. Initially chaired by the lead bishop for safeguarding, the panel became independently chaired in 2018.

The NSP does not oversee individual safeguarding cases or conduct quality assurance reviews; these responsibilities may be included in future independent arrangements. The National Safeguarding Team (NST) has developed a quality assurance framework for safeguarding across the Church, and audits continue in line with recommendations from the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA).

Key activities of the panel include:

- Scrutinising safeguarding policy areas and themes
- Reporting to the National Safeguarding Steering Group (NSSG)
- Reviewing NST overview reports
- Contributing to policy consultations

From 2025, NSP meetings are held every six weeks and follow a two-part structure:

1. **Fact-Finding Session:** A call for evidence where survivors and stakeholders share experiences on the topic under scrutiny, either in person, online, or in writing. Participation is voluntary and respectful of personal boundaries.
2. **Scrutiny Session:** The panel discusses the evidence and questions NST representatives or policy leads. Survivors from the fact-finding session are not expected to participate in this part.

Recommendations from the panel are shared with the NSSG, which oversees follow-up actions. Survivors are never required to discuss personal cases or confidential information. The NSP encourages broad participation, especially through written submissions, and is developing a Survivor Protocol to support those engaging with scrutiny sessions.

PANEL DEVELOPMENT

In 2025, the NSP enhanced its effectiveness by establishing an Executive Group. This group—comprising the Chair, Vice Chair, an independent panel member, the Panel Associate, and NST business support—meets every two months to oversee critical areas such as the risk register, scrutiny programme, and NST projects. This structure ensures regular, focused discussions and strengthens governance and oversight.

PANEL SUPPORT AND CAPACITY

The need for increased capacity to handle additional responsibilities was addressed during the year with the support of an NSP devolved cost centre (budget). Details of the budget allocation can be found at Appendix A. The budget provided for the creation of dedicated governance support officer role (0.4 of FTE post). The successful candidate, Rebecca Moronfolu, was recruited in June and took up the post in September. Additional

hours were allocated to the panel associate (36 days per year). The budget allocation also provided the time for the panel to utilise a communications specialist on a day a month basis but a suitable person to undertake this role is still to be recruited.

PANEL MEMBERSHIP WORKING GROUP

In 2025, the NSP conducted a comprehensive review of its membership, led by independent member Peter Willson. The Working Group was tasked with evaluating panel composition, governance, tenure, vacancies, and recruitment. Its proposals were consulted on and ratified by the National Safeguarding Steering Group.

Panel Composition:

- Membership now prioritises skills and independence over sector representation.
- Survivor representation is being expanded to include:
 - Two representatives from survivor organisations (one focused on Church of England abuse, one on any faith-based abuse).
 - Two individual survivor members (one with Church of England experience, one from any faith background).
- Denominational roles are replaced by up to two individuals from any religious background with safeguarding scrutiny experience.
- The ordained parish representative role is retained, with an emphasis on safeguarding expertise.
- Individuals in attendance remain unchanged, including a Safeguarding Bishop or deputy, the NST director of safeguarding, and representatives for the Archbishops of Canterbury and York.
- Safeguarding professionals in attendance include a Parish Safeguarding Officer, and a Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel (DSAP) Chair.
- Independent expertise in offender management and specialist roles in adult and children's safeguarding is retained.
- Recruitment for nine refreshed roles began in October.

Tenure and Review:

- Membership terms are three years, renewable once for two years (3+2), with all but those in attendance subject to this policy.
- Exit interviews are conducted by the Chair at the end of tenure.
- The Chair, with panel input, holds review discussions with members six months after recruitment and annually thereafter, deciding on renewals after three years.

Remuneration:

- Independent members can claim travel and accommodation expenses, £25 per hour for meeting participation, and £25 for one hour of preparation per meeting.

Standards and Induction:

- A draft Charter outlining membership standard (attendance, communications, social media, response times, and ethical principles) is under consultation and will be adopted in early 2026.

