

Statement: *Percy -v- Independent Safeguarding Board* Case Resolved

The Independent Safeguarding Board (ISB) is pleased to announce a settlement in the case brought against it by Professor Martyn Percy, the former Dean of Christ Church Oxford.

Professor Percy brought the claim following his request to the Archbishops' Council and Diocese of Oxford that there should be an independent review of the alleged weaponization of safeguarding by individuals and agencies within Church of England perpetrated against him. The Archbishops' Council and Oxford Diocese decided to commission the ISB to conduct this review. However, Professor Percy challenged the restricted terms of the draft terms of reference set out by those commissioning the review and the previous Chair of the ISB. In the event, the court dismissed the claim brought by Dr Percy against the ISB, in part because all parties agreed that the ISB was not a legal entity against which such a claim could be brought.

At the heart of the case is the need for a rigorous review of the processes and practices of the Church of England alongside other developments at Christ Church. The ISB consider that the original review's published terms of reference would have needed significant amendment to ensure that any independent ISB review had sufficient scope and depth.

While the ISB's review could have made progress, the absence of an Information Sharing Agreement with the Church of England significantly hampered the continuation of the work. The review was initially paused and then discontinued by the Archbishops' Council which decided that it should be conducted by some other person. That individual has yet to be agreed. The ISB urges the Archbishops' Council to act with urgency to ensure that an independent review is commissioned. Professor Percy's assertion that such a review should be led by a KC or Judge has significant merit and is one with which the ISB concurs.

ISB members met with Professor Percy, on a without prejudice basis, and had a very constructive meeting. The ISB has agreed to drop any enforcement of a costs order made against him.

Professor Percy thanked the ISB for its work and has undertaken to co-operate with it as it develops its approaches to the scrutiny and independent oversight of Church of England safeguarding.

Steve Reeves stated that *“Ongoing legal action between the Independent Safeguarding Board and Professor Percy was not going to result in the independent review of the issues of concern. Children, vulnerable adults, survivors of abuse, and the public need our focus to be on providing independent oversight and scrutiny of safeguarding in the Church of England”*.

Jasvinder Sanghera stated that *“The ISB recognises that Professor Percy has made serious allegations against Church authorities, including that there has been a deliberate weaponization of safeguarding against him. It is right that these claims are investigated without fear or favour.”*

Professor Percy praised the two ISB board members for their *“independence, thorough determination, and undoubted commitment to ensuring that the Church of England’s safeguarding policies and practices are scrutinised and properly held to account, in line with the original aims and objectives of the ISB in response to IICSA. Proper independence in safeguarding is now an urgent matter. For example, setting up a fair and impartial Redress Scheme, which could draw on the superior modelling already practised in other parts of the Anglican Communion.”*

Professor Percy added: *“Although there was evidence to suggest other senior individuals and bodies did not want the ISB to engage with the issues that have been raised, the board members have showed considerable tenacity, courage and determination in their work, which bodes well for the future of fully independent oversight and scrutiny in relation to Church of England safeguarding practices”*.

Professor Percy thanked the ISB for its work and has undertaken to co-operate with it as it develops its approaches to the scrutiny and independent oversight of Church of England safeguarding and also in supporting survivors and victims of abuse.