



## Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse – Lessons for Religious Organisations

[www.sfitogether.org](http://www.sfitogether.org)


## IICSA - Background

- In October 2012 'Operation Yewtree' – a Police investigation into sexual abuse allegations against Savile, which also investigated (and resulted in the conviction of) a number of other prominent public figures
- Increased call for Public Inquiry into child sexual abuse – cross-party support
- 7 July 2014 the Home Secretary (Theresa May) announces

***“an inquiry to consider whether public bodies and other non-state institutions have taken seriously their duty of care to protect children from sexual abuse.”***



## IICSA – Background

- Originally opened as a 'Panel Inquiry' – similar to (eg) the Hillsborough Independent Panel Inquiry
- First two chairs stood down from the Inquiry (July 2014 and October 2014)
- 4 February 2015 – existing panel is disbanded and new Inquiry is set up
- Inquiry given new powers as a Statutory Inquiry under the Inquiries Act 2005
- (this provides greater powers including to compel witnesses to give evidence and to examine classified government documents)
- Initially chaired by Dame Lowell Goddard (replaced by Professor Alexis Jay  in August 2016).



## The Truth Project

- Launched in 2015 – part of IICSA
- Provides an opportunity for people to share their experiences of child sexual abuse
- In person
- By phone
- In writing
- More than 6000 people have shared their experiences since it launched in 2015.
- Still possible to submit experiences to The Truth Project **in writing**:

<https://www.truthproject.org.uk/share-your-experience>



"So grateful I was given this opportunity to attend the Truth Project. For the first time in 50 years I felt I was believed; I was treated with the utmost respect by all involved."

- Truth Project participant

## IICSA – Scope

Investigations announced in November 2015

- Children in the care of Lambeth Council
- Children in the care of Nottinghamshire councils
- Cambridge House, Knowl View and Rochdale Council
- **Child sexual abuse in the Anglican Church**
- **Child sexual abuse in the Roman Catholic Church**
- The sexual abuse of children in custodial institutions
- Child sexual abuse in residential schools
- The internet and child sexual abuse
- Child sexual exploitation by organised networks
- The protection of children outside the United Kingdom
- Accountability and reparations for victims and survivors
- Allegations of child sexual abuse linked to Westminster

Subsequently announced:

- Institutional Response to Child Sexual Abuse Involving Lord Janner
- **Child Protection in Religious Organisations and Settings**
- Effective Leadership of Child Protection

(Jan 2016)

**(May 2019)**

(October 2019)





## The Anglican Church Investigation



## Anglican Investigation

- Considered both the Church in England and the Church in Wales
- Not possible to accurately identify scale of abuse:

*“It is not possible to accurately identify the scale of sexual offending within the Church of England. The Church provided the Inquiry with a list of 390 individuals (either clergy or those in positions of trust) who have been convicted of child sexual abuse offences since the 1940s. There have also been 330 civil claims against the Church of England for child sexual abuse. The majority of these relate to offending carried out before 1990 and some of these are multiple claims against one individual.*

- In any case, report is very critical of the Church’s failure to protect children:

*“In the context of child sexual abuse, the Church’s neglect of the physical, emotional and spiritual well-being of children and young people in favour of protecting its reputation was in conflict with its mission of love and care for the innocent and the vulnerable.”*

## Anglican Investigation

- *“The Inquiry examined a number of cases relating to both convicted perpetrators and alleged perpetrators, many of which demonstrated the Church’s failure to take seriously disclosures by or about children or to refer allegations to the statutory authorities.”*
- *“The culture of the Church of England facilitated it becoming a place where abusers could hide.”*
- *“Deference to the authority of the Church and to individual priests, taboos surrounding discussion of sexuality and an environment where alleged perpetrators were treated more supportively than victims presented barriers to disclosure that many victims could not overcome.”*
- *“Until recently, at least 2015, the Church of England did not properly resource safeguarding. Funding has increased considerably, in particular for safeguarding staff.”*
- *“The Church has failed to respond consistently to victims and survivors of child sexual abuse with sympathy and compassion, accompanied by practical and appropriate support. This has often added to the trauma already suffered by those who were abused by individuals associated with the Church. This failure was described as “profoundly and deeply shocking” by Archbishop Justin Welby.”*
- *“Sometimes sexual offending was minimised”*
- Recommendations include: **adjustments to the structure of safeguarding in the Church of England; revising Clergy Discipline; Improved record keeping and information sharing; support for victims and survivors and external auditing of safeguarding.**
- All recommendations were accepted by the Church of England.



