

## **Updating Report for SCCA Campaign**

2012 proved incredibly important in raising public awareness of the institutional cultures and dynamics that hinder the effective implementation of Child Protection/Safeguarding policies and procedures.

The Savile Inquiries, the Rochdale cases and the inquiries and police investigation into child sexual abuse perpetrated by clergy within the Diocese of Chichester all in 2012 raise considerable concerns about how those placed in positions of authority within institutions, local authorities and police services as well as within the wider communities respond to Child Sexual Abuse that is taking place in some cases quite literally before their eyes.

### **The campaign and the Government's response**

The Stop Church Child Abuse ("SCCA") campaign was launched in March 2012. The campaign is an alliance of clergy sexual abuse survivors, charities supporting survivors, specialist lawyers and interested individuals working in the field of child safeguarding. The campaign aims to highlight the serious safeguarding failures of church institutions. The campaign and many individuals have called on the Government to institute an independent inquiry into child sexual abuse perpetrated by clergy, religious and other church officials within all Dioceses and institutions of the Catholic Church in England & Wales and the Church of England and in Wales.

Many contacts and letters have passed between the campaign's supporters and the MPs. The Government response to this pressure has been (quoting from the Education Secretary's letter of 25<sup>th</sup> May 2012):-

- 1) "No child should ever have to tolerate abuse. I am not however convinced of the need for a public inquiry, as the key issues are already being addressed by reforms we have underway.
- 2) We are improving disclosure and barring arrangements that prevent unsuitable adults working with children. Any organisation (for example a school run by a church) with individuals who look after children has clear statutory duties with criminal penalties for non-compliance. For example, any organisation that has removed a person from work, due to the risk of harm

they posed to children, or would have removed them had they not left first, must refer that person to the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA). The ISA will then consider barring that individual from working with children. It is an offence to fail, without good reason, to make such a referral.

- 3) It is also an offence for an organisation knowingly to allow a barred person to work with children. Schools and a range of other bodies that are regulated by this department also have a duty to check that a new entrant is not barred.
- 4) “.....we are committed to strengthening the role of statutory Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs). LSCBs coordinate the effectiveness of organisations’ safeguarding activity, and they should also secure the involvement of faith groups in their arrangements”
- 5) In the tragic event that a child is seriously harmed and there is cause for concern about how local professionals and services involved have worked together, then the LSCB will carry out a Serious Case Review.
- 6) The office of the children’s commissioner in 2011 also launched an in-depth inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups. Therefore we believe that we are already taking forward action that will broadly meet the outcomes that the campaign is seeking from an inquiry”.

This response is inadequate for the following reasons:-

- 1) Every single plan or initiative set out by Michael Gove will fail to catch a person suspected of abuse whose colleagues turn a blind eye either through misplaced loyalty to the individual or the organisation and/or conflicting interests.
- 2) Barring arrangements can only catch individuals already convicted of abuse or already barred by ISA.
- 3) Local Safeguarding Childrens Boards whilst helpful have no power to take action to force organisations to implement policy.
- 4) The lessons learned in serious case reviews whilst important are rarely translated into positive action.
- 5) The inquiry into Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups whilst important ignores abuse within established church organisations.

Overall the lack of compulsion to report to the police and social services is the key issue which has enabled many cover ups and scandals like the Archdiocese of Birmingham and Chichester to fester and be so harmful to children caught in these organisations.

A close analysis of the Diocese of Chichester reveals the dysfunctional dynamics and distorting attitudes and conflicting priorities that undermine child safety within Church communities and Institutions.

### **The Diocese of Chichester – The Dynamics of Abuse and Failures to Respond**

At the beginning of 2011 Baroness Butler-Sloss was asked to conduct a review into child protection failings within the Diocese of Chichester in respect of two vicars, Roy Cotton and Colin Pritchard. The report was published in May 2011 and found the Bishop of Lewes Wallace Benn to have acted incompetently. Numerous recommendations were made for improving responses to reported allegations of child abuse, especially where allegations are made by adults reporting abuse when they were children. Within days of the report being published survivors and vicars within the diocese contacted Butler Sloss claiming that the facts given to her by Bishop Wallace and the former Archdeacon of Hastings and Brighton, now Bishop of Blackburn Nicholas Reade, were incorrect. The Bishop they said had allowed the convicted sex offender, Rev Roy Cotton, who had further allegations made against him, to continue in ministry within the parish run by his co-accused Colin Pritchard, where children attended and where he was allowed to work with children.

