

adopt necessary and appropriate measures which reflected the circumstances in their own regions. The intention was not to determine precisely how each Bishops' Conference should act on the common expectations set out above, although the Meeting did end with a statement of the steps that the Holy See will now take to support all Bishops' Conferences in these efforts. As the Inquiry is aware, the Catholic Church in England and Wales has already adopted many measures and has been engaged in a process of continually refining and improving its work for the prevention of child sexual abuse. The Meeting informs that process of reflection and development. It is therefore not the case, as some might think, that it is necessary for us to wait for further instructions and guidance from the Pope and Holy See before we can continue to develop and improve our work of safeguarding. We will, of course, welcome and take full account of the practical outcomes of the Meeting itself.

6. As part of my preparation for the Meeting, I met with three members of the Survivors' Advisory Panel of the National Catholic Safeguarding Commission (the NCSC), and three other survivors drawn from diverse victim and survivor groups. In the light of the key aims of the Meeting, I considered it very important to hear the views of survivors in this country, to assist in our discussions. While in Rome, prior to the Meeting, I also met with a further group of 15 survivors, and listened attentively to their views. I will continue to meet with survivors in future, not least to inform and assist my work in relation to safeguarding.
7. I cannot recall another occasion on which the Presidents of every Bishops' Conference in the Catholic Church have come together in Rome for a meeting presided over by the Pope. Together with representative leaders of Religious Orders, the Meeting brought together leaders from almost 150 countries, and therefore covered a wide variety of social, political, cultural and religious settings.

Dissemination of learning from the Meeting

8. On returning from the Meeting, I wrote to every member of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, giving my reflections on the Meeting (VN Exhibit 1). In my view, it was important to share my reflections on the Meeting with my fellow Bishops in England and Wales soon afterwards (and I also sent my letter to the Conference of Religious, although as the Inquiry is aware the Diocesan structure of the Church stands alongside that of the Religious). This is of course not the only way in which the learning from the Meeting has been disseminated. A full and interactive website has been developed by the Holy See relating to this event: www.pbc2019.org. Much of the information on that website regarding the Church's approach to safeguarding, including a timeline of worldwide actions in the Church on the subject, was publicly available before the Meeting and, as the Meeting progressed, the talks and presentations were added to the website, thereby giving a comprehensive record of the event. This is a rich source of the primary evidence of the Meeting.