## Anglican Investigation – Case Studies

### The Diocese of Chichester

- *“Over 50 years, 20 individuals with connections to Chichester Diocese have been convicted or have pleaded guilty to sexual offending against children. This is higher than other Dioceses.”*
- *“The responses to child sexual abuse were marked by secrecy, prevarication, avoidance of reporting alleged crimes to the authorities and a failure to take professional advice.”*
- *“prioritisation of reputation over the protection of children”*
- *“deep seated arrogance amongst some senior clergy... They believed they were right in their indulgent attitude towards some perpetrators, even when they had been convicted”*
- *“clericalism and tribalism”*

# Anglican Investigation

## The Diocese of Chichester

*“What marks out faith organisations such as the Anglican Church in this context is their explicit moral purpose, in teaching right from wrong. In Chichester, its neglect of the physical and spiritual well-being of children and young people was in conflict with the Church’s mission of love and care.”*

- Clericalism

*“Church structures in which control is largely or entirely vested in the clergy. The consequence of this is the absence of accountability, and the creation of a climate in which clergy may consider themselves superior to laity”*

- Tribalism

*“Tribalism is based on the impulse to protect a particular group, belief or way of thinking, regardless of individual responsibility or culpability. In Chichester, this manifested itself in opposing factions. Rivalry between the two groups was in itself destructive, and within each group there was misplaced loyalty to its adherents. In the public hearings, this was acted out by several senior clergy squabbling about responsibility for failing to deal with past sexual abuse. The damaging consequence of this overriding allegiance to one’s own ‘tribe’ was that child protection was compromised.”*

## Anglican Investigation

### Peter Ball

- A Bishop in Chichester (1977 – 1992) before becoming Bishop in Gloucester (1992 – 1993)
- December 1992 - Reported to Police by parents of a victim of his abuse
- A number of individuals then wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury, alleging child sexual abuse by Ball
- January 1993 – arrested on suspicion of offences against two further complainants
- Cautioned for on offence of gross indecency in 1993 – resigned as Bishop of Gloucester



