

Update on the Independent Review – April 2026

From Rich Johnson, National Leader, and Paul Langham, Chair of Trustees, New Wine

In February 2025, we published the findings of an independent review led by Fiona Scolding KC into New Wine's historic connections with Mike Pilavachi and Soul Survivor. The review formed an addendum to her earlier work and examined the extent of New Wine's involvement and responsibility.

We accepted the findings in full and committed ourselves to the hard and necessary work of change - to listen, to act, and to grow, building a healthier, safer, and more accountable culture across New Wine.

Since then, we have also undertaken a further organisational review into the handling of a more recent complaint (published in August 2025). That process has helped us test our progress and highlighted further areas where we needed to improve, particularly in how concerns are handled and experienced.

Taken together, these reviews have sharpened our understanding of where we needed to change, both in our systems and in our culture.

As we committed at the time, we want to keep the New Wine community informed of the progress we are making. This update shares what we have done so far.

Our Commitments: What We've Done

The independent review made four specific recommendations to New Wine. Below is how we have responded:

1. Discernment in Promoting New Leaders

We have strengthened our safer recruitment procedures to ensure discernment and due diligence in all appointments, especially where public leadership or influence is involved. Key steps include:

- Retrospective safer recruitment checks completed for those in current leadership positions.
- Expanded processes to include all volunteers, contracted leaders, and seconded roles, not just those at national events
- Consistent implementation of these standards across our wider programme, including regional events such as RESET Women's Days and Worship Nights

2. Minimum Vetting Procedures for Visiting Speakers

We have introduced a formal Speaker Agreement process for all visiting speakers, which must be completed prior to participation in any New Wine event. This agreement includes:

- Commitment to New Wine's values and expectations for safe, accountable ministry
- Clear safeguarding requirements, including adherence to policy and appropriate ministry boundaries
- Prayer ministry training, including guidance on safe and non-coercive practice
- Clear expectations for conduct and collaboration with on-site leadership teams

This ensures that all speakers are both aligned in our values and accountable for safe ministry practice.

3. System for Reporting and Monitoring Low-Level Concerns

We have strengthened our safeguarding systems to ensure that concerns, including those that may previously have been seen as "low-level" are properly recognised, recorded, and reviewed. This includes:

- Clear guidance for staff and volunteers on identifying and reporting concerns
- Centralised recording and oversight to enable patterns to be identified early
- Strengthened safeguarding leadership oversight and review processes

Alongside this, we are continuing to build a culture where speaking up is encouraged, supported, and taken seriously.

4. Accessible and Independent Complaints Process

We have revised and relaunched our Complaints Policy, making it clearer, more transparent, and more accessible. This includes:

- A defined process for raising and escalating concerns
- Access to independent investigation where appropriate
- Public availability via our website for all delegates, team members, and leaders
- The introduction of QR codes across festival venues, enabling real-time feedback and safeguarding alerts, which are monitored by our team

Wider Cultural Change

Beyond specific policies and processes, we recognise that lasting change requires a shift in culture.

We are working to nurture a culture where:

- It is safe to speak up
- Leadership is exercised with humility
- No individual is elevated above accountability


This includes:

- An ongoing governance review to strengthen oversight and accountability
- Continued learning from external advisors and partner organisations
- A commitment to reflect, listen, and remain open to change

Support and Safeguarding

We know that this process has surfaced pain, grief, and long-standing harm for many. If you have been affected or need support, we encourage you to contact Safe Spaces, an independent, confidential support service:

 safespaces@firstlight.org.uk

 0300 303 1056

Our Ongoing Commitment

To those who have come forward, and to those who may still be finding their voice, we want to say thank you. Your courage continues to shape a safer and more accountable future.

We remain committed to listening, learning, and continuing to strengthen both our culture and our practice.

With deep gratitude and renewed resolve,

Paul Langham
Chair of Trustees, New Wine

Rich Johnson
National Leader, New Wine