Bishop Wallace Benn was reported under the Clergy Disciplinary Measures by the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory committee, the first Bishop known to have faced a CDM. In late 2011 the Archbishop of Canterbury commissioned an Arch Episcopal Visitation in the Diocese of Chichester to investigate and report on current Child Protection/Safeguarding failing within the Diocese. This was the first such Visitation in over 130 years in any Diocese in England.

Butler-Sloss wrote an addendum report to her review published in January 2012 setting out how she had been misled by Bishop Benn and Bishop Reade during her review.

Whilst the Archbishop's Commissars held hearings in the Diocese of Chichester and took evidence from a range of agencies and professionals, survivors of clergy abuse and support organisations, files were handed over to the police containing reported allegations of child sexual abuse made against a number of clergy within the Diocese. Operation Perry was launched by the Police to investigate clergy abuse within the diocese and in late 2011 and early 2012 four arrests were made and as a result of upwards of a further 70 victims coming forward, four men have been charged with sexual offences against children and all face trials during 2013.

The accused include:

- (i) **Canon of Chichester Cathedral, Rev Gordon Rideout** who had been investigated by police on four separate occasions over the previous thirty years in relation to reports made to Police of sexual offences against children at the Bernardo's children's home where he worked in the 1960s. It has also come to light that Rev Rideout had been court marshalled out of the army whilst an army chaplain on charges related to child sexual abuse before he worked at the Bernardo's children home.

In 2003 when Rev Rideout was last questioned by police, he attended the police station with the Bishop of Lewes Wallace Benn. Following questioning no charges were brought and the Bishop appointed Gordon Rideout Acting Archdeacon of Hastings and Brighton in 2004 and then Canon of Chichester Cathedral.

During the Past Cases Review of all files containing allegations of child sexual abuse by church officers and ministers conducted across all CoE Dioceses in England and in Wales between late 2007 and early 2009 Gordon Rideout's file was not disclosed to the independent reviewer appointed for the Diocese.

It also came to light when Gordon Rideout was arrested that until November 2011 he had been the Chair of Governors of Bishop Bell Secondary School, and as such was responsible for safeguarding at the school. He had been allowed to continue as Chair of Governors despite the Head teacher of the School and Bishop Wallace Benn having

knowledge that Rideout had multiple allegations of child sexual abuse made against him and multiple police investigations and had a blemished CRB check since August 2010 as a result.

After events at Bishop Bell School unfolded in September 2012 it was discovered that during Rev Rideout's time as Chair of Governors a comprise agreement was signed between the school and a teacher, Robert Healy, who was reported to have had acted inappropriately with female pupils, this enabled the Healy to move to another school where he was arrested and convicted for grooming pupils. Gordon Rideout was also Chair of Governors when Jeremy Forrest was appointed to the school as a teacher. Forrest made news headlines and triggered a Europe wide police hunt in September 2012 when he ran away with a pupil from the school with whom he was having a relationship, and fled to France. Forrest has been charged child abduction. At all times the HT and Chair of Governors knew about the inappropriateness of the relationship and yet failed to take effective action and failed to protect the pupil from further harm.

Gordon Rideout is now charged with 38 sexual offences against 18 children and young teenagers alleged to have been committed between 1962 to 1973, he pleaded Not Guilty at a plea and directions hearing in December 2012 and faces trial in April 2013.