## Anglican Investigation

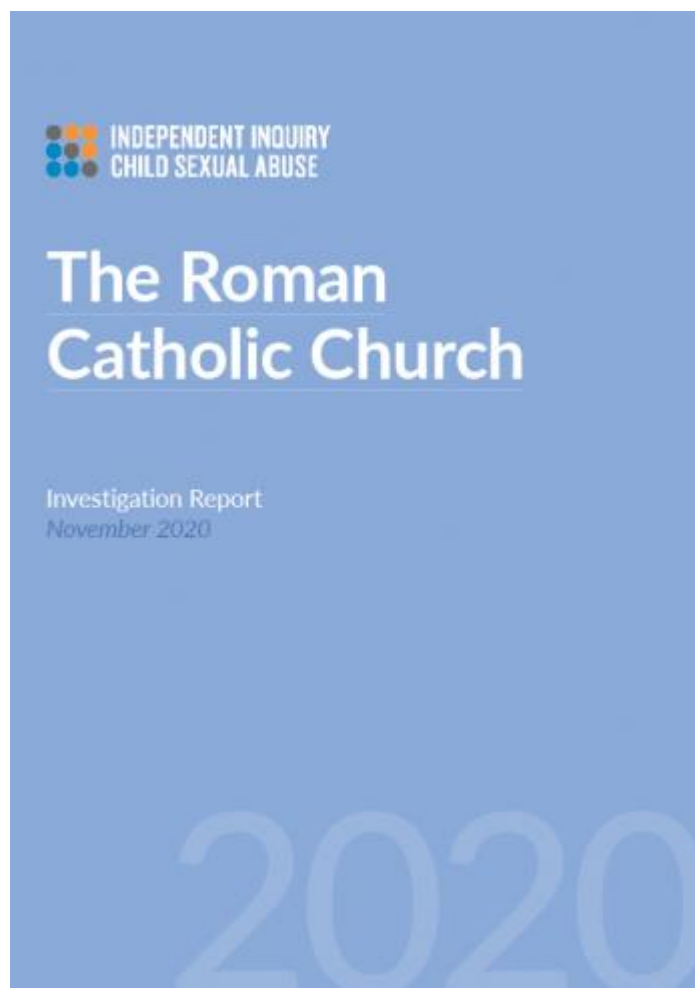
### Peter Ball

- No action taken by the Church of England
- 6 months after cautioning returned to Ministry in Truro (Sept. 1993)
- Returned to Public Ministry in 1995 – including conducting confirmations at schools & staying on the premises of a public school in Oxford
- *“convinced himself, and sought to convince others, that he had been unjustly treated, in particular by being ‘forced’ to retire. He had no insight into the distress he had caused to others.”*
- Extensive support from prominent & influential public figures
- In 2012, Nick Todd, who had complained in 1992, took his own life.
- In 2015, following further Police Investigation, admitted he had abused his position as Bishop of Lewes and Bishop of Gloucester to offend against 17 teenagers and young men. That offending involved deliberately manipulating vulnerable teenagers and young men for his own sexual gratification





# The Roman Catholic Church Investigation





# The Roman Catholic Church Investigation

*“This investigation is concerned with the nature and extent of, and the institutional response to, allegations of child sexual abuse within the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales.”*

Public Hearings held in October & November 2019

Public Hearings also held in case studies:

- Ampleforth and Downside abbeys and their respective schools;
- The Archdiocese of Birmingham; and
- Ealing Abbey and St Benedict’s School.

Again, **full scale was not possible to determine:**

*“Between 1970 and 2015, the Church received more than 3,000 complaints of child sexual abuse against more than 900 individuals connected to the Church. Those complaints involved over 1,750 victims and complainants. Civil claims against dioceses and religious institutes have resulted in millions of pounds being paid in compensation. Even so, the true scale of child sexual abuse is likely to be greater than these figures.”*

## Roman Catholic Investigation

*“The evidence in this investigation has revealed a sorry history of child sexual abuse in the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales. There have been too many examples of abusive priests and monks preying on children for prolonged periods of time. Responses to disclosures about sexual abuse have been characterised by a failure to support victims and survivors in stark contrast to the positive action taken to protect alleged perpetrators and the reputation of the Church.”*

## Roman Catholic Investigation

- Nolan Report (2001) made 83 recommendations, including the ‘One Church’ approach – a single set of principles, policies and practices across the Church that put the welfare of the child first.
- As a result of the Nolan Report, the Catholic Office for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (COPCA) was established, which – although met with resistance – initiated change.
- 2007 – Cumberlege Report set out progress made since the Nolan Report, including more formal handling of reports of child sexual abuse, better training for the clergy, religious and those involved in safeguarding, and greater cooperation with the statutory authorities.
- However, this is *“in contrast to slowness’ in other areas”*

# Roman Catholic Investigation

## Leadership

*“Across the Inquiry’s hearings on the Roman Catholic Church, weaknesses in leadership were significant in the failures to address child sexual abuse. The responses of Church leaders over time were marked by delay in implementing change as well as reluctance to acknowledge responsibility, to hold individuals to account or to make sincere apologies. They conveyed on occasions a grudging and unsympathetic attitude to victims. Failure in some of these areas contributed to more children experiencing actual abuse and many others being exposed to the risk of sexual abuse.”*

Archbishop Vincent Nichols described the failings of the church as a source of:

*“great sorrow and shame for me and, indeed I know, for the Catholic Church”.*

## Roman Catholic Investigation

### The Holy See

*“In 2018 and 2019, the Inquiry asked the Apostolic Nuncio (the Holy See’s ambassador to the United Kingdom) and the Holy See for information relevant to both the public hearing on Ealing Abbey and St Benedict’s School and the final hearing on the Roman Catholic Church, held in late 2019. The Holy See is a foreign state and the Apostolic Nuncio’s diplomatic status means that neither the institution nor the individual can be compelled to provide a statement to the Inquiry or to give evidence. Despite efforts by the Inquiry, very limited information was forthcoming. Much of the information that was provided was already in the public domain. After several months of correspondence, the Holy See belatedly confirmed it would not provide a witness statement. This response appears to be at odds with the May 2019 Papal pronouncements from Rome in which Pope Francis asserted that there needed to be “concrete and effective actions that involve everyone in the Church” regarding its approach to child sexual abuse.*

*The Holy See’s limited response on this matter manifestly did not demonstrate a commitment to taking action. Their lack of cooperation passes understanding.”*



### Child sexual abuse inquiry criticises lack of cooperation from Vatican

Lead counsel also condemns Holy See's delay in stripping convicted offenders of clerical status