- An improved induction process is being developed, including meetings with leadership, information on governance, a digital handbook, a buddy system, and trauma-informed training.

Communications:

- The NSP is developing a comprehensive communication strategy to increase openness and transparency. A new website domain (NSP-uk.org) and dedicated email addresses for independent members are being set up to support engagement and calls for evidence.

These changes aim to strengthen the panel's effectiveness and ensure its continued contribution to safeguarding in the Church of England. Due to the substantial changes introduced to the NSP's arrangements through the above developments, the panel's Terms of Reference have also been updated (see Appendix B).

LEARNING TOGETHER WORKING GROUP

On 11 June 2025, the Learning Together Working Group, co-produced by two NSP members, diocesan safeguarding advisers, and survivors, held an event at the National Council Voluntary Organisations in London. The aim was to create a neutral space for staff and survivors to learn about survivor engagement in safeguarding. Forty-five delegates attended, including 11 survivors and 34 practitioners, with additional survivor leaders ensuring balanced participation.

The event was funded by the National Safeguarding Team and came in under budget at £9,115.02. Feedback indicated that the goal of providing a safe, neutral space was fully achieved, while learning together about survivor engagement was partly met. The NSP is considering whether to organise similar events in the future or keep this as a one-off initiative.

2025 PANEL SCRUTINY SESSIONS

In 2025, the NSP targeted its scrutiny sessions at policy and practice issues where its input could have the greatest impact on the Church's safeguarding approach. To maximise effectiveness, the timing of scrutiny topics was flexible—some were advanced or postponed ensuring the panel's insights were most valuable.

Five bespoke scrutiny sessions were held throughout the year (January, March, April, June, and October). Additionally, a policy consultation on the Future of Safeguarding Structures took place in July, and a business consolidation and review meeting was held in November.

JANUARY SCRUTINY SESSION: NSP CONSIDERATIONS ARISING FROM THE PUBLICATION OF THE MAKIN REVIEW INTO JOHN SMYTH

Context & Impact

The NSP convened to discuss the Makin review, which examined the Church of England's response to serious abuse allegations involving John Smyth. The review's publication in late 2024 had a profound effect on

survivors and eroded public trust in the Church's safeguarding systems. The NSP noted widespread frustration and anger among stakeholders about both the offences and the Church's public response.

Panel's Critique

The NSP was extremely disappointed with the Church's official response, describing it as arrogant and inappropriate, especially criticising the tone of Justin Welby's House of Lords speech. The panel felt the Church's response failed to acknowledge the trauma suffered by victims and mirrored problematic behaviours identified in the review, highlighting the urgent need for institutional change.

Call for Independence & Clarity

The NSP emphasised the importance of maintaining its independence and authority to scrutinise and challenge Church decision-makers. It also recognised the need to formalise and clearly communicate its role in both national and local safeguarding reviews.

Learning & Communication

The panel stressed the importance of learning from the review, including scrutinising terms of reference, timelines, survivor impact, and publication planning. It highlighted the need for a clear, consistent approach to media and public communications, and recommended access to independent communications expertise.

Governance Recommendations

The NSP encouraged the National Safeguarding Team (NST) to consider adopting a governance model like the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel, to improve coordination and learning from safeguarding incidents. The NSP also pointed to statutory guidance for escalation when dissatisfied with partner agency responses.

Key Questions Raised

The panel formulated a series of questions for the NST and Archbishops' Council, focusing on:

- The reasons for delays in publishing safeguarding reviews.
- Actions taken to implement lessons from the Makin review.
- Methodologies used in preparing reports.
- Support for survivors before and after publication.
- Costs associated with the review.
- Survivor engagement and trust post-publication.
- The unique public reaction to the Smyth case.
- Governance, accountability, and transparency in safeguarding reviews.
- The need for annual public reporting on safeguarding reviews.
- Risks posed by high staff turnover in safeguarding roles.
- Steps to clarify roles, responsibilities, and progress tracking for recommendations.
- Addressing inconsistencies and poor safeguarding cultures.
- Improving collaboration with police and addressing specific follow-up actions.

