

## Introduction

In 2017 the Independent Safeguarding Advisory Panel for the Diocese of Chichester recommended that the Diocese commission research regarding the history of sexual abuse in its churches. This recommendation was in recognition of the large number of proven cases of abuse that had come to light in recent years. In making this recommendation, the Panel was mindful that more was known about what had happened than why it had happened, and in particular why such a relatively large concentration of cases had occurred within this Diocese.

The Diocese approached Professor David Shemmings from the University of Kent to lead the research. Professor Shemmings, a leading expert in the use of interviews and qualitative methods in social research, and his wife Yvonne, who works with him in numerous training and research contexts, conducted a series of interview with Diocesan staff, police colleagues who had worked investigations into abuse in the Diocese, and victims of abuse.

The Diocese is very grateful to Professor Shemmings and Yvonne for their work, and to all those who contributed to this research. In particular, the Diocese wishes to thank those victims of abuse who agreed to be interviewed, reliving very painful experiences in order that those responsible for preventing abuse in church now can learn lessons from the past.

Many readers of this report may be unfamiliar with ‘qualitative’ studies as opposed to ‘quantitative’. In reading this material, readers should understand that the authors have been exploring the experience of those whom they have interviewed rather than examining facts in all their detail. This is a distinct discipline that differs from that used to compile reports that set out factual evidence. The experiences of those interviewed are important because they describe the real effect of events upon their minds.

The report makes for difficult reading, particularly as it shines light on elements of the culture of the Diocese and its churches that contributed to abuse of the vulnerable. The voices in this report add to the findings of the recently-published Chichester case study from the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, the review conducted by Dame Moira Gibb into the case of Bishop Peter Ball, and other similar reviews that have highlighted not only the guilt of individual abusers, but also the responsibility of the wider church regarding its culture, leadership, and values. No matter how difficult it is to hear the voices in this report, particularly those of victims whose experience challenges the Diocese to its core, it is vital that we approach these perspectives with an open mind and a humble attitude, recognising the depth of hurt that has been caused and the moral imperative that is placed on us as a result, to do all we can now to ensure that children and adults are safe in our churches.

The report adds to the wealth of research in this field, but as it identifies, there is much more to learn. The suggestions contained in both this report and others offer food for thought, for the wider church and not only for this diocese, and indeed for other organisations. Careful consideration will be needed on the best areas to focus on. Meanwhile, we commend this report to you and trust that the moral challenge it contains will continue to drive the Diocese towards further improvements to our safeguarding culture and practice.

**Sexual Abuse by Clergymen  
in the Diocese of Chichester**

*'You Can't Say No To God'*

*FINAL REPORT*

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## Introduction

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Over many years in the Diocese of Chichester a number of children were sexually abused and humiliated. They were sometimes plied with drink or drugs (and sometimes both). To add insult to injury - literally - they were sometimes made to feel that the abuse they suffered was their fault or, even worse, ordained and sanctioned by God. As one of the individuals interviewed put it 'You can't say "No" to God'.

It is difficult to comprehend how trapped, imprisoned, terrified, alone and abandoned survivors<sup>1</sup> must have felt when this was happening to them. Survivors were sometimes made to feel 'special' - 'chosen', even - and that their recruitment into the 'inner circles' of abuse was not only the ultimate seal but also the condition of their membership.

This abuse took place at different levels in the organisation but, perhaps understandably, attention has focussed more on some of the most senior clergymen<sup>2</sup> found guilty of sexually abusing children. So we are probably more familiar with the cases of Ball, Pritchard, Cotton, House and other clergymen than what else was going on in the Diocese: 'goings-on' that may have contributed to, exacerbated and reinforced the abuse taking place.

Hearing from those involved about what happened in this Diocese - as well as in others – over many years, has affected us both (and we have both worked in the field of child protection and safeguarding, between us now for over 50 years). To learn, repeatedly, about the effects and sequelae of what happened to survivors into their adulthood was in one sense humbling but, at another, devastating. That these events could have happened within a set of religious beliefs based on love, peace and non-violence is particularly hard to reconcile.

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<sup>1</sup> There is a debate about whether the children subjected to sexual abuse should be referred to as 'survivors' or 'victims'. Most of these children are now adults and their preferred term is usually 'survivor' (although clearly some did not survive, such as the late Neil Todd, who attempted suicide three times before he took his own life in 2012, aged 38).

<sup>2</sup> The abusers featuring in the reports were all male, so masculine pronouns and other descriptors are used for them throughout this report.

## Background to the specific brief and the research questions

What we hope to achieve in this report is to begin to address the following questions, given to us as the brief for this research:

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### Commission brief

1. The Diocese of Chichester will commission a small qualitative research study and review of key documents into the known history of child sexual abuse in the Diocese.
2. The main outcome of this research will be to seek to move from understanding 'what' has happened to understanding 'why'.
3. To that end, the research will seek to identify:
  - *Patterns of offending behaviour*
  - *Patterns of victimisation*
  - *Pattern of offenders, including any evidence of links or associations*
  - *Features of the institutions (i.e. Individual churches/parishes) in which the abuse occurred*
  - *Features of organisational responses that contributed, or may have contributed, to the initiating and maintenance of the abuse*

The research will draw upon:

4. Existing reports and reviews into abuse in the Diocese of Chichester (all published, available on Diocese of Chichester Safeguarding website). Current data regarding the extent of abuse associated with the Diocese (including a mapping exercise jointly conducted by the Diocese of Chichester and Sussex Police). Wider published research regarding abuse in religious and institutional settings.
5. The primary purpose of this research will be to inform current practice in the Diocese of Chichester and the wider Church of England with regards to safeguarding children and adults.

Because there is already in existence a number of reports (see Appendix A for a list) that have tried to address the 'Who, the When and the Where', the aim of this research study was to concentrate upon 'the How and the Why' questions. We were also asked to focus on the 'present and the future' rather than on the specific events of the past. The brief asked us to see if we could identify patterns of offending and victimisation as well as consider

aspects of the organisation and its culture that might explain what happened (and, because everyone needs to stay vigilant and resist complacency, may still be happening).

To understand and appreciate the scale and magnitude of the ‘Who, What and Where’ questions we have included as Appendix B some of the key paragraphs in Dame Moira Gibb’s report, published in the summer of 2017. For those unfamiliar with the events these extracts provide the chronological detail of what happened.

Following the Gibb report the current Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, was critical of the role played by one of his predecessors, George Carey, and, as a result the Archbishop asked Lord Carey to step down from an honorary role he occupied in the Church of England within the diocese of Oxford. The Guardian newspaper on 22 June 2017 contained the following passage:

*‘Justin Welby said the Report on the church’s handling of former bishop Peter Ball made harrowing reading. “The church colluded and concealed rather than seeking to help those who were brave enough to come forward. This is inexcusable and shocking behaviour”, Welby said’.*

To be able to move on after a series of seismic or catastrophic events, it is necessary to remember the past while deliberately focusing one’s gaze to the future. When driving a car we look forwards, through the windscreen, yet we would be a dangerous driver if we didn’t regularly look in the rear-view mirror; but we would end up an even more dangerous driver if we *only* looked through the rear-view mirror. The aim is to get the balance right which, in our driving analogy, is pre-set for us, given the relative sizes of the windscreen and mirror.

