

## NATIONAL SAFEGUARDING STEERING GROUP

### SAFEGUARDING CASEWORK OMBUDSMAN

#### Outline proposal for the NSSG

#### Purpose of this paper

1. This paper aims to offer an outline proposal of what a Safeguarding Ombudsman Office for the Church of England would look like, including its role, duties, responsibilities and powers.
2. Should the NSSG be content with the proposals and costings, the Church House Legal Office will draft proposals to establish an Ombudsman Scheme. No legislation will be required, and the Ombudsman can probably be established some time in 2019.

#### Background to these proposals

3. In July 2018, the General Synod voted by a large majority to approve the proposals for action set out in a paper from the National Safeguarding Steering Group (NSSG). These actions included the following commitment:

*[To] Develop a business proposal for the establishment of an independent Ombudsman Service with regards to complaints relating to how safeguarding cases have been managed.*

4. In its introduction, the paper agreed that

*[The] independence [of Church of England Safeguarding] might be strengthened in a number of areas of safeguarding practice and arrangements.*

5. The paper agreed that this strengthening of independence could include establishing a system for the

*Independent investigation of complaints about how safeguarding allegations have been handled by the Church – for example, the establishment of an independent Ombudsman role for the occasions when complaints processes have been exhausted within the church.*

6. In its concluding set of action points, the NSSG committed to doing the following:

*Develop a business proposal for the establishment of an independent Ombudsman Service with regards to complaints relating to the management of safeguarding cases.<sup>1</sup>*

7. This paper is aimed at taking forward these proposals.

#### What is an Ombudsman Scheme?

8. The British and Irish Ombudsman Service define Ombudsman Offices as

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<sup>1</sup> See GS2092 *Report from the National Safeguarding Steering Group* (July 2018 Group of Sessions) Available at: <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2018-06/GS%202092%20-%20SAFEGUARDING%20%28REPORT%20FROM%20THE%20NSSG%29.pdf>