Overall, the NSP called for greater transparency, accountability, survivor engagement, and institutional reform in the Church's safeguarding practices, with a strong emphasis on learning from past failures and improving future responses.

MARCH SCRUTINY SESSION: ENGAGEMENT WITH VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS OF ABUSE

The National Safeguarding Panel (NSP) convened at Manchester Cathedral in March for a three-part session focused on survivor engagement within the Church. The session comprised:

- **Fact-finding:** Contributions were received from Diocesan Safeguarding Officers, a survivor chaplain, regional leads, survivor representatives, and panel members, providing a broad perspective on survivor engagement.
- **Review of Findings:** The panel discussed insights from the INEQE annual audits, survey feedback from survivors and safeguarding advisers, and a written survivor submission, consolidating key learnings from these sources.
- **Scrutiny Session:** Senior representatives from the National Safeguarding Team (NST) joined virtually, allowing the panel to explore issues and question the NST on survivor engagement activities.

KEY THEMES AND OUTCOMES INCLUDED:

Survivor Chaplaincy: The panel commended Newcastle's peer support and creative arts initiatives, highlighting the importance of authentic co-production and the distinct roles of survivor support and policy development. The value of dedicated chaplaincy resources and communication channels was recognised.

Survivor Representation: The importance of survivor representation on Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panels (DSAPs) was emphasised, with calls for greater consistency and transparency in how survivor voices are included at both local and national levels.

Funding and Conflicts of Interest: Concerns were raised about the funding and employment arrangements for survivor chaplaincy roles, noting the need for transparency to avoid conflicts of interest.

Consistency and Sharing Best Practice: The panel noted the lack of replication of successful survivor engagement models across dioceses and encouraged sharing and embedding of effective practices, including regional collaboration and creative projects.

Support Structures: The need for trauma-informed practices, peer supervision, and independent complaints handling was highlighted to improve survivor confidence and support.

Honorarium Policy: While the current policy provides £25 per hour for survivor contributions, suggestions were made to improve terms for those involved in longer-term commitments.

Data and Impact: Challenges in collecting and using data on survivor engagement were discussed. The NST has established a quality assurance post and a Data Group to address these issues.

Independent Advocacy: The panel supported the idea of commissioning an independent advocacy service to balance case management with survivor engagement initiatives.

The National Safeguarding Steering Group (NSSG) were asked to consider the themes raised in this session. The NSP undertook to work with INEQE to review audit processes and findings on victim and survivor engagement, continuing efforts to enhance survivor participation and support within the Church.

APRIL SCRUTINY SESSION: INEQE SAFEGUARDING AUDITS

Purpose & Structure

The meeting, held at Church House, Oxford, aimed to consolidate understanding of safeguarding audit activities within the Church and explore enhancements. It was divided into two sessions: a Fact-Finding Session and a Scrutiny Session.

Key Themes Discussed

Topics included the conduct of audits, survivor perspectives and engagement, audit preparation, recommendations and oversight, identification of safeguarding concerns, accessibility, cultural acceptance, accountability, audit findings (such as the Clergy Conduct Status Letter process), and audit expenses.

Panel Contributions & Audit Value

The panel highlighted the significant value of the audit process, which challenged safeguarding arrangements at all levels. INEQE's preparatory work involved reviewing previous Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) and Past Cases Review 2 (PCR2) audits. Emphasis was placed on capacity, leadership, and culture standards.

Survivor Engagement

Survivors valued having their voices heard and their feedback applied strategically, supported by trauma-informed approaches. However, the panel noted that relatively few survivors had contributed and recognised the National Safeguarding Team's (NST) role in improving engagement frameworks.