To help achieve this balance in practice, Marie Keenan’s 2013 book *Child Sexual Abuse and the Catholic Church: Gender, Power, and Organisational Culture* we believe contains some important ideas for the Diocese to consider for the future. We refer to these ideas at different points in this report but here we introduce those that we believe are important when adjusting the focus between the past, the present and the future. Although her research was conducted within the Catholic Church, primarily in Ireland, it strikes us that

there are certainly more than enough similarities to permit its translation almost entirely to the Church of England, especially within the Anglo-Catholic tradition. Here are the two key sections:

*In the case of sexual abuse and how to deal with it, it might be more appropriate to argue both sociologically and functionally that once abuse remains unpunished and becomes widespread, as suggested in some reports into institutional abuse in Ireland (... ref provided ...) and that individuals and institutions learn that there are no limits to these behaviours and bystanders won't protest, the abuse and violence becomes "normal practice," which is what it appears to have become'. (p.xii).*

*'Despite occasional mutterings in the public press and the rare suggestion in the empirical literature, there is no evidence to suggest that Catholic clergy enter clerical and religious life with the purpose of gaining access to children to abuse them. In fact, the most comprehensive research ever carried out on sexual abuse by Catholic clergy, conducted by researchers in the United States (John Jay Study, 2004, 2006, 2011), reports that whatever else formed the priests' motivation for joining, there is no evidence to suggest that gaining access to children to abuse is part of it. My own experience confirms this. The more I met with the clerical men, who had abused, the more intrigued I became. Put simply, I was not in the presence of "monsters," nor was I in the presence of individuals who had an "illness." I began to think there must be more to this problem (with) situational and institutional dimensions beyond the well-documented mishandling of abuse complaints in Ireland, England, the United States, Canada, Australia, and now other parts of Europe'. (p.xiv).*

To move on from these events, beliefs about the possibility of sex offenders being able to change need to be considered. But here is another quote from Keenan (2013) to indicate some of the context of our analysis later. We include it here as we believe it should be discussed and debated as part of the 'moving forward' agenda upon which the Diocese has already embarked.

*'Despite the best of intentions of therapists and do-gooders, so the argument goes, no help in the world can change these men. The common belief and perception of clerical perpetrators is that they are fundamentally flawed and fundamentally bad; they just managed to hide that fact for a long time. Public belief rests on the premise*

*that “once a child sexual offender; always a child sexual offender.” The idea of “flawed nature” dominates reports and public debate. In the paradigm of criminal essentialism (... refs provided ...) the sexual offender is bad and cannot ever be good. In the somewhat popular paradigm of paedophilia, the sexual offender is simply regarded as sick and cannot ever recover from his condition. Reductionist models of explanation and intervention are en vogue. In the rush to condemn, some things get noticed but even more gets missed. The stage is set for extremes of hate. In the world of good versus evil, the good are allowed the occasional mistake, but “the essentially evil” deserve no consideration whatsoever. In the current climate, Catholic clergy who have perpetrated sexual abuse against minors are largely seen and treated as a cast of unreformable men. They have almost become “untouchables,” total outcasts. The hierarchy who are accused of “cover-up” are also seen as beyond redemption’.* (p.xxiv).

A concern we have is that an assumption might follow that the Diocese should spend time or money trying to rehabilitate current offenders. That, we believe, would be disrespectful and insensitive to the survivors of the original abuse, to say the least. Nevertheless, if it is possible for current offenders to be helped then, as part of the duty of a humane and caring society, but especially within the Church of England, with its deep-rooted beliefs about forgiveness, reparation and absolution, sexual offenders should be offered opportunities to change. Nevertheless, we were told by Stevie that any such ‘rehabilitation’ would not include working with children or vulnerable adults again, as this is precluded by Church of England policy and, in some instances, by UK legislation.

Although this report sheds some new light on the subject of the sexual abuse of children within a religious setting, sometimes by refocussing and recalibrating lenses already in existence, we will argue later that there is so much that we still do not know about the motivations of sexual offenders generally, but especially within religious settings. A promising area of possible future research might be to develop a greater understanding of men who are attracted to children but who *claim* not to act upon their predilections – so called ‘desisting sexual offenders’. We say ‘so called’ because it is possible that ‘non-desisting’ sexual offenders could decide to refer to themselves as ‘desisting’ in order to avoid suspicion and to further legitimise their activities: without wishing to be cynical, it is important to be aware that sexual offenders can be extremely scheming and devious. Thus, we need an ‘open mind ... but not an empty head’.

The aim of the research was deliberately to identify key individuals likely to express different viewpoints, and then to explore their perspectives in some detail with them. This can present some dilemmas if the views expressed are based upon inaccurate information or perceptions. Where this was felt likely to happen, we sought advice from other sources (whilst maintaining the anonymity of the interviewee/s).

What emerges from this study are differences of opinion or perception on a number of themes. Some of those interviewed believed there was evidence of the abuse being 'covered-up', but others disagreed. Some thought there was evidence of the existence of a paedophile ring in operation; others do not. Some thought there was a specific problem in the Diocese, whereas others believed strongly that similar abuse had happened - and was probably still taking place - elsewhere in the country (and we would add, across the world and in many other organisations too). And there was the question of 'homosexuality and sexual abuse', which divided interviewees. We would wish to state here, however, that research into the sexual abuse of children – globally, nationally and locally – shows unambiguously that they are more at risk from heterosexual men than any other group. We have reported key individuals' viewpoints as they were stated to us but we have not sought – and were not asked - to investigate the underlying facts and assumptions upon which those viewpoints are based. They will not be agreed with by all readers of this report.

We argue in the final section of this report that both the Diocese and the Church of England as a whole will need to listen to these differing viewpoints and seek to correct misunderstood facts but also to appreciate that a considerable amount of repair and reconciliation is needed to heal the wounds caused by the behaviour of some priests. From what people have told us, simple apologies along with a desire to 'move on' will not be enough.

In the next short section we outline the design and methodology of the research, undertaken between November 2017 and January 2018.

## Design and Methodology

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### Design

The aim of the research was to understand *why* the abuse of children, young people and sometimes adults happened in the Diocese, rather than explore the more forensic aspects of *what* happened (partly because many of those questions have been addressed already in the myriad reports that now exist on sexual abuse within the Diocese of Chichester).

With that end in mind a small-scale but intensive qualitative research study was sought, the aim of which was to explore the perspectives of some of the key 'stakeholders' in the Diocese. Some of those interviewed were suggested by the commissioner of the study, Colin Perkins (Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser), and the group overall comprised:

- Survivors of the abuse
- Senior and other police officers who had investigated the allegations
- Senior and other members of clergy and priesthood within the Diocese (but not any of those convicted of the sexual offences)
- Senior and other professionals involved in the role and tasks of safeguarding within, or in association with others within, the Diocese
- The author/s of previous reports

A total of 17 interviews were undertaken (all by the same person, Yvonne). They were mostly conducted at the interviewee's home or place of work, except for one conducted over the telephone, one conducted using Skype and one in the Diocese's administrative centre. In addition one set of correspondence was received, representing three survivors.

