



New lead safeguarding bishop and deputy announced

The Bishop of Huddersfield Jonathan Gibbs has been announced as the Church of England's new lead safeguarding bishop, taking over from Bishop Peter Hancock, the Bishop of Bath and Wells who leaves the role at the end of February. Bishop Jonathan, a member of the House of Bishops, will be supported by the Bishop of Southampton Debbie Sellin, as deputy lead safeguarding bishop.

Bishop Jonathan and Bishop Debbie will work closely with the national director of safeguarding Melissa Caslake, who took up the role six months ago, along with the all members of the National Safeguarding Team as they continue to develop the Church's safeguarding practice. Bishop Jonathan will chair the National Safeguarding Steering Group, the delegated House of Bishops body responsible for making national safeguarding decisions.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby said:

"We are truly grateful to Bishop Peter who as lead safeguarding bishop, represented the Church at its three IICSA hearings over the past two years as well as leading on the response both to the recommendations and the important calls for change from survivors. His commitment to safeguarding and the mission of the Church is exemplary and the House of Bishops has learnt a lot from him.

"We welcome Bishop Jonathan and Bishop Debbie and commend their willingness to take up this role which is a vital part of the work of the Church. I am aware of the immense time commitment involved and pray for them as this new chapter begins."

Bishop Jonathan said:

"Having been a member of the NSSG for the last two years, I am deeply grateful to Bishop Peter Hancock for all that he has done, as well as very aware of the responsibility involved in taking on this role. I am profoundly conscious of the work that lies ahead, both in response to the findings of IICSA and beyond.

"In particular, I am committed to working closely with the survivor community, to whom we owe a huge debt of thanks for their courage, integrity and willingness to hold us to account. Safeguarding is about enabling the Church of England to go on becoming a safer, healthier place for all, and it is a sacred responsibility in which every single one of us must share."

Bishop Debbie said:

"It is a privilege for me to take on this role, and to play my part in helping the Church respond well to survivors. Having begun ministry as a Family and Children's Worker, I am committed to safeguarding vulnerable children and adults and supporting families in need.

"Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and I am pleased to be working with the National Team in developing our practice further."