- (ii) **Rev Robert Coles** previously investigated by police in the 1980s and 1990s in relation to reports of sexual offences against children. In 1997 he was questioned by police after victims came forward. In the summer of 1997 Coles confessed to the Bishop of Lewes, Wallace Benn and the then Archdeacon of Hastings and Brighton, Nicholas Reade that he had abused a child in the church. This information only came to light during recent police investigations when the files of clergy with allegations of child abuse were handed over by the Diocese. As a result the Diocesan safeguarding committee reported Bishop Wallace Benn and Nicholas Reade, Bishop of Blackburn under the CDM in the summer of 2012.

In 2012 Coles was arrested and charged with multiple counts of sexual offences against children and at the plea and directions hearing in

December 2012 he pleaded Guilty to eleven counts of sexual offences against children including buggery. On 14<sup>th</sup> February 2013 he was sentenced to 8 years in prison.

Following his conviction the former Bishop of Lewes, Wallace Benn issue a statement absolving himself of any blame or responsibility for the mishandling of the allegations that he had failed to disclose to police and/or the ongoing harm caused to the victims that resulted. We were also informed that the CDMs against him were dropped by the Archbishop of York for lack of evidence.

Police investigations are ongoing in respect of Operation Perry and evidence continues to be gathered.

### **Investigations into the former Bishop of Lewes and of Gloucester**

Whilst the Archbishop's investigations continued in 2012 further allegations of sexual abuse and assaults were reported concerning the former Bishop of Lewes and Bishop of Gloucester, Peter Ball. The National Safeguarding Advisor to the Church of England commissioned an Independent review of Peter Ball's files held at Lambeth Palace to determine whether there were criminal offences recorded there that should be investigated by police. Following the recommendations of the independent reviewer the Peter Ball files were handed over to Sussex police. In May 2012 the police launched Operation Dunhill to investigate allegations of the sexual abuse of children and young men aged between 1980s and 1990s. Following publicity of the investigation more men came forward.

One of the first victims to report abuse back in 1992, when he was just 18 years of age was Neil Todd. It was his allegations to which Peter Ball pleaded guilty to gross indecency in 1992, in an appalling plea bargaining deal that meant far worse charges were dropped and Ball was allowed to walk away free. The CoE National Safeguarding Advisor's office contacted Neil in early summer 2012 and asked him to come forward and make an official report of the appalling sexual and physical abuse by Peter Ball that he had suffered. Neil agreed to do so, however shortly after in July 2012 Neil took an overdose of insulin in his home in Queensland and remained in a coma until he died after his life support machine was turned off in August 2012.

Bishop Peter Ball and Rev Vickery House were arrested in October 2012. Peter Ball was arrested on suspicion of sexual offences against eight boys and young men aged from 12 to their early 20s in the late 1980s and 1990s. However Peter Ball did not answer questions as he was said to be too ill. He has maintained ill health to avoid answering police questions since then. Some of the men who have now come forward reported abuse taking place when they were testing their call to ministry, and have since become ordained ministers. They hesitated in reporting to police for fear of reprisals from Church Authorities if they pursued their allegations: a number had previously reported Peter Ball to church authorities in the late 1980s and early 1990s and had been severely criticised and condemned by church officials up to and including Lambeth Palace.

Police investigations are ongoing in respect of Operation Dunhill and evidence continues to be gathered.

Upwards of 70 people are believed to have now reported that they were sexually abused by clergy within the Diocese of Chichester from the 1960s up to the late 1990s.

### **Arch Episcopal Visitation Report**

The Interim Report from the Arch Episcopal Visitation was published in September 2012 and was damning of the cultural and institutional dynamics that had failed to ensure that the welfare of children and vulnerable adults was paramount. Bishop Wallace Benn was heavily criticised for creating and contributing to the negative culture and dysfunctional dynamics within the Diocese which undermined the power of the Diocesan Bishop and therefore the Diocesan child protection policies. The recommendations made by Butler-Sloss were endorsed and recommended for consideration and implementation across Dioceses in England and Wales.