All of those interviewed agreed for the sessions to be audio-recorded. They were informed that they could stop the interview at any point if they were uncomfortable or if they needed a break, or if they were unsure about meaning of the question or why it was being asked. Before the recorder was switched on, the purpose, aims and design of the research were explained and any questions answered or addressed.

All participants were assured that what they said would remain confidential and that, furthermore, their anonymity would also be protected. To achieve this, we gave each participant a 'gender-neutral' name and we have used 's/he' or 'her/his' instead of the 'gender-specific' personal pronouns i.e. 'he', 'she' etc. (Obviously, individuals will most likely recognise themselves in the quoted material but, to maintain anonymity and confidentiality, it is important that they do not reveal this later).

To preserve the anonymity of priests, clergy or any other members of the Diocese we have used letters e.g. 'X' to disguise their identity. If more than one person is alluded to in a quote then we have used additional letters of the alphabet. The letters used do not refer to the same individual throughout the report.

Participants were informed that detailed notes - and, later on, that full transcriptions of extracts to be quoted - would be produced and kept in a secure place and that they would then be destroyed after the publication of the report.

Additionally we were able to refer to all available reports connected with these events in the Diocese (see Appendix A). Most of these reports are available on the Diocese website (<http://www.chichester.anglican.org/>) and a small number of other relevant documents were made available including, for example, some personal diaries of a survivor's relative, who has now passed way.

After the interviews were completed a draft of the report was sent to the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor who then circulated it to members of the Safeguarding Board. We attended a meeting of Board on 12 June 2018 to present and discuss the report.

To ensure fidelity and accuracy, we sent each interviewee the specific excerpts which referred to them - directly or indirectly – and asked them to check what was said. We were then able to check any point made by an interviewee about accuracy with the original tapes. If a correction or an amendment was needed we drafted the re-worded extract and re-sent

it to the interviewee. This was a time-consuming process but we thought it was essential to ensure confidence in the report.

We would like to thank and pay tribute to all those concerned for their willingness to take part and for their generosity, not just with their time - some of the interviews lasted 2-3 hours – but also for their openness and candour. For many of those who took part, discussing the events clearly rekindled painful and poignant memories. It was a privilege to be taken into their confidence. What they recalled and recounted will stay in our minds.

### Methodology

The contemporary term for the way in which qualitative interviews are conducted is a ‘guided conversation’ rather than the, largely now abandoned term, ‘semi-structured interview’<sup>3</sup>. The change of emphasis in the terminology indicates that the interview is more like a ‘conversation’, but with a ‘purpose’ defined by the research questions that were set out beforehand and listed in the Introduction but which, for continuity, are reproduced again below:

- Patterns of offending behaviour
- Patterns of victimization
- Pattern of offenders, incl. and evidence of links or associations
- Features of the institutions (i.e. Individual churches/parishes) in which the abuse occurred
- Features of organisational responses that contributed, or may have contributed, to the initiating and maintenance of the abuse

Simply to precis each individual interview would not have accomplished the task of being able to understand and appreciate some of the ‘why’-type questions. Summarising, or even reproducing verbatim, what person A, B, C etc. said about RQ1, RQ2 etc. could not have provided the Diocese what it sought. To do this we needed to use an established method of qualitative research analysis.

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<sup>3</sup> For more information see Orme & Shemmings (2010), *Developing Evidence-based Social Work Research* 2010, Chapter 8 and Shemmings & Ellingsen, 2012, Chapter 28 in *The SAGE Handbook of Interview Research* (and any other relevant chapters in this large body of work).

There is a variety of analytic qualitative techniques to choose from, most notably narrative analysis, discourse analysis, interpretative phenomenological analysis and thematic analysis. Given the nature of the RQs, however, it was clear that thematic analysis was the most appropriate alongside the method known as ‘grounded theory’<sup>4</sup>. A grounded theory approach, as the name suggests, develops ideas and thoughts from the ‘ground upwards’ i.e. from the participants, rather than ‘top-down’, by being guided too heavily by pre-existing research. In the spirit of grounded theory we undertook a ‘light’ skim-read of the documents before doing the interviews began (and then we re-read them more closely after the first level of analysis was complete).

We now describe each of the two levels of analysis that is required when using the principles of grounded theory and thematic analysis. We have provided a couple of examples so that the process is transparent.

#### *First level of analysis*

The transcription of each tape produced many thousands of words in total. At this point one of us (David) began ‘open coding’ each transcript against the 5 RQs. This involved making a decision about whether the ideas expressed in each paragraph (and sometimes different sentences) related to RQ1, RQ2 etc. Whilst the interviews were sequentially undertaken in the order of the RQs, doing so doesn’t necessarily guarantee that participants’ thoughts and reflections didn’t from time to time span different RQs; and sometimes they overlapped and/or touched upon topics that were not part of the RQs but which, nevertheless, were relevant to the overall research aims.

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<sup>4</sup> First developed and outlined by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in their book *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (1967).

## *Second level of analysis*

At this stage the extracts from each interview were divided into different sub-topics. As an example, under RQ1 there emerged the following sub-themes, some of which suggested further division:

### *RQ1 – Patterns of Offending Behaviour*

- *Buying expensive clothes and being taken on 'treats'*
- *The deliberate use of alcohol during 'grooming'*
- *Other 'grooming' methods (distinguishing between 'grooming' and 'opportunism')*
- *Expensive clothes, events e.g. being taken to the Last Night of the Proms, Lord's Cricket ground*

At this point each sub-theme was coded with a letter and number e.g. 'A1', 'B5' etc. Where there were additional sub-divisions roman numerals were deployed, which generated further codes, such as C2 (i), D4 (iv) for example.

The penultimate stage was to collect all the A1s, and the B1s etc. together, along with any further sub-divisions, into one place. Before doing so, however, a photocopy of each partial transcript was taken - to preserve an original - and then the individual examples were cut up and placed together. Each set of what were by now often tiny slips of paper codes were placed together. Each one identified *who* had said it (with their unique, gender-neutral name) along with precise point in the interview *when* they had said it (in case it needed to be re-played).

At the completion of these steps, the final stage was to decide how best to present the findings – which by this point is rarely under the original RQ headings – and then sort the slips of paper, for each code/sub-code/sub-theme into a sequence to narrate them into the report, after having explicated and explained the codes. So, for example, in the case of, what became B2, above ...

*Other 'grooming' methods - B2 (distinguishing between 'grooming' and 'opportunism')*  
*Expensive clothes, events e.g. being taken to the Last Night of the Proms, Lords Cricket ground - B2(i)*

... when writing this up in the report, we firstly explained what was meant by this particular code i.e. "Other 'grooming' methods" as well as explaining a distinction made by one or more participants between 'grooming' and 'opportunism'. In each case, we drew heavily upon examples taken from the participants' partial interviews.