▲ Cardinal Vincent Nichols said he found seeing the issue from the perspective of the survivors ‘sobering’.  
Photograph: Mohammed Saber/EPA

The Vatican’s repeated refusal to cooperate with official investigations into paedophile priests and its delay in stripping convicted offenders of their

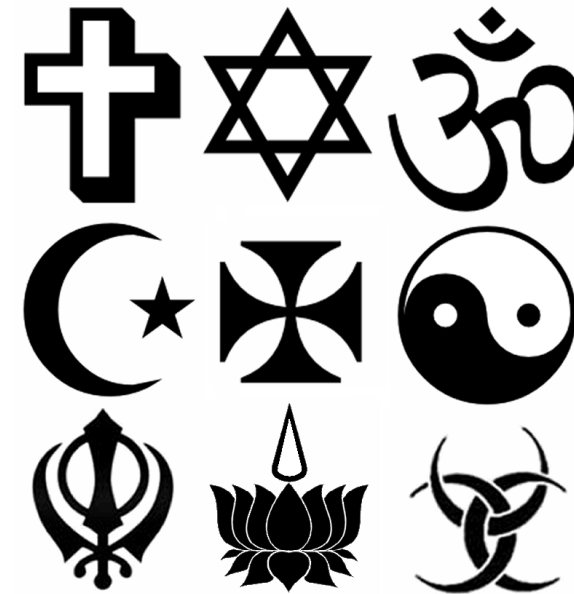
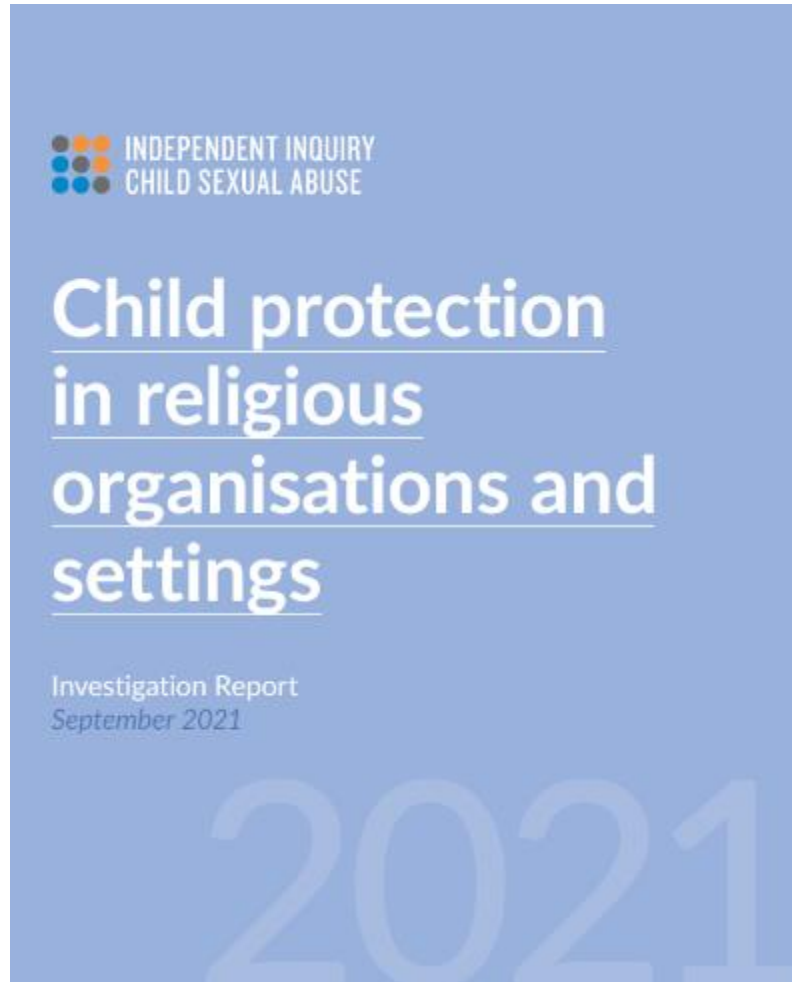
# Roman Catholic Investigation

## Recommendations

- Improved leadership and oversight on safeguarding matters
- Mandatory Safeguarding Requirement for all staff and volunteers working with children or victims/survivors
- Clear framework for dealing with cases of non-compliance with safeguarding policies and procedures
- External auditing
- Making information on child protection policies and procedures easier to follow and more accessible
- National Policy for complaints about the way in which a safeguarding case is handled
- All Recommendations accepted by the Roman Catholic Church.