Many questions remain however as there is compelling evidence implicating Bishops who up until this year were member of the House of Lords, in the cover up of a network of child sex offenders within the Diocese of Chichester. There is clear evidence that several Bishops with the permission of the Archbishop of Canterbury in the late 1960s circumvented the procedures to be followed when selecting men for ordained ministry in order to accommodate a convicted sex offender who would

otherwise not be selected. There is compelling evidence of attempts to protect Bishop Peter Ball going to the top of the establishment in this country and including senior members of the royal family. And there is compelling evidence that Bishops and other senior clergy within the Catholic Church and the Church of England used their close ecumenical ties within the overlapping dioceses to move sex offenders between denominations and across dioceses when allegations of sexual abuse of children and vulnerable adults threatened to become a public scandal. Internal inquiries such as those that have so far taken place fail to ask the questions that would get to the heart of what happened in Chichester.

### **Other cases within the Diocese of Chichester**

There had been a number of reported cases of sexual abuse by clergy within the Diocese of Chichester before 2011 as set out in the original SCCA report. The cases of Rev Roy Cotton and Colin Pritchard were the subjects of two reviews conducted by Roger Singleton in 2010 and Butler-Sloss in 2011. It was found that Cotton had first been convicted of child sex offences in 1954 in Oxford where he was in seminary training for ordination. He was told by the church to go away until he had matured. Cotton went off and set up a school with a friend in the early 1960s, Cookham Wood School. Multiple allegations of sexual misconduct with pupils were made against him and he left the school in 1967. Cookham Wood was the first school Esther Rantzen investigated as part of the ground breaking investigations into child abuse with the That's Life team in the 1980s and managed to get the school closed down.

Despite all this information being passed to the Diocese of Portsmouth where Cotton lived the Bishop asked for special dispensation from the then Archbishop Ramsay so that he could be ordained without the normal formalities and scrutiny. This was allowed. The Bishop of Portsmouth also persuaded the Scouting movement to overturn its lifetime ban on Cotton working with scouts and he then persuaded Bishop Eric Kemp of Chichester to take him into ministry there, his file went with him, with the conviction and the multiple allegations set down. Cotton proceeded to abuse boys for decades up to 1998, however when the reviewers checked his files in 2010 and 2011 they found all records from 1972 to 1997 had been removed.

The Johnson brothers reported extensive and prolonged sexual abuse by Cotton to police in 1996. Following a three year investigation during which no corroborating evidence was found, no charges were brought against him or his co-accused Rev Colin Pritchard.

In or about 2006 Pritchard eventually pleaded guilty to sexual offences against the Johnson brothers in 2008 and was sentenced to 5 year after an interminable wait a report was made by another victim of Colin Pritchard and police were able to link this to the report by the Johnson brothers, new investigations into Cotton and Pritchard were opened and Cotton died shortly after. s in prison.

During protracted negotiations as the Johnson brothers settled their claims against the diocese evidence emerged of the Cotton conviction and previous allegations and of further allegations coming to light after previous police investigations were closed in 1999, none of which were reported to police. The Johnson brothers demanded a review into how Roy Cotton ever became a vicar, and how he was placed in a position of authority to abuse them. The Singleton and Butler-Sloss reviews followed in 2010 and 2011.

A review was also conducted into the handling of child sexual abuse allegations at the Prebendle Cathedral School in Chichester in 2003 after three men including a choir master and a vicar were convicted of child sex offences against choir boys. Although the Bishop of Chichester promised to make the findings public only a summary was ever made public. The 'Carmie Report' uncovered that files central to the inquiry were deliberately destroyed/burnt at the Bishop's palace.

In the early 2000s a murder trial took place in Eastbourne after a young man, aged only 16 was charged with killing and dismembering the body a retired vicar Rev Glazebrook. The young man, Christopher Hunnisett was found guilty of murder and sent to prison for life. In the Court of Appeal in 2008 Hunnisett had his conviction overturned after evidence was produce that Glazebrook had sexually abused him from the age of 10 and that he had killed him when he tried to abuse him again. Having already served a number of years in prison Hunnisett was released.