Recommendations

The panel made several recommendations including in the following areas:

- With appropriate capacity, shifting from reactive to preventative safeguarding
- Improving communication about audit activities with victims and survivors
- Supporting audit capacity and resources in dioceses and cathedrals, ensuring audit recommendations align with action plans
- Clarifying Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel (DSAP) roles
- Ensuring user access to INEQE surveys
- Prioritising responses to Clergy Conduct Status Letters (CCSL) audit findings
- Tracking audit costs

JUNE SCRUTINY SESSION: IICSA RECOMMENDATIONS 1 AND 8 (REGIONAL SAFEGUARDING MODEL)

Fact-Finding Session:

This included personal contributions from two survivors and Regional Safeguarding Leads (RSLs) for the West Midlands and Southwest, as well as their manager. These discussions informed the subsequent scrutiny session.

Scrutiny Session:

The panel questioned senior representatives from the National Safeguarding Team (NST) about issues raised, aiming to consolidate understanding of the regional safeguarding model and explore enhancements.

Key Themes

Survivor Participation and Engagement

Survivors contributed to the development of the regional model, including recruitment panels for RSLs and regular supervision meetings.

The Survivor Participation and Engagement Framework, developed by the NST, has increased confidence and proactivity in survivor engagement, though practice varies across regions.

Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panels (DSAPs) are meant to include survivor representation, but this is not consistent nationwide. The regional model aims to improve this.

Survivor involvement spans both support and service standards, as well as co-production and policy development.

RECOMMENDATIONS - SURVIVOR ENGAGEMENT

Several recommendations were highlighted to improve survivor engagement, including:

- The NST providing details on survivor contributions to the regional model.
- NSSG being asked to note positive feedback on the Survivor Participation and Engagement Framework.
- The NST sharing plans for consistent Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel (DSAP) survivor participation.
- The NST being asked to report on integrating the Survivor Participation and Engagement Framework with the regional model by the end of 2025.

REGIONAL SAFEGUARDING LEADS (RSLs) – ROLE AND IMPACT

RSLs supervise, but do not line manage, those handling safeguarding cases. They provide professional supervision every six weeks.

The new arrangements have empowered Diocesan Safeguarding Officers, increasing their confidence and autonomy.

RSLs foster professional development, cross-boundary collaboration, and peer review, strengthening risk management and communication.

RSL roles are evolving and must adapt to future policy changes. Their influence is significant, though not absolute.

RECOMMENDATIONS - RSLs

- The NST should maintain oversight of RSL decision-making authority and influence.

Budget and Resourcing

The NST's regional project budget is equitable, but diocesan financial disparities and lack of devolved budgets for RSLs create challenges, especially for remote or local initiatives.

Benchmarking has identified resource disparities; all dioceses now have more than one Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, with NST support for additional resources.

The transition from Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor to Diocesan Safeguarding Officer is ongoing, with national implementation supported by nine RSLs (8.2 FTE) and one RSL manager.

The panel seeks transparency on the costs of these arrangements.

RECOMMENDATIONS - BUDGET

- The NST should consider devolving budgets to RSLs for greater flexibility and to address geographical challenges.
- NST should share with NSP the full costs of implementing the regional safeguarding arrangements.

CONSISTENCY AND “ONE CHURCH” APPROACH

The panel noted ongoing challenges to consistency due to complex structures, policy interpretation, and resource disparities.

The regional model and national Quality Assurance Framework are helping to drive standardisation and collective problem-solving.

IICSA RECOMMENDATION 1

From September 2025, volunteers who fail to follow safeguarding codes or Diocesan Safeguarding Officer instructions will be required to step down, in line with IICSA recommendations.

JULY SCRUTINY SESSION: FUTURE SAFEGUARDING STRUCTURES AND NSP MEMBERSHIP

Session 1: Future Safeguarding Structures- Consultation

Session 2: NSP membership proposals

The National Safeguarding Panel (NSP) convened online on 30 July for a session dedicated to strengthening governance and membership arrangements. The morning session featured engagement with the Safeguarding Structures Programme Team, including updates on programme developments, opportunities for consultation, and clarification of key aspects. Panel members heard from members of the Safeguarding Structures Programme Team, including Joanne Grenfell, Simon Gallagher, and Dominic Goodall, on issues of governance, timelines, and outputs.