At this stage we re-read the background documents, along with other sources related to the subject of the research, and then made a final decision about the overall organisation of the coded interviews for the final report. This is when we decided that, because a central bifurcation in the research and theoretical literature overall was between explanations that saw, on the one hand, 'understanding the motivation of individual offenders' as the best way to explain what happened, from 'understanding the culture and context of the organisation in which it all took place', on the other, that we would present the findings in two sections of this report.

We explain these two differences in emphasis later in this report when we discuss the findings but at this point we want to state our view that the best explanation is when *both* are woven together (rather than selecting one or the other). Hence, we have adopted a 'both-and' logic rather than an 'either-or' one.

It is through this exhaustive process that we were able to give a 'voice' to those interviewed. In a very real sense – and we hope this emerges in what follows – those we interviewed 'wrote' the report: what we did was shepherd and then organise their thoughts and ideas.

Before we move on to present the findings we just need to say something about the nature and type of knowledge created as a result of this kind of study (what researchers refer to as 'epistemology'). In other words, what can we actually 'say' at the end of this: what 'truth-claims' can – and, conversely but more importantly, cannot - be made? After all, isn't what

we've produced just the views of a small number of individuals? Isn't it just 'their perspective'?

Qualitative research permits different kinds of 'truths' than this. To illustrate this, here is an example from a study which sought to understand the views of adoptive parents who also had birth children of their own. One (of many) of the objectives of the study was to seek research participants' views about whether and then, if so, to what extent, they felt the same or differently about their birth children compared to the child/ren they had adopted. Put simply, did they treat them as the 'same or different'? One can immediately appreciate that such a question doesn't really have 'an' answer, as such. One can have a view, state an opinion and certainly one can shed light on the phenomenon ... but not give 'an answer'.

One of the ways that helps interviewees explore their views is to follow up the 'closed' question 'Do you treat your birth children the same as your adoptive children?' with 'Can you give some examples?' or 'Can you tell me more ...'? This encourages the participant to explore the question rather than to 'answer' it (and not many people would tend to say 'No' to that question even if, in reality, they *did* treat them differently).

To demonstrate the kind of response that can illuminate the phenomenon, one mother said that, to begin with, she had not felt that her newly adopted baby boy was 'hers', as she put it. But, unprompted, she then went to say that there was one particular event in time when she felt, from that moment onwards, that it felt that he had become 'hers': she said it was when she 'licked his spoon when feeding him'.

There is something powerful about the idea of 'licking a baby's spoon' when feeding it. We wouldn't do this for anyone unless we felt close and very connected to them. The expression invites researchers and others who are interested to speculate about ideas around the meaning of 'intimacy'. So from 'guided conversations' emerge a range of ideas about the questions posed as we hope the next two sections of this report will show.

It is important to remind ourselves that in this study there are questions which already have answers, and which cannot be refuted (because other reports exist that have proved them

to be true and/or because the result of a number of judicial processes and procedures is known). So, we know that a number of priests and laity between them sexually abused a number of children, young people and adults. Some believe that their activities were 'covered up' by some individuals in the Diocese (but other do not believe this to be the case). And we also know that many survivors were not believed and sometimes not even listened to. Referring to the question of there being a 'cover-up', Stevie made this point ...

*'This is slightly tricky because 'cover-up' means different things to different people. There is actually little evidence of deliberate, 'Spotlight'<sup>5</sup> style cover-up in this Diocese. (Bishop A knows that Priest B is abusing children in parish C, so moves Priest B to parish D with a strict instruction to mend his ways, but doesn't tell anyone else – including in parish D). What there is evidence of everywhere is indifference. The effect on victims is identical ...'*

Some areas are more 'grey'. For example, one view expressed in this study challenged the statement 'the Diocese in some instances allowed the abuse to happen'. There was a view held that 'allowed' was incorrect. A 'truth' could only emerge if the majority of people agreed what 'allowed' means: does it mean 'connived', 'encouraged', 'turned a blind eye' for example?

There are other questions that are also imprecise. For example, was the behaviour of the priests more or less like that of Savile, Harris etc. or were there other dimensions to it? Similarly the view was expressed that 'this didn't only exist within this Diocese; it must have happened elsewhere' (and one could have added 'and may still be happening ...'). We know that this kind of abuse did happen elsewhere (and probably still is) but what we don't know is whether it happened more or less in this Diocese than in others, and whether there were similarities between them.

We now feel that we have clarified the main features of qualitative research design and methodology enough to present our findings.

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<sup>5</sup> *Spotlight* is a 2015 feature film about the systemic sexual abuse of children by Roman Catholic priests in the Boston area. It was directed by Tom McCarthy and starred, among others, Mark Ruffalo and Michael Keaton.

## FINDINGS 1

### Understanding Patterns of Offenders, Offending and Victimisation

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As we will see later in this report there were mixed views about whether what happened in the Diocese can be understood as the activities of a 'paedophile ring'. At the most basic level, a paedophile ring is a 'group of people who take part in illegal sexual activity involving children'. We need, however, to be clear about language here, especially with such an emotive subject as paedophilia. For example, for Stevie, the term 'paedophile ring' connoted something more akin to the notorious Sidney Cooke (and the 'Dirty Dozen'<sup>6</sup>). But alongside this definition is an understanding that individual members of a 'paedophile ring' would know of each other's activities, and that they would be acting in concert, knowing what each other was doing and sharing victims.

One view that we heard was that no legal evidence existed to indicate the operation of an organised paedophile ring in the Diocese (this individual's preferred term was 'criminal conspiracy'). However, it would perhaps be unwise to assume that what happened was simply a series of separate events involving sexual offenders who had no idea of the existence of the activities of other offenders in the same organisation.

We believe that an understanding of 'social networks' clarifies what happened and so before presenting the analyses of the interviews we first outline recent insights into the nature and significance of such networks. We follow this with a short summary of contemporary research summarising what is known about the 'sexual abuse of children'.

#### The nature and significance of 'social networks'

The problem is that the terminology used to describe what was happening can end up rather vague and overly reliant on everyone's notions and understandings about what 'organised associations' might look like. Surprisingly perhaps, a rudimentary appreciation of

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/evil-paedophile-branded-hannibal-lecter-11400056>

'network analysis' - a topic in modern mathematics - can quickly deepen our understanding about what it meant by 'organised associations'. The key ideas can be readily assimilated visually; and no knowledge of mathematics is required. So bear with us for a few more paragraphs, when the relationship to what happened in the Diocese will hopefully become clear.

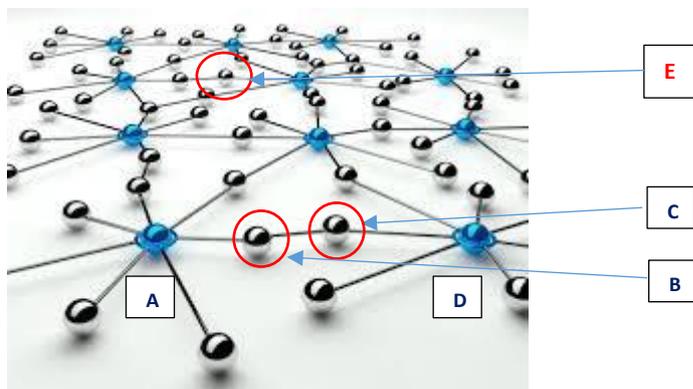
The simplest network looks something like this:



*Fig 1. A simple, dyadic network*

In this configuration, individual relationships are simple, one-to-one dyadic correspondences, with Person **A** knowing Person **B** who knows Person **C** etc.