Upon release Hunnisett, by now the balance of his mind seriously disturbed, set about finding other child sex offenders and having drawn up a list of over 900 he met

with one on his list, Peter Buck and murdered him in 2010. Hunnisett was found guilty of murder and sentenced to life in prison in 2012.

### **Disturbing Evidence of Collusion and Abuse between Catholic and Anglican clergy**

Among the disturbing evidence to emerge over the past year have been reports from a number of people who have contacted survivor support groups including Eastbourne Survivors and MACSAS about clergy who seem to have worked together with priests from the Catholic Diocese of Arundel and Brighton which overlaps the Diocese of Chichester geographically to abuse children. Reports include that of a Catholic priest who had multiple reports for alleged child sex offences and who was moved by the Catholic Bishop over to the CoE diocese of Chichester and became an Anglican Minister. This man had abused children and teenage girls whilst a Catholic priest and had multiple allegations on his file. In or about the 1980s one of his victims became pregnant and in a deal with then Bishop Cormac Murphy O'Connor he agreed to marry the victim and become an Anglican minister. Within a few years the vicar's wife suspected that he was abusing their daughter and following a hospital investigation she left him. In 2001/2 when all files of Catholic priests with allegations of child abuse were being investigated by police the man confessed to the Archdeacon of Hasting and Brighton that he had abused many children including his daughter. This information was not passed to the police, the Archdeacon was Nicholas Reade who went on to become the Bishop of Blackburn and was found to have misled Butler-Sloss in her review into the Diocese in 2011. It also came to light that the offender had on occasion brought his daughter to meetings with Fr Michael Hill, a convicted sex offender and Rev Roy Cotton also a convicted sex offender.

The relationship between the Anglican and Catholic churches in the Dioceses of Arundel and Brighton and Chichester has been historically close. The Pope celebrated an ecumenical service in Arundel and Brighton in the 1980s at the height of that closeness, Bishops Cormac Murphy O'Connor and Peter Ball were close friends and it is now known that both sat on multiple reports of child sexual abuse by clergy and did nothing to protect children from further abuse.

In total upwards of 17 Anglican and 19 Catholic clergy have been reported to have abused children up to the late 1990s within these Dioceses. Most lived and/or worked within one small geographic area which adds to the concern that there was a network of sex offenders shoaling for victims within church communities, schools, cathedrals, youth groups and scouting groups. There has been no inquiry into the movement of these men across parishes, Dioceses and denominations and the harm caused to so many more children as a direct result.

### **Ongoing concerns within the Catholic Church and Religious Communities**

The recent issue of The Child Abuse Review (December 2012) is a special issue on Child Sexual Abuse within Religious Institutions in the UK with a particular focus on the Catholic Church. Philip Gilligan of the University of Bradford contrasts the narrative on responses to victims of clergy abuse in England and Wales and considered how the responses to victims of child abuse continue to be undermined by trying to serve conflicting legitimacy of communities and prioritising the financial interests and reputation of the Institution over the needs of victims.

This issue comes after three years of unprecedented focus on the abuse of children by clergy within the Catholic Church and institutions run by it Religious Orders. The Pope's visit to the UK in 2010 provided the opportunity for survivors to publicise the failure of the Church to acknowledge the many thousands of children in this country who were sexual and physical abuse by priests and members of religious communities over decades.

MACSAS (Minister and Clergy Sexual Abuse Survivors) carried out a survey throughout 2010 asking victims/survivors about the responses they received from the Church (all denominations) when they reported cases of child abuse. The findings and analysis of the Survey were published in 2011 and provided compelling evidence that despite the rhetoric of the Catholic Church that it was prioritising responses to victims of abuse, the experience of victims was of being ignored, dismissed and re-traumatised when they reported cases. Even where clergy and members of religious communities were convicted for child sex offences their victims were ignored and forced to seek pastoral responses and restorative justice through the civil courts (eg. St Williams Children Home – Supreme Court Judgement Autumn 2012; and Archdiocese of Birmingham – Robinson Conviction October 2010).