SESSION 1: FUTURE OF SAFEGUARDING STRUCTURES

The Programme was advancing following the General Synod's decision in February 2025 to proceed with 'model 3', while further assessing 'model 4'. Despite improvements in audits and safeguarding practices, inconsistencies persist in service delivery and complaint management.

The approved motion included:

- Setting up an external scrutiny body, which is likely to be on a statutory basis in order to give it "teeth" and so would require legislation
- Transfer of most functions currently delivered by the National Safeguarding Team (NST) – except policy development – to an external employer, eventually and after all development, consultation and legislative processes complete
- Further work to determine the legal and practical requirements 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.
- 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.

The Programme aims to establish an independent scrutiny function, address procedural gaps, and overlay robust governance. Effective change management is emphasised, especially for Parish Safeguarding Officers, frontline professionals, and survivors. A dedicated survivor participation role is being recruited to build trust and confidence.

Governance structures include a Programme Board, a Scrutiny Project Board, and an Operational Delivery Project Board, each with defined workstreams. Survivor representation is a priority, with three roles identified for the Programme Board and ongoing efforts to improve engagement at all levels. The Programme Board was asked to review survivor engagement processes and representation balance across governance structures.

Programme planning is ongoing, with legislative requirements and implementation timelines under review. A communications role has been established to support stakeholder engagement. Policy developments are expected to be presented at General Synod in February 2026.

The need for a clearer national framework for complaints in dioceses and cathedrals was identified, with workshops informing future recommendations. Independent scrutiny and survivor advocacy are highlighted as key elements for successful implementation.

FUTURE ROLE OF NSP

Panel members assessed the strengths (independent and diverse membership, survivor organisation representation, accountability) and weaknesses (lack of IT infrastructure, limited links to complaints/audits, communication capacity) of current NSP arrangements.

The NSP's advisory role was recognised, with broad support for its function as an independent body supporting high standards in policy and practice. The panel was encouraged to consider its future role in scrutiny arrangements and to forward a consolidated response to the Programme Team.

SESSION 2: NSP MEMBERSHIP PROPOSALS

The November 2024 NSP meeting initiated a review of panel membership, leading to the formation of a Membership Working Group in July 2025. This group is tasked with consulting and developing proposals to enhance membership arrangements, with support from the panel and endorsement from the National Safeguarding Steering Group (NSSG). The outcomes from this work were highlighted earlier in this report.

OCTOBER SCRUTINY SESSION: BUSINESS MEETING AND SCRUTINY ON SAFEGUARDING TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT – DELIVERY AND IMPACT

On 3 October 2025, the National Safeguarding Panel (NSP) convened in the Diocese of Birmingham, with remote participation, to scrutinise the Church of England's safeguarding learning and development programme. The session included contributions from panel members, survivors, clergy, and safeguarding professionals, followed by a scrutiny session with the National Safeguarding Team (NST).

KEY THEMES AND FINDINGS

Limited Stakeholder Engagement: The evidence session saw low participation, with no written submissions and some expected contributors absent. This limited the panel's ability to fully assess the strengths and weaknesses of the training programme.

Survivor Participation: Survivors raised concerns about the undervaluing of their expertise in trauma-informed practice and issues with the management of survivor-led training contracts. Despite these challenges, survivor-led training at the diocesan level was positively received, fostering trust and effective trauma-informed communication.

Culturally Sensitive Training: The need for safeguarding training tailored to diverse groups, such as refugees and asylum seekers, was emphasised. Effective training must go beyond translation to address cultural context and trauma, with in-person formats preferred for vulnerable groups.