The next configuration becomes more complicated (but also more realistic):



*Fig. 2 A More Complex Network*

If we focus on the blue node **A** we can see that it is connected to the black nodes **B** and **C**, which in turn are connected to the blue node **D**. This is visually self-evident; but what is less clear, at first sight at any rate, is that the black node **E**, which is *distally* further from either blue nodes **A** and **B**, nonetheless is connected to them both. We hope it is also clear that, in such a configuration of nodes, if there is a line connecting them on the chart, then they are all connecting to one another but, from Fig 2, the blue nodes have more ‘influence’ upon a network than black nodes simply because they are linked to numerous black nodes (whereas black nodes only connect to one or two nodes).

Applying these ideas to social networks then becomes clear – some people have very little influence within an organisation, whereas others, through their ability to network with others – which can be because of their position or personality, or both – have a much wider influence. For a ‘black node’ to be a sex offender is one thing, but for a ‘blue node’ to be one is an entirely different thing, as the influence can be much wider.

There is one additional concept we need to take from network analysis before we can start to apply this knowledge to the associations within the Diocese. Consider the final diagram:

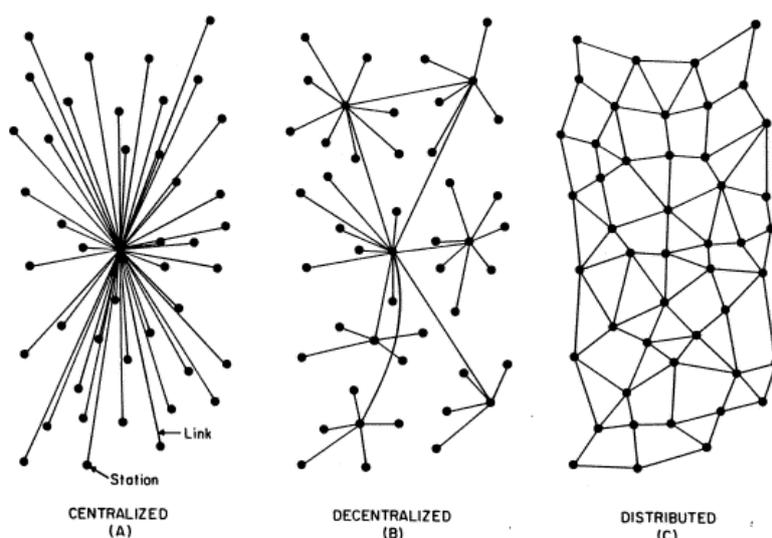


FIG. 1

Fig. 3 Centralised, Decentralised and Distributed Networks

Here we see the different relational possibilities from the three types of diagram. In *centralised* networks the nodes are connected only to the central one, not to each other. But in *decentralised* and *distributed* nodes all are connected to each other. So far, we have considered only 'blue and black nodes' but it is easy to see how this relates to individual human beings in a network.

The point of this short detour into modern mathematics is that the mapping exercise we referred to on page 3 of the Introduction contains decentralised *and* distributed networks. This means that, at different times, sexual offenders were operating in the organisation which, due to the particular type of inter-connectedness of the 'network' just described, means that they were influencing others in the network, sometimes deliberately but often unknowingly. Stevie added,

*'... for some offenders ... of course (original emphasis) they were connected to (Peter) Ball ... he was their Bishop. It would have been anomalous for them to not be closely connected to him. Most of that connection was entirely legitimate, but the issue, to my mind, is whether the legitimate and illegitimate was so intertwined that they could not be separated out ... there might have been an element of 'osmosis' here where clergy inclined to abuse were made more likely to do so by interacting with others equally inclined, so that they sort of 'drifted' into more-and-more unhealthy behaviours.'*

As we saw earlier the existence of a 'paedophile ring' typically contains a notion of a number of adults who each have knowledge of one another and who 'share' their victims. It resembles the decentralised (b) network in Fig 3 above. But when a network of individuals also contains *distributed* networks we end up with a different kind of interconnectedness, one that incorporates *social* influences, transcending simple linear forms of *physical* inter-relatedness. The sociologists George Simmel and Emile Durkheim were the first to outline 'social network theory', which explores the social structure of the network rather than the linear nature of each dyadic relationship.

Unlike examples using inanimate coloured nodes, when humans are part of a network, additional dimensions are at work. When we consider, for example, some of the social

processes involved in the cultural transmission of values, mores, expectations and behaviours within a network, we notice that such effects may 'travel through time' because the influence of an abuser can be felt long after they have moved into another parish or diocese; and even after their death. In the case of the late Neil Todd, the survivor was himself living thousands of miles away. For Neil, in the end there was only one way to escape the 'internalised' network: he took his own life.

These insights form the first of two powerful lenses with which to analyse the interviews. The second prism is built upon a brief review of contemporary research into the sexual abuse of children. This review was an obvious choice, given that the focus of the first three research questions was i) the 'nature of offenders' ii) the 'nature of their offending behaviour' and iii) the existence of 'patterns of victimisation'. Taken together, these two lenses gave us the focus with which to analyse the interviews.

### Contemporary research into the sexual abuse of children and adults

Numerous explanations exist that try to explain why some adults sexually abuse children (and adults). They can be sub-divided into three different but overlapping approaches that i) concentrate on the individual abuser as an adult ii) those which focus on the abuser's early childhood development within their family, and finally iii) those that look at wider, societal explanations for such offending. We now give a brief outline of each approach:

Intra-personal and primarily psychological insights began with Freud's theories around the Oedipal and castration complexes, and 'penis envy'. Freud postulated that these were stages that all children experienced but that if they became 'stuck' in the phase their psychosocial development would be delayed, with consequences later in childhood and then in adolescence. Such theories carry little weight as contemporary explanations in most circles nowadays, except a general recognition that sexual urges are powerful motivators of human behaviour (one only has to consider how advertisers sell many products, alongside the popularity of pornography since its ubiquitous availability online to appreciate Freud's legacy).