The Ealing Abbey and St Benedict's School inquiries and reviews (Carlisle, Charity Commission and OFSTED 2011/2012) highlighted the institutional failings to protect children from a known sex offender who had previously been found to have abused children in a civil claim in the High Court in 2006. When interviewed by journalists in 2011/12 the current Abbot of Ealing Abbey appeared not to recognise the moral and personal culpability of the members of the religious community who had known for decades that the former head teacher of the school was sexually abusing boys. The Abbot continued to refer to 'rumours' of abuse as if these were something different in nature to concerns raised and reported allegations made by pupils past and current. At no time did any member of the community acknowledge how wrong they were to continue denying David Pearce had abused children right up to the day of his conviction for multiple sex offences against boys over a period of more than thirty years including a victim who had reported the abuse in 2004 and was told by the then Abbot that Pearce was well known to have abused children for decades. Yet from 2004 to 2008 Pearce was portrayed within the press and the school and parish community as a man falsely accused of sexual offences against children and was allowed to reside at the Abbey beside the school where he was able to abuse another child between 2006 and 2007. He was eventually convicted in 2009.

Pearce was only one of six teachers and monks who had allegations of sexual abuse made against them as revealed in the Carlisle review. Fr Lawrence Soper, a former Abbot of Ealing Abbey went on the run aged 80 in 2011 when he was faced with the prospect of police questioning. It is undoubted that his whereabouts it known to senior officials within the Benedictine order and the Catholic Church, he is believed to be in a monastery in Italy.

Buckfast Abbey and Downside Abbey and School and the safeguarding failings within the Diocese of Plymouth have also been the subject of multiple reviews and inquiries in 2011/2012 following the latest convictions of the Prior of Buckfast Abbey and a monk at Downside Abbey for the sexual abuse of pupils at their associated Schools, and the conviction of the Diocesan of Plymouth Safeguarding Advisor who was investigating Buckfast Abbey, for possession and production of images of children being sexually abused.

There is no evidence that anything has changed within the Catholic Church with respect to its handling of child sexual abuse allegation made repeatedly and over decades. Many thousands of victims of sexual abuse perpetrated within the Catholic Church continue to struggle to be heard and for their cases to be taken seriously, or to receive any kind of compassionate response from Church leaders and the leaders of religious communities.

The Supreme court cases concerning the more than 150 victims of sexual abuse at St Williams Children's Home in Middlesbrough and the case of JGE and the Diocese of Portsmouth are evidence of the lengths to which the Catholic church will go to avoid any acknowledgement of responsibility and liability for the devastating harm caused to some many children whilst under the care of their officers and within their institutions.

How are the actions and inactions of the Catholic Church and the Church of England set out here and within the original SCCA report any different to those found within the Savile Inquiries and inquiries into Local Authority run children's services and homes?

**Why smart policies and procedures for real people living in the real world are needed, rather than ones written for super heroes living in fantasy world.**

Victims of child sexual abuse carry terrible suffering that cannot be resolved without processes of truth, justice and reconciliation being engaged with. In the Diocese of Chichester one victim murdered his abuser and another took his own life after a courageous life long battle to overcome the abuse he suffered. Yet it has been the tireless efforts of one man, a victim of sexual abuse by a vicar that he endured for over 9 years that uncovered a network of sex offenders within the Church of England who had been enabled to continue to abuse children for decades despite cases reported by victims from the 1950s onwards. Some victims reported cases multiple times over a period of more than thirty years, never forgetting what happened to them, some were in children's homes and social service care when the abuse took place, they were the most vulnerable of the vulnerable. Others were choir boys, boy scouts, pupils in schools; all were abused by men who wielded unquestioned power and authority over their communities and whose denials were believed by police, social services and church communities over the reports of victims who did not wield the same level of power or authority.

Church leaders express their shocked at the reports of the extent of the abuse perpetrated within the Diocese of Chichester, yet compelling evidence has emerged over the past ten years that church leaders knew about these cases, held files containing multiple allegations against the same men and did nothing to report what they knew to the police, bar the offenders from ministry or protect children from harm. At best church leaders were naive and incompetent and at worst they perverted the course of justice, aided and abetted the commission of criminal offences against children and colluded in the cover up of crimes.