Training for Trustees and Volunteers: Gaps were identified in training provision for trustees (e.g., PCCs and Cathedral Chapters), and concerns were raised about the perceived burden of safeguarding training on volunteers. The panel recommended a more flexible, proportionate approach to training delivery, recognising the diversity of church settings.

Training Framework and Uptake: The Church's safeguarding training framework includes core pathways and role-specific modules, with nearly 750,000 completions recorded. The new Domestic Abuse module saw particularly high engagement.

Survivor Involvement in Training: Survivors have contributed to the design and delivery of some training, but broader involvement remains limited. The panel encouraged greater survivor participation in reviewing and co-delivering core training.

Evaluation and Quality Assurance: While satisfaction surveys are routine, there is no systematic assessment of training impact. Plans are underway to introduce evaluation forms and produce annual learning evaluation reports. Regional Safeguarding Leads play a key role in quality assurance, with evidence suggesting parish-level training increases safeguarding referrals.

Several recommendations were developed which aim to strengthen safeguarding training, enhance survivor involvement, and ensure continuous improvement in safeguarding practices across the Church.

PANEL ACTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The NSP undertook to introduce new measures to strengthen scrutiny session structure and stakeholder engagement, including a dedicated website for feedback and a survivor participation protocol. Ongoing business progress includes revising terms of reference, clarifying attendance expectations, recruiting new members, and enhancing communications.

This session underscored the importance of survivor involvement, cultural sensitivity, and robust evaluation in safeguarding training, while highlighting areas for improvement in engagement and delivery.

NOVEMBER SCRUTINY SESSION- NSP REVIEW AND PLANNING

Survivor contributions were recognised as a vital element of the panel's scrutiny process, offering valuable insights. Limited representation from dioceses, cathedrals and parishes raised concerns about whether the evidence gathered during NSP sessions accurately reflects the wider Church context. The panel agreed to reconsider the value of holding meetings outside London to maximise participation and resource effectiveness.

To address the learning that had developed during the year, the panel undertook to address several areas of its operation:

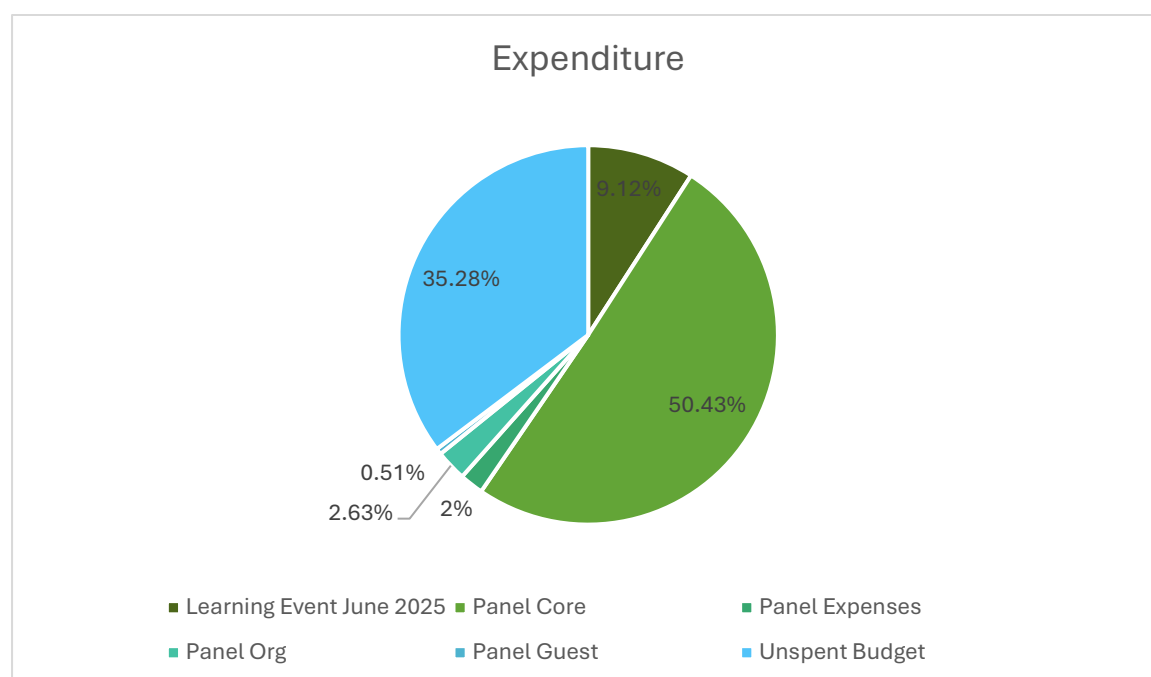
- Review the engagement model, considering alternatives to regional meetings such as virtual sessions or targeted outreach.
- Clarify the scope of communications to ensure future invitations and briefings are focused and relevant, utilising newsletters and the NSP website.
- Broaden representation by exploring ways to secure wider diocesan participation, including direct invitations and structured surveys.
- Separate feedback streams to distinguish between areas controlled by the National Safeguarding Team and external factors.