Contemporary psychological theories of sexual offending now tend to concentrate and focus upon ‘offender profiling’ (popularised in many televised crime thrillers) and understanding their motivations. The idea is that if we ‘know’ more about the offender, especially their *modus operandi*, then we can catch more offenders and, as a direct consequence, protect more children. A particular trend has been the emergence of the notion of ‘cognitive distortions’ i.e. specific and identifiable ways of thinking that distinguish offenders from non-offenders (even if sometimes only by degree). Researchers such as Tony Ward<sup>7</sup> identified five ways in which the thinking of sexual offenders differed from non-offenders. This knowledge, he argues, should then form the basis of subsequent treatment and intervention programmes with the aim of challenging and then altering these deviant forms of thinking. Ward’s (1999)<sup>8</sup> five cognitive distortions of sexual offenders are:

1. *Children are ‘Sexual Beings’* – offenders seek to justify what they do by arguing that sexual activity is ‘natural’; some will also say that children ‘enjoy’ it. (We will see how this idea may relate to the culture within religious organisations in ‘Findings 2’).
2. *Nature of Harm* – offenders will argue that sexual activity is not necessarily harmful to children.
3. *Entitlement* – offenders may believe themselves to be superior and more important than others (this could be a particularly important distortion within the clergy, as we will see later – and it raises the question whether the feelings of superiority are the result of being a priest ... or, is it possible that they are what push some men towards priesthood, and who later become offenders?).
4. *Dangerous World* – the offender believes that other people are abusive and rejecting and that he must regain control over them
5. *Uncontrollable* – the world is outside of the offender’s control so ‘what can the offender do’, faced with such thoughts?

Some recent research into abuser characteristics may at first sight seem rather odd, even frivolous, but they may contain kernels of truth because they focus on delayed

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<sup>7</sup> Cairdha, C. Ó. & Ward, T. (2012) Theories of Cognitive Distortions in Sexual Offending: What the research tells us, *Trauma, Violence and Abuse*, 14(1), pp. 5-21.

<sup>8</sup> Ward, T. & Keenan, T. (1999) ‘Child molesters’ implicit theories’, *Jnl of Interpersonal Violence*, 14 pp. 821-838.

development. For example, ‘Leg Length Versus Torso Length in Paedophilia’<sup>9</sup> strikes initially as a somewhat flimsy correlation, but the subtitle – ‘Further Evidence of Atypical Physical Development Early in Life’ – gives an indication of what the article is pointing to:

*‘Although prior research has repeatedly shown that pedophiles<sup>10</sup> are shorter than nonpedophiles, the largest study to date relied on self-reported height. In the present study, pedophiles demonstrated reduced measured height and reduced leg length as compared with teleiophiles<sup>11</sup>. Given the prenatal and early childhood origins of height, these findings contribute additional evidence to a biological, developmental origin of pedophilia. In addition, the magnitude of this height difference was substantially larger than that found in children exposed to a variety of early environmental stressors, but similar to that seen in other biologically based neurodevelopmental disorders’. (p. 500).*

The basis of one of the arguments in the above study connects with another set of findings, namely that some kinds of sexual offending towards children results from arrested psycho-sexual development. For example, applying this finding to sexual abuse within the Catholic Church in the US it has been argued that, because some boys entered the seminary to become a priest at around 14 it resulted in them living solely with ‘celibate’ men and other adolescents of their own age. As a consequence, they were unlikely to have encountered the usual exploratory ‘rites of passages’ that their peers in the rest of the community would have gone through. They would have little or no sexual experience (unless, of course, they had been abused by a member of the seminary).

The second set of explanations for sexual offending stress early problems within the parenting/caregiving but because it contends that ‘sex offenders’ have been starved of love, affection and nurture, it quickly ends up ‘blaming mothers’. Consequently, attachment theory and research are nowadays viewed rather critically as an approach to understand

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<sup>9</sup> Fazio, L.F., Dyshniku, F. & Cantor, J.M (2015) in *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*, 29 (5), pp. 500-514.

<sup>10</sup> Some definitions are needed: i) *paedophiles* are adults i.e. over 16 who are sexually interested in pre-pubescent children - for boys, c.11/12 and for girls, c.10/11 ii) for *hebephiles* the sexual interest is with 11-14 year olds iii) for *ephebophiles* the interest is with 15-19 year olds. (It is interesting to speculate why such chronological precision was thought to be important).

<sup>11</sup> A *teleiophile* is an adolescent or young adult who is sexually attracted only to mature adults.

sexual offending. An exception is the work of Bill Marshall<sup>12</sup> at Queen's University, Belfast, who has studied differential levels of empathy and mentalising capacity among sexual offenders who had themselves experienced more extreme attachment difficulties in childhood (but not necessarily or solely with their mothers). Some types of fractured relationships could lead to reduced levels of ability to take another's perspective, leaving it easier for such sexual abusers to justify to themselves what they were doing. And we can see resonances here with the second of Ward's five cognitive distortions i.e. 'what I do doesn't harm children'.

Complementing but sometimes posited in opposition to psychological explanations are insights from feminist theory, which argues that unequal power relationships between men and women, as well as adults and children, offers an alternative and powerful prism through which to understand sexual offending. Unequivocally critical of another discredited explanatory perspective – the 'victim precipitation' approach, typified by the 'women ask for trouble, if they dress provocatively' stance – feminist explanations stress forcefully that it is the *abuser's* responsibility for initiating and/or maintaining sexual assault, no-one else's.

Within the feminist perspective the primary analytic framework is centred upon how social structures and culturally-transmitted attitudes affect how men and boys are socialised into what counts as masculinity. Understanding sexual abuse requires knowledge of the distribution of sexual power in patriarchal society. Because feminist perspectives resist explanations focussing more on individuals, we return to them in the next section – Findings 2 - where we consider wider cultural, socio-political and organisation insights into sexual abuse within the Diocese.

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<sup>12</sup> See for example, Marshall, W. L., Hamilton, K., & Fernandez, Y. (2001). Empathy deficits and cognitive distortions in child molesters, *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*, 13, 123–130.

## *Prevalence and Incidence of Sexual Abuse*

Before moving on to consider interviewees' insights about sexually abusive individuals within the Diocese, it is worth looking at figures around its prevalence/incidence<sup>13</sup> in the general population and then among clergymen specifically.

A study by the NSPCC<sup>14</sup> stated that referrals for sexual abuse had increased by 31% in the previous year i.e. 2016. (The first NSPCC study seeks to estimate prevalence, whereas the second is an incidence study). It is important to remember that some of the '31% increase' may reflect improvements in the reporting of abuse (as distinct from its actual prevalence, which is always much more elusive and difficult to fathom).

If we turn to the question of how much sexual abuse there is within the Church itself, the John Jay report<sup>15</sup> published in 2004 is one of the most cited. John Jay College is based in New York and so the data refer mostly to the Catholic Church but the figures provide a great deal of detail over a 50 year timespan.

The John Jay report found that:

*'... during the period from 1950 to 2002, a total of 10,667 individuals had made allegations of child sexual abuse. Of these, the dioceses had been able to identify 6,700 unique accusations against 4,392 clergy over that period in the USA, which is about 4% of all 109,694 ordained clergy i.e. priests or deacons or members of religious orders, active in the USA during the time covered by the study. Roughly 4% of them were accused. However, of these 4392 accused, only 252 (5.7% of those accused or less than 0.1% of total clergy) were convicted. Half the priests were 35 years of age or younger at the time of the first instance of alleged abuse. Fewer than 7% of the priests were reported to have experienced physical, sexual or emotional abuse as children. Although 19% of the accused priests*

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<sup>13</sup> Data on the *prevalence* of sexual abuse attempt to estimate the actual level of its occurrence in a large population. Incidence data, on the other hand, is the number of sexually abusive events recorded over a given period of time (or, the number of 'incidents').