Destroying files when inquiries are taking place, failing to hand over evidence of previous convictions and multiple allegations when police are investigating and failing to report to the police when offenders confess they have abused children, all has happened within the Diocese of Chichester.

Church communities and church leaders refused to look at what was happening and the terrible harm being caused to so many despite it being common knowledge within the Church that certain vicars liked choir boys, scouts, and little girls. There was no secret among the brotherhood of clergy about those among them who had particular 'weaknesses' for children or young men and women. Congregations preferred to believe the statements issued by Bishops and Archdeacons when cases did break into public knowledge often fearful of what it would mean if it was true that the parish priest was having sex with their children.

For what does it mean when leaders within communities betray and abuse the trust and authority that adheres to their office in the most horrendous way, to rape and sexually abuse our children? What does it mean that Bishops, Police and social services knew about the growing number of cases and allegations yet did little and took no effective actions against suspected offenders, thereby allowing them to continue abusing? What does it mean that parents of children abused preferred to believe the denials of prolific sex offenders over the truth told by their own children?

We must sit with these truths, the truth that power dynamics and conflicting priorities can and do distort our responses to the dangers of sexual predators attacking our children. Society needs to acknowledge that this is true, that despite the noble objective of wanting to protect children and place their welfare as paramount, children are vulnerable because they are not adults and they do not have the power and authority that would enable their experiences of abuse to be heard over the insistent denials and manipulations of the offenders who often do have power and authority and most crucially legal rights that do not accrue to children.

There is a need to be a reflective society not a reactionary one, a need to gather the evidence and research to understand how people actually respond to disturbing reports that all is not well within the community, that close to us are people who are abusing and harming children, women and the vulnerable.

Contrary to our perception of ourselves as brave and courageous in the face of evil, we are not, we shy away from costly confrontations and the more powerful the offender the more costly any engagement with reporting concerns and pursuing reports becomes. For it is costly to report a colleague, a family member, a husband, brother, grandfather, a teacher or Head Teacher, a doctor, judge, priest or Bishop. The uncertainty, the 'what if I'm wrong; begin, then the 'what would it mean', or 'how would this look', or 'what about the school, church, family reputation'. 'What about my job', so many get sacked for reporting concerns about colleagues especially if they are more senior. The Whistle Blowing legislations has not been well used not because there are not multiple concerns within institutions, hospitals, schools, children's homes etc, but because the cost to the whistle blower is still huge and often outweighs doing the right things.

Most people do not say to themselves "despite the consequences of reporting my concerns the welfare of the child and others come above anything that can happen to me as a result". We should not expect people to be heroes or martyrs: people have families, children, bills to pay, they have careers and aspirations for promotion, they have positions within churches and communities, they also have egos and fantasies and delusions and weaknesses, fears and anxieties. People often trust the people who are accused of abusing children and vulnerable adults and want to believe their friends, relatives and/or colleagues, because if what is alleged is true they too have been betrayed and abused. People invest themselves in relationships with others and they cannot help but be affected by and influenced by what others do. It is very difficult to set aside all these pressures and relational dynamics to engage with the objective principle that the welfare and safety of a child, even one we don't know very well is paramount; in many cases the child's welfare is not paramount within institutions where abuse is taking place. Paying the bills, maintaining a close friendship, keeping a family together, or a school running, protecting reputations, avoiding being called racist, are often more important at the time, in the instant when decisions have to be made.

"Why should I be the hero?"; "why me?"; "if I do nothing someone else will"; "I can't afford to get involved"; "I'm too busy"; "I don't even know if it's true"; "the heck the child lies all the time"; "it's not that serious"; "she asked for it"; "he provoked him"; "he's disturbed"; "she's made a choice to be a prostitute".

These responses by real people in the real world have been said and reported when professionals and others were confronted with deciding whether to officially report concerns and allegations of child abuse. Why are we so devastated that these responses are common? Why do we continue to maintain that if we just get the training right people will suddenly find the personal courage to overcome all the cultural and institutional, personal and familial dynamics that stop them acting according to the objective principles within the safeguarding policies?