Additionally, the panel proposed evolving from an ad hoc approach to a formal scrutiny programme, with annual planning to identify priority topics informed by risk, survivor feedback, and strategic safeguarding priorities. This structured approach aims to ensure consistency, improve engagement, and strengthen accountability.

In summary, the 2025 NSP annual report details significant progress in governance, survivor engagement, and scrutiny of safeguarding practices. It identifies ongoing challenges and sets out recommendations for future improvements, with a strong emphasis on independence, transparency, and survivor-centred approaches.

APPENDIX A – NATIONAL SAFEGUARDING PANEL DEVOLVED BUDGET

National Safeguarding Panel (NSP) Devolved Budget



Item	Cost
Learning Event June 2025	£9,115.02
Panel Core	£50,434.12
Panel Expenses	£2,033.55
Panel Org	£2,628.25
Panel Guest	£507.30
Unspent Budget	£35,281.76

APPENDIX B – NATIONAL SAFEGUARDING PANEL TERMS OF REFERENCE

National Safeguarding Panel (NSP) Terms of Reference

Version Date: September 2025

1. GOVERNANCE

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

2. AIM AND PURPOSE

The NSP 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.

While 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:

- Offering high-level strategic advice and guidance on policies and practices around safeguarding to the National Safeguarding Team (NST) to ensure that the Church of England meets accepted best practices.
- Considering and reflecting on the NST's annual work plan and making recommendations for priorities. It will also consider papers on matters prepared by the NST.
- Undertaking in-depth consideration of key areas of concern and proposed safeguarding developments and ensuring appropriate input to the NSSG.
- Developing proactive and constructive support and challenge with the NST and those who are delivering and providing direct services.
- 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 regularly analysing 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
- Ensuring that victims and survivors are heard and suitably consulted on topics covered by the remit of the NSP.
- Offering a fair and balanced perspective on safeguarding matters, mindful of individual lived experiences.
- Examining the outputs of the INEQE audits conducted in dioceses and cathedrals, building a picture of any emerging themes, and considering any recommendations arising from these audits.
- The Chair will provide regular reports on its work and present an annual report to the NSSG.
- 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. PANEL SCRUTINY SESSIONS

The panel will meet up to six times a year. At least two meetings a year will be hosted in a diocese or cathedral outside of London. Other meetings will be held in person in London.

The panel will deliver a scrutiny-focused approach to its work. To facilitate this, the meeting structure is divided into two sessions:

- **Fact-Finding Session:** The morning session is a 'call for evidence'. This session offers an opportunity for the NSP to hear experiences and perspectives on the scrutiny subject from a range of stakeholders. Anyone wishing to contribute can attend in person, join the meeting online, or provide a written submission. These discussions are used to inform and explore themes in the scrutiny session.
- **Scrutiny Session:** The afternoon session allows the panel to question the NST representatives or policy leads and examine some of the issues that arise in the 'call for evidence'. Attendees from the fact-finding session are not usually involved in the scrutiny part of the meeting.

