

*Sent to all clergy and licensed lay ministers*

Dear colleagues,

I wanted to touch base with you after the events of the last few days. Like everyone else I was deeply disturbed and saddened by the [Makin Review](#), and its conclusion that the victims of John Smyth were failed by the Church in multiple ways over a number of decades. It is painful but important reading for all of us and there are many lessons to be learned from it as we seek to build a safer and happier church.

Many have carried the pain of this for years, and these last few days will have been very difficult for survivors and victims of both John Smyth and others. Archbishop Justin has chosen to take personal responsibility for his part in safeguarding failures. This was obviously a hard decision for him to make and I feel it was the right and responsible thing for him to do. Victims and survivors are central here, but we also need to hold him, his wife Caroline and their children in our prayers.

What the situation has reinforced, and Makin's report made clear, is that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. We all have an obligation to see things through and when we don't, there are consequences, for ourselves, but especially for victims and survivors.

But the centre of our church is not in Lambeth Palace; it is in the cities, towns and villages of our land. In the parish communities and churches where ordinary Christians live out their calling to love God and neighbour. This Sunday is Safeguarding Sunday. It may feel daunting in the current climate, but it does provide an opportunity for us to reflect on these issues and to make sure that any survivors in our midst feel listened to and know where to go for help and support.

If you, or anyone you know, have been affected by the Makin Review and would like confidential, independent, support, our diocesan safeguarding team is ready to provide support. Please don't hesitate to contact them on [safeguardingadvice@cofe-worcester.org.uk](mailto:safeguardingadvice@cofe-worcester.org.uk) or 01905 732800. The [Safe Spaces helpline](#) is also available for confidential, independent support.

Safeguarding is at the heart of our mission to love our neighbour and protect the vulnerable. I am committed to creating a safe and healthy culture for all in our churches and church schools, where power is not abused, crimes are not hidden, people feel able to speak-up, victims are heard, and action is taken. I know you are with me in this.

As a diocese we are committed to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults to worship and grow in Christ safely. Thank you for all the work you put into your own safeguarding training and practice, and in supporting your PSOs in their vital work. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and our churches need to be safe places where people can discover who they are as children of God, and who they can become in his name. We need to be responsive and listen well to those who have experiences to share and like all organisations need to continually work hard to get it right.

There is no doubt that victims and survivors have been let down by the Church of England in the past. We all have a part to play in making sure this doesn't happen again as we create a simpler, humbler, bolder church with Jesus Christ always at the centre. I remain so grateful for all you do already to promote a positive safeguarding culture in our parishes and across our diocese. May God bless you in all you do.

With every good wish,

+Martin