### **Mandatory Reporting and Smart Policies**

Instead of trying to change human natures and characteristics why not draft policies and procedures and legislation that acknowledge these human dynamics? Make the reporting of allegations and concerns of child abuse mandatory and so cut across many of the distorting dynamics. A bishop might want to protect his friend or church reputation but if he gets a criminal conviction for so doing and a hefty fine then he will think it a poor exchange to have his own destroyed. Within schools and hospitals a colleague would have no choice but to report or face prosecution and so would be better protected from blame by others as all are in the same boat. It cuts across friendship and loyalty when faced with prison or hefty fines. Also it takes away the perceived need to weigh up whether the concerns reported are true, or serious enough, or who to believe before deciding what to do, the person reporting is freed from having to make judgements about friends and colleagues or the child.

However mandatory reporting alone is not enough. There needs to be build into policies and procedures the understanding of how real people respond to disturbing events within their communities, work places and families. Making it explicit that people will feel conflicted, and how our decision making may be distorted by disturbing events which are so serious. We need to develop policies and procedures that acknowledge these dynamics yet remain effective. Training is part of that, together with developing reflective practices within institutions and communities and professions, that question how things are being done and what is determining decision making on a regular basis to ensure that distorting dynamics are identified as soon as possible, engaged with and minimised.

We won't be able to do this whilst Governments and others continue to draft legislation, policies and procedures fit only for the few with the personal integrity and

moral courage to transcend the distorting dynamics and conflicting interests within Institutions, communities and within ourselves.

### **The Need for a Commission of Inquiry**

There needs to be a Commission of Inquiry in order for the public, our society to understand why we continue to fail to safeguard children, why the prevalence of child abuse has remained stubbornly constant despite more than 20 years of Government policies, from Working Together to Protect Children to Every Child Matters, Safeguarding Children, Safer Recruitment and Dealing with Allegations of Abuse etc; inquiries such as Victoria Climbié, the Soham Murders and Peter Connolly, and the development of a profession and a multi-million pound industry dedicated to child protection and safeguarding.

Anecdotal evidence, serious case reviews and piecemeal research conducted within academic institutions and child protection organisations is not enough to bring about the shift in understanding that is required within society to enable the fundamental changes in attitude required to make real our stated objective to protect children.

A Commission of inquiry would set down what has happened to our children in the care of institutions in this country: Church and State, public and private, charitable, social care, education and health care services. A Commission would help us to understand why even today those tasked with protecting children are failing to recognise the harm being caused to them even when the abuse is happening before their eyes (including Rochdale, Oxfordshire, Hill Side First School, Ealing Abbey, Chichester Diocese and the Savile Inquiries). Only when the truth is faced, when victims have told what happened to them, those who knew and did nothing have answered questions, and when those who tried to report and were ignored are heard, will we be able to understand what it is that needs to happen next. Then the development of legislation, policies and procedures will reflect reality: fashioned by the knowledge of the dynamics and culture, attitudes and conflicting interests that distort responses and undermine the protection and safeguarding of children.

We need to have the courage to face the truth and acknowledge what undermines our best intentions if we are ever to effectively protect our children.

**Let's have policies and procedures for real people living in the real world rather than for super heroes living in a fantasy world.** Let's stop blaming people for being human and start working out how we can better protect our children together.

**[NB 1 6<sup>th</sup> February 2013 – The report of the public inquiry into the Staffordshire Hospital Care scandal recommended inter alia that it should be a criminal offence if hospital staff and managers fail to report cases of poor care which is like to cause serious harm or death to patients. If it hospitals and patients why not institutions tasked with working with and caring for children?**

**NB 2 18<sup>th</sup> February 2013 – the look at improving the whistle-blowing legislation is in response to the understanding of the difficulties and conflicts of interest that stop people reporting concerns. Let's see something similar in terms of our statutory frameworks for safeguarding children.]**

**February 2013**