



THE BISHOP OF CHESTER

A letter to the Diocese of Chester

Tuesday, 12th November, 2024

Dear friends,

I am writing to you in the wake of the publication of the Makin review into the abuse perpetrated by John Smyth and today's resignation announcement from the Archbishop of Canterbury. I know that there are many questions, quite a lot of which remain unanswered. Like you, I am listening to the media coverage with all manner of mixed feelings, mainly grief over the failings of our church. You will know what a focus this kind of work has been in this diocese following the Pearl Review four years ago: there is no place for cover-up or complicity with abuse in any part of society, least of all in the church.

I do want to say a number of things as we seek to respond in the Diocese of Chester.

First and foremost; if the report raises concerns for you in any way at all, please do reach out for support. You can either talk with our safeguarding team or Safe Spaces and contact details are available overleaf. These conversations can trigger all manner of emotions in us, and support is available.

Secondly, please keep victims and survivors in your prayers. This is a very hard time for those who have journeyed through the kind of horrific experiences Makin outlines. Our aim to be '*survivor centred and trauma informed*' can never just be a strapline. Please be kind to each other, and please pray.

Thirdly, may I thank all who are working to make our parishes, chaplaincies, and church schools safer spaces. I appreciate all that you do to enable this; there is always more work needed, but we can be grateful.

Fourthly, alongside my deep regret and concern about the failings of the church, I want to express gratitude for the good things that Archbishop Justin has done in this role.

As we have found in Chester Diocese, safeguarding is always a shared responsibility, and I am thankful for all who partner in this vital part of the life of the church.

Friends, please pray. Please care for each other. Please reach out for support if you need it. I will write further in due time.

With my ongoing prayers
+ Mark

Mark Tanner
Bishop of Chester

Safe Spaces Helpline:

0300 303 1056

Monday to Friday: 09:00-21:00

Saturdays: 09:00-13:00

Sundays: 13:00-17:00

Safe Spaces is a free and independent support service, providing a confidential, personal, and safe space for anyone who has been abused by someone

Chester Safeguarding Team

For all reporting and enquires please email safeguarding@chester.anglican.org. Please note, this email address is monitored between the hours of 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.

For general safeguarding enquiries, call 01928 718834 between the hours of 9am and 4pm, Monday to Friday.