## Child Protection in Religious Organisations and Settings



# Child Protection in Religious Organisations and Settings - IICSA

(Published September 2021)

*“Religions with a significant presence in England and Wales including non conformist Christian denominations, the Jehovah’s Witnesses, Baptists, Methodists, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism, Hinduism and Buddhism were considered in this investigation.*

*Religious settings such as mosques, synagogues, churches and temples fell within scope. Places of faith tuition such as Muslim madrassahs and Christian Sunday schools and places where children and young people gather in connection with their religious beliefs, including youth groups and camps were also investigated by the Inquiry.”*

## Child Protection in Religious Organisations and Settings - IICSA Scale

*“There is no way of knowing the true scale... there is, however, likely to be a significant under-reporting of child sexual abuse in religious organisations and settings.”*

Figure 4. Experience of CSA before the age of 16 among respondents to the 2019 CSEW, by ethnic group

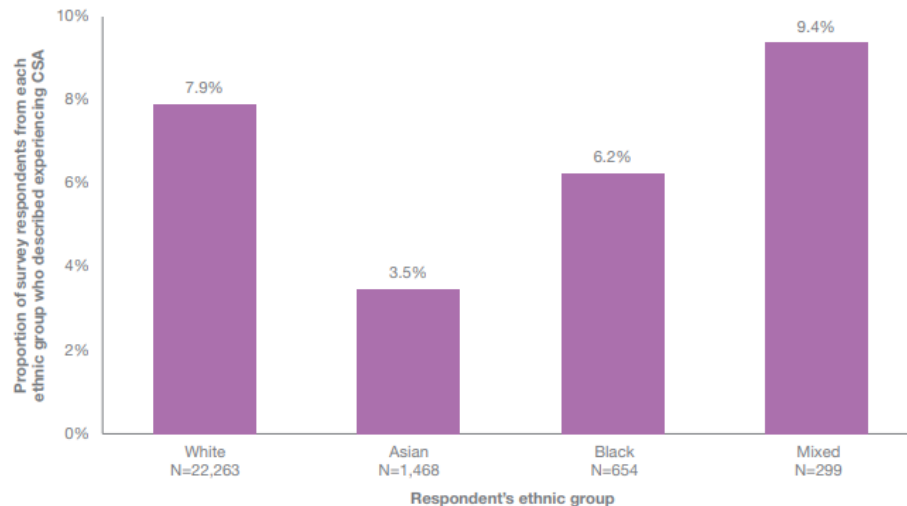
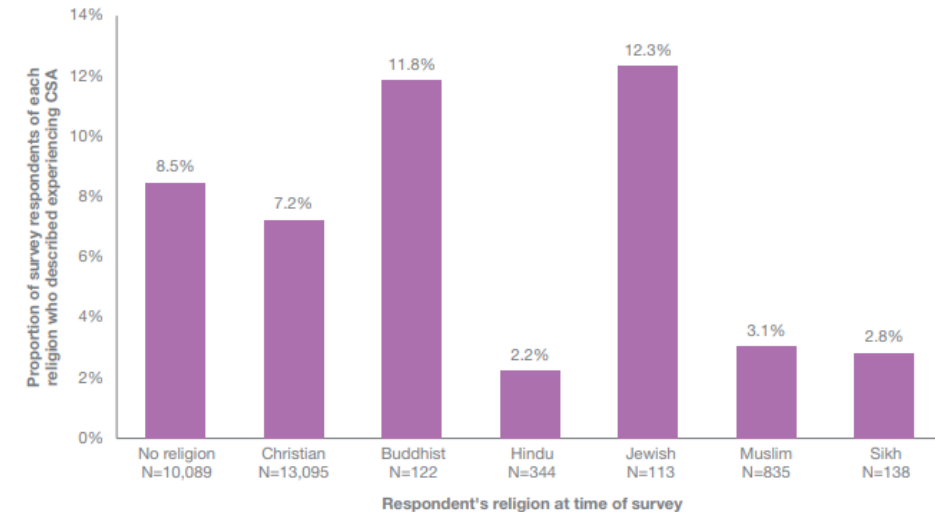


Figure 5. Experience of CSA before the age of 16 among respondents to the 2019 CSEW, by religion