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/dec/18/cases-of-child-sexual-abuse-up-31-says-nspcc>.

<sup>15</sup> John Jay College of Criminal Justice (2004), "Executive Summary", *The Nature and Scope of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests and Deacons in the United States 1950–2002* (PDF), United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, ISBN 1-57455-627-4.

*had alcohol or substance abuse problems, only 9% used drugs or alcohol during the alleged instances of abuse ...*

*... Of the priests who were accused of sexual abuse, 59% were accused of a single allegation. 41% of the priests were the subject of more than one allegation. Just under 3% of the priests were the subject of ten or more allegations. The 149 priests who had more than 10 allegations against them accounted for 2,960 of the total number of allegations'.<sup>16</sup>*

The headline figure from the John Jay report is that around 4% of priests sexually abused minors during the period of the study. Commenting on this in the periodical *Psychology Today* in 2010<sup>17</sup>, Thomas Plant, professor of psychiatry at Stanford University said ...

*'The 4% figure appears lower than school teachers during the same time frame and certainly less than offenders in the general population of men. Research states that over 20% of American women and about 15% of American men were sexually violated when they were children by an adult.'*

It is important to compare prevalence/incidence between different sub-sections of the population but it is unfortunate that Plant appears not to provide a reference for the level of sexual offending among school teachers (or within the general population). It is also important not to draw the false assumption that the percentages of American women (20%) and American men (15%) who reported being 'sexually violated' in their childhoods relate to the 4% figure as they are different<sup>18</sup>.

Our brief look at the research into the sexual abuse of children and adults has uncovered complexity over definitions, theoretical disagreements among researchers and writers in this field, and pitfalls when interpreting statistics concerning prevalence/incidence. It was important as an awareness of the underlying complexity is useful before we report the analysis of the interviews.

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<sup>16</sup> Figures taken from [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_Jay\\_Report](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Jay_Report).

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/do-the-right-thing/201003/six-important-points-you-dont-hear-about-regarding-clergy-sexual>.

<sup>18</sup> The 4% figure is 'the numbers of abusers'; the 15% and 20% are 'the number of people abused' (albeit in different populations). The danger is that readers might think that 'only' 4% of priests were abusers, compared to between 15-20% of sexual abusers in the general population ... this is *not* what is meant in the extract quoted.

## ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS

### A complex web of connections and associations

#### *Intergenerational dimensions*

Sometimes abuse can occur over time within a family and, as we are about to see from the analysis of the interviews, within a social network. But to understand this, we need to dispel a common misunderstanding about 'intergenerational transmission'. Put simply, many abusers will have been abused as children ... but it is incorrect to jump to the conclusion that most children who are abused will go on to abuse their own children. This is known as the 'fallacy of reverse inference'.

It is certainly not the case that 'children who were abused are likely to become abusers'. If it were, then, as most children who are sexually abused are girls, then logically most sexual abusers would be women. But by far the majority of sexual abusers are men, not women (there are women who do this but they are a much smaller group<sup>19</sup>). The reason it is difficult to obtain reliable figures about the likelihood of a child who is abused becoming an abuser is that it requires longitudinal, prospective studies and this takes many years, and hence a lot of research funding. Researchers first have to select a large group of abused and non-abused children - but how can one ever really know they have *not* been abused? – and then follow them on through their lives until they become parents themselves. This requires very large samples, which adds to the cost of the research.

A number of studies have been conducted over the years and they tend to converge on a figure of around 20/30% of the prospective index children who became abusers ... so around 70/80% did not. Child protection professionals tend only to see the 20/30% who do; they rarely see the 70/80% who do not go on to abuse their own children. We do not have figures for those who were abused as children who then go on to abuse *other people's* children but it is worth remembering that there is no known mechanism that deterministically predicts that if something dreadful has happened to a child then they are

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<sup>19</sup> See for example the work of Prof Theresa Gannon at the University of Kent.

automatically going to repeat the same pattern with their own children. In fact, the reverse is more likely: it is precisely *because* they were abused themselves that they are less likely to do it to their own children – hence the finding that 70/80% do not. That is not of course to say they do not suffer from the abuse they experienced as children, sometimes throughout their lives. (We are not overlooking, however, the role of resilience here, as it is certainly not the case that children who are abused are pre-programmed to have major problems later in life, and we return to this idea later in the report).

Conversely, although some adults who abuse children may have been abused themselves, there still are many examples of paedophiles who were *not* abused as children. For example, as far as we are aware, at no point during the uncovering of the horrific abuse carried out by the likes of Rolf Harris, Paul Gadd (aka Gary Glitter), Ian Watkins (lead singer of Lost Prophets) etc. did any of them appear to say they were abused as children (and we are feel that if they had, they would likely have said so in mitigation).

Naturally there are exceptions and, from what we were told, on one occasion, the abuse did seem to ‘run in the family’. It is not known if any of the abusers in this study were abused as children, with the exception of one known abuser (who we will call ‘L’). Ryan, (L’s child) described a family history of abuse. L, who had been abused by an uncle and rejected by his own father, was so affected that he could not utter the name ‘father’ in relation to him, instead referring to him as ‘that man’. Having had a co-dependent relationship with his mother, and rejecting his father, he went on to become attracted to pre-pubescent boys who were about the same age as when he had begun to be groomed and abused within the Church. He was described by Ryan as being ‘confused sexually’. L had married young and had a number of affairs with women, and was reported to have been engaged in ‘cottaging’. He went on to introduce his three young children into the Church and to his own abuser. Ryan said s/he had been rejected by L, side-lined and ignored. This left him/her vulnerable to the attentions of L who did not confine his associations to the Church. We were told that he introduced Ryan to a deputy headmaster who groomed Ryan after L had permanently left the family home, taking Ryan out to the theatre, to cricket matches at Lords and bought expensive designer clothes. It was said that he also permitted the deputy headmaster to put money into a bank account for Ryan, who said L knew the Headmaster was ‘predatory’ and

had a 'predilection for young (children)', but continued to let his children have contact with him. This highlights the insidious nature of these abusive relationships. Ryan said,

*'Our vulnerability to abuse was almost inherited through L. He started grooming and abusing at the age he started being abused (himself), and had introduced his own children to the same church and the same abuser. My father and brother were groomed over time, but the pattern of abuse seemed to stop at about the age of seventeen. The abuser had a system of preparing the next one before casting aside the current one.'*

It took some time, but during his stay in prison, L began to make links between his own experiences as a young boy and that of his current behaviour. From L's diaries, written in prison, it was noted:

*'To an extent, I believe I am aware how I came to be an abuser during my discussion with probation. I was able to identify the experiences of my own abuse commencing at about age three up to and including my last abuser at age fourteen. I had previously mentioned this last in therapy and it was only post arrest that I began to reflect more fully on the other abuses.'*

We were also told that a second brother of Ryan suffered emotional abuse at the hands of his father, and was described by L as 'a dirty, naughty child' ... 'And when, after L had left the family home, he was "going off the rails" he was sent to a priest<sup>20</sup> who got him on the floor in a vice-like grip around the throat and hit him and verbally abused him.'