These sessions aim to help the panel understand the church's response to the scrutiny subject and offer recommendations on how to build on strengths and address weaknesses. The conclusions from the panel sessions are presented to the NSSG, which oversees the responses.

4. QUORACY AND VOTING

The focus of the NSP'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.

5. COMPOSITION OF THE PANEL

A skills-based membership is prioritized over sector representation to ensure the correct blend of skills and competencies across the membership. Independence, skills, and competencies, as well as alignment with the role of the NSP, are key hallmarks of the panel's membership.

No.	Role
1	Independent Chair
1	Vice Chair
2	Independent survivors from survivor organisations with experience in scrutiny processes. One organisation who specifically work with survivors of Church of England abuse, the other who work with survivors of any faith-based abuse.
2	Independent survivor members. One with lived experience of Church of England abuse and one as a survivor of any faith-based abuse.
2	Denominational representatives from any religious background with safeguarding scrutiny experience.
2	Independent members with specialist skills in the scrutiny of children's safeguarding
2	Independent members with specialist skills in the scrutiny of adult safeguarding
1	Independent member with expertise of working with offenders

1	Ordained Parish representative, with an emphasis on safeguarding and scrutiny experience.
	In Attendance
1	Safeguarding Bishop or Deputy Safeguarding Bishop (both roles invited, only one required to attend)
1	National Director of Safeguarding, NST
1	Representative for the Archbishop of Canterbury
1	Representative for the Archbishop of York
	Safeguarding Professionals in Attendance
1	Parish Safeguarding Officer
1	Regional Safeguarding Lead
1	Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel (DSAP) Chair

6. APPOINTMENTS

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

7. TENURE

The initial membership term is three years, renewable once for two years (3+2). All members and attendees, except for those in Attendance, will align with the tenure requirements. The tenure requirements should be applied to all current independent members. If a member's tenure is extended by two years, the NSP commits to recruit a replacement before the incumbent's tenure has ended to allow for a handover. Exit interviews will be undertaken by the Chair when a member's tenure ends or they otherwise leave the panel.

8. MEMBER REVIEW DISCUSSIONS

The NSP Chair, with input from the panel, will hold discussions with members six months after initial recruitment and hold annual reviews thereafter. The NSP Chair will decide on the renewal of membership after members' first three years.

9. REMUNERATION FOR NSP MEMBERS

The role of the Chair is a remunerated position. The NSSG has approved devolved budget arrangements for the NSP. Effective from 6 June 2025, independent members are eligible to claim the following:

- Reimbursement for travel and accommodation expenses incurred for NSP work activities.
- £25 per hour for time contributions to NSP meetings and work activities.
- Members are also entitled to claim £25 for one hour of preparation and reading time for NSP meetings.

10. 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.

11. NSP EXECUTIVE GROUP

An Executive Group comprising the NSP Chair, Vice Chair, one independent member, the Panel Associate, and Business support will meet every six weeks to review NSP business, plan for future events, and consider good practice and governance. This will include reviewing the risk register.

12. NATIONAL SAFEGUARDING TEAM

The panel is 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.

13. 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.

14. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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

15. RISK REGISTER

The NSP will maintain a risk register which will be reviewed regularly by the NSP Executive Group and annually by the NSP members.

16. 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.

17. MEMBERS STANDARDS OF CONDUCT AND EXPECTATIONS

Members should adhere to the standards, expectations, and principles set out in the NSP Charter.

18. MEMBERS NSP EMAIL ADDRESSES

A website domain (NSP-uk.org) has been purchased, and work is progressing to create email addresses for independent members. This will support the accessibility and reach of the NSP.

19. RECRUITMENT

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

20. 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

September 2026

The NSP recognises 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 acknowledges that this mandate will almost certainly change at some point in the next couple of years.