# Child Protection in Religious Organisations and Settings Investigation

## Scale

*“Research has found that the likelihood of experiencing Child Sexual Abuse does not vary significantly with ethnic group in England (Bebbington et al, 2011), but has highlighted that people from minority ethnic backgrounds face barriers to reporting Child Sexual Abuse (Ali et al, 2021; Rodger et al, 2020).”*

<https://www.csacentre.org.uk/documents/scale-nature-review-evidence-0621/>

## Child Protection in Religious Organisations and Settings Investigation

- Denial of possibility of sexual abuse in communities/institutions - and
- Contrasting experiences of members of the religious communities
- 'Close-knit' faith-based communities & authority making reporting difficult (and even 'shameful')
- Awkwardness/taboo of discussing sexual issues in religious communities
- Protecting institutions / abusers over victims
- Failure to report incidents to the proper authorities
- Safeguarding policy / training as 'tick-box exercises'
- Unwillingness of some places of worship to admit need for help/support
- Volunteer-led organisations
- Poor record keeping
- Lack of DBS checks

## Legal Changes

IICSA evidence has resulted in proposed legislative changes. Eg:

### **Marriage and Civil Partnership Bill**

raises the minimum age for marriage/civil partnership to 18

### **Police Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill**

puts person A in a position of trust where

person A (the adult) is 'coaching, teaching, training, supervising or instructing [person B - the young person] in a sport or a religion'

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/police-crime-sentencing-and-courts-bill-2021-factsheets/police-crime-sentencing-and-courts-bill-2021-positions-of-trust-factsheet>



## Church of England gave more support to predators within its ranks than their victims: Damning report reveals CoE failed to protect children and created culture of secrecy that let abusers hide

**BBC** Sign in Home News Sport Weather

### NEWS

Home | Coronavirus | Climate | **UK** | World | Business | Politics | Tech | Science | Health | Family

UK | England | N. Ireland | Scotland | Alba | Wales | Cymru | Isle of Man | Guernsey | Jersey | Lo

## Religious groups in UK failing children over sexual abuse, report says

By Tom Symonds  
Home Affairs correspondent

2 September

Independent Inquiry into Child Sex Abuse

## 'Catastrophic failure'... religions blasted over sex abuse of children

FAITH groups have been accused of not protecting children from paedophiles but blaming the victims instead.

By **JOHN TWOMEY**

13:46, Fri, Sep 3, 2021 | UPDATED: 13:46, Fri, Sep 3, 2021



14



## Who knew about the abuse at St Benedict's? The entire Catholic Church

At the child sexual abuse inquiry Stephen Bleach sees the truth emerge about the school where he and other boys were harmed. And it hits him: the instinct to shield paedophiles was endemic

Stephen Bleach

Sunday February 17 2019, 12.01am,





## Common Themes & Lessons

## Common Themes & Lessons

- None of the Inquiry reports was able to accurately determine scale of abuse
- **No community (religious or otherwise) is immune from the threat of child sexual abuse (or other types of abuse)**
- **Complacency is a big risk**



## Common Themes & Lessons

- Policies and procedures are important, BUT
  - **Attitude is more important still**
- 
- Children expect adults to model proper behaviour. Religious Authority reinforces this – perhaps to the highest degree –  
  
**‘the voice of God’**





The priest who abused **Greg** groomed his family first, and then fought the civil case he eventually brought

[Continue reading Greg's account](#) >

Church officials tried to persuade **Dwayne** to withdraw his statement about abuse by a clergyman

[Continue reading Dwayne's account](#) >

**Dylan** lost his faith when he was sexually abused by a curate, who was protected by the church

[Continue reading Dylan 's account](#) >

**Camila** finds it hard to live with the fact that the church chose to protect itself and its reputation

[Continue reading Camila's account](#) >

**Antoni** says that abuse in the church is 'heard about often ... and the church didn't do anything'

[Continue reading Antoni's account](#) >

**Daniela** says some church officials believe that Christians cannot be sexual abusers

[Continue reading Daniela's account](#) >

**Karl** says 'The church has colluded again and again' to suppress the truth about child sexual abuse

[Continue reading Karl's account](#) >

Sexual abuse and indoctrination by Mormon church members caused **Jade's** PTSD

[Continue reading Jade's account](#) >

**Bridget** says she feels stupid that abuse that lasted for 30 seconds had such an awful effect on her

[Continue reading Bridget's account](#) >

**Andre** says 'I'm sick to death of reading in the papers of another child being abused'

[Continue reading Andre's account](#) >

**Kenny** says 'society' should not tolerate organisations protecting their image rather than children'

[Continue reading Kenny 's account](#) >

**Ben** says 'Looking at the map of my abuse, everybody knew ... nobody stopped it.'

[Continue reading Ben's account](#) >

**Malcolm** was asked to leave school when his parents complained about a member of staff who abused him

[Continue reading Malcolm's account](#) >

**Martin** was sexually abused by someone involved with – but not employed by – the church

[Continue reading Martin's account](#) >

**Suzanne** knew no one outside her foster parents' church and could not

**Naomi** says that in the church she belonged to, a culture of denial is still facilitating abuse

[Continue reading Naomi's account](#) >

The priest who abused **Evin** was convicted twice, but the church would not formally acknowledge his guilt

[Continue reading Evin's account](#) >

**Anton** says 'the welfare of children must be given precedence over the institutions of church and state'

[Continue reading Anton's account](#) >

**Noah** thinks the causes of behavioural changes in children need to be identified

[Continue reading Noah's account](#) >

**Vinnie** says he shared his experience because 'I feel I shouldn't be an unseen statistic'

[Continue reading Vinnie's account](#) >

**Cathy** was empowered by the compensation she received for the sexual abuse at her church

[Continue reading Cathy's account](#) >

**Lewis's** parents trusted the man who sexually abused their son

[Continue reading Lewis's account](#) >

**Spencer** says his parents 'didn't want to make a fuss' because he attended a prestigious school

[Continue reading Spencer's account](#) >

**Berg** is still distressed by memories of the man who abused him. 'I think we him every day' he says

[Continue reading Berg's account](#)

**Angelina's** testimony encouraged others with similar experiences of abuse to speak out

[Continue reading Angelina's account](#)

**Felicia** says the belief that she was a girl and should do as she was told is ingrained in her mind

[Continue reading Felicia's account](#)

**Carlton** says 'Not a day goes by when I don't think about my time in that house'

[Continue reading Carlton's account](#)

**Madison** says 'I never wanted to go home ... it was supposed to be my refuge'

[Continue reading Madison's account](#)

**Ava** says 'I will probably always feel like I deserved it or something like that'

[Continue reading Ava's account](#)

Two institutions failed to take action against the man who sexually abused **Isaac**

[Continue reading Isaac's account](#)

**Adeline** says that people who have been through trauma may not have perfect recall

[Continue reading Adeline's account](#)

**Nicholas** describes how painful sexual abuse was, but 'you didn't see it in those days'

[Continue reading Nicholas's account](#)

It was clear to **Alexandra** that girls were likely to be blamed for the wrong doings of the boys

[Continue reading Alexandra's account](#)

**Angela** was abused by two men in her family but felt it was her role to protect her mother and her siblings

[Continue reading Angela's account](#)

**Graden** says that when he was a child 'there was no control over who was where with who'

[Continue reading Graden's account](#)

## Common Themes & Lessons

- The reputation of the organisation / individual must NEVER be put above the needs of the victim / survivor
- (Failure to respond properly to allegations leads to much greater subsequent damage to reputation)
- **This damage extends to (significant) damage to the faith**
- Incidents MUST be properly reported to the proper authorities (Local Authority, Police, Charity Commission).



## Charity Commission Requirements

You should report an incident if it results in, or risks, significant:

- harm to people who come into contact with your charity through its work
- loss of your charity's money or assets
- damage to your charity's property
- harm to your charity's work or reputation

The main categories of reportable incident are:

- protecting people and safeguarding incidents – incidents that have resulted in or risk significant harm to beneficiaries and other people who come into contact with the charity through its work
- financial crimes – fraud, theft, cyber-crime and money laundering

## Common Themes & Lessons

- Proper leadership is essential
- **This does not mean that leaders need understand everything**
- Safeguarding can be complex –  
    ensure Designated Safeguarding Leads are in place & lead  
    trustees for safeguarding
- Get professional support wherever needed –

E.g. thirtyone:eight / NSPCC

## Questions

- 1) To what extent do you think abuse 'wouldn't happen' in your community?
- 2) If there were an allegation of abuse, how prepared would you be to take the proper steps?
- 3) How willing would you be to prioritise the needs of the person making the allegation over the reputation of individuals / the organisation?

## Questions



Contact: [nick@sfitogether.org](mailto:nick@sfitogether.org)