In a bid to try to understand the psychology of L, Ryan concluded that s/he believes he did not go into the 'Church' - he had been ordained - specifically to groom and abuse, as he had begun his behaviours some ten years previous to it, but that he had gone into it 'for the power and the status it offered him. He had ideas of grandiosity and appeared to be a narcissist'.

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<sup>20</sup> The interviewee wishes to stress that this priest was not the abuser of his/her father nor his/her brother.

As with a number of revelations that have come to light recently, when people said they had their suspicions, Ryan told us that the same was said about L. S/he said that when they found out 'it was a shock but not a surprise as everyone said he was creepy'.

The power and coercive nature of L's abuser was such that when his abuser was dying, Ryan said, 'L went to him, and the abuser said "what can I do for you?" and L said "just give me your blessing". He didn't challenge him to say something like 'I was just a boy!'" Ryan said his father had found this very difficult to reconcile, knowing the extent of the damage the abuser had done to both his father, him/herself and his/her brothers.

#### *Abusive events began at a young age*

A theme emerged which shed light on some commonly applied strategies that abusers used to identify their victims (we return to this point later). As described in the example above, the children were actively introduced to a priest who had abused their father as a child. It is possible that this demonstrates the level of indoctrination and coerciveness of his abuser such that L could not recognise or acknowledge until much later, when in prison, that he had been traumatised by the abuse, or even that what had happened to him *was* abusive.

For one survivor, Drew, her/his abuse by priests was compounded by being bullied at school, also from a young age, for 'being small'. But s/he said s/he had developed a coping strategy which has helped in later life in seeking justice for the survivors. S/he said,

*'...I learned that you could use your intelligence and outwit the bully. As a result I can now use my memory and am able to catch them (the priests) in their lies, and use their own words against them.'*

It appears that children's minds were conditioned early in the process, making them unlikely to disclose their abuse. One interviewee said that s/he had 'a high threshold' for what s/he 'perceived as being abused.' Because of the extreme nature of what s/he had to endure most of the time, s/he had felt that lesser acts were not significant, by comparison.

Ryan surmised that vulnerable children and young people were targeted because many were looking for meaning in their lives at that point in time. People were finding meaning through religion and this rendered them particularly ripe for manipulation.

For many children the abuse did not start immediately but from survivors' accounts, the abusers started grooming children early, often when they were about eight or nine. The strategies used were insidious and manipulative. Part of the grooming process was to make the children and young people feel they were 'special'. Ronnie, put it,

*'It was the aim of the abuser to induce fear. Because of the 'direct line to God' they scared you but also make you feel very special'.*

The abusers used many opportunities to draw young people in by making them believe they were 'special'. Ryan recalled a friend who was being prepared for Confirmation 'had been told things like "you're special" and "you're my favourite". My friend was looking for a father figure, so of course s/he was drawn to this guy. They were vulnerable children ... and almost all were vulnerable boys exclusively.'

Ronnie said s/he was made to be totally dependent and 'special' by careful 'schooling' and 'grooming':

*'You were psychologically, physically, spiritually dependent on that person. You were made to feel special. He made you know that he "can't do this for everybody, you are special". He gave gifts of books, ornaments, and knew what your likes were. He picked me up once and took me to go and see a sunset. Challenging is not an option, you don't even think about it'.*

#### *The importance of secrecy*

It is well-known that any criminal act involves differential levels of dishonesty, dissembling, subterfuge and the use of 'smoke and mirrors', simply in order to avoid detection. But with child sexual abuse, there are additional dimensions to the secrecy which are aimed at closing down and shutting off the danger that a child might tell others what is happening to them. Of course, this 'problem' is made much easier if the 'social network' in which the

abusive adults, and their child victims, co-exist contains many others who are perpetrating the abuse or who are experiencing it themselves. A church or a Diocese does not, however, offer sexual abusers the unique ‘subterfuge’ of a traditional closed community such as a prison, a residential school/home<sup>21</sup>, or a child sexual exploitation gang, where victims are held against their will by threats to them, their family, or their loved ones (or all three). The *apparent* ‘openness’ of a Diocese where, theoretically at any rate, people can come and go as they please, requires additional and more subtle levels of coercion and, as we shall see, secrecy was one of a number.

Ashley surmised, ‘When something is hidden it produces a culture of secrecy. Elements of your social life which aren’t talked about maybe promotes deviancy.’

The level of fear some of the abusers instilled in the children and young people was pernicious and sometimes extreme. Drew painfully recalled three distinct features, ‘isolation, fear and secrecy’. The abusers were seen as powerful people, well thought of by the community, so the children knew they could not tell anyone about what was happening to them. In the following example, the threats are the same as those made by other abusers in the wider community i.e. they are not specific to the clergy:

*‘You believe them when they say they’ll kill you. They can, and do, physically overpower you: a 300lb person picking on a twelve year old who weighs 80lb, and locking you in rooms in their house, effectively kidnapping you’.*

The impact of these threats on a child’s psyche is profound and it is hard to comprehend how a child might make sense of the contradictions of ‘a man of the cloth, a Christian’ doing such things. Drew described how it felt (which was common among other survivors):

*‘You fear for your life. Then you go home and pretend to act as normal so you’re not giving him away. You’re made to carry the guilt of the whole thing. And the person is walking around giving sermons about righteousness and things. You can end up leading a double life yourself.’*

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<sup>21</sup> There were actually a small number of residential schools/homes operating within Sussex

Secrecy was instilled into the children and young people to such an extent that even in adulthood some survivors cannot bring themselves to speak to one another about it, even when it had happened to their siblings. Similarly, Max said, ‘the boys who were abused did not speak to each other because of strong feelings of embarrassment, fear and shame’. The level of control and manipulation was such that each of those being abused often thought it was unique to them and was unaware that others were being abused too.

Some young people did disclose the abuse they were suffering but, as we have shown elsewhere in this report, their efforts to be taken seriously usually failed. Survivors (and others) felt that the betrayal of trust compounded the abuse. Ashley said:

*‘When the abuser is in a position of trust, it’s harder to disclose. They (the victims) were often young and didn’t realise what they were experiencing was abuse, so they didn’t disclose because of this. They may have been fearful. They also may not have wanted to affect the priests’ future career if they were going for ordination. They may have feared the effect on themselves of whistle blowing.’*

#### *Ritual, paraphernalia and transcendence*

It was felt by some that the complex web of connections and associations results from the institution of the Church because it is cloaked in hundreds of years of history, a history where men in the Church held and exercised power (and in many respects still do). Their vestments and rituals set them apart, give them authority, raise them above others as being emissaries of God. This is the context in which the children found themselves. So when a priest, sometimes in a high position, told them to do something, they did not question it. Ryan put it, ‘You can’t say No to God.’ Another interviewee, Ronnie, felt that,

*‘Gay priests may be attracted to the transcendence and paraphernalia and power of the Anglo-Catholic tradition. In the Anglo-Catholic Church there is incense, it is mystery, it is dressing up. It’s all about persona – putting on a persona. If you put on a persona and dress up, then you’re acting out something’.*

But, as we stated at the beginning of this report, such a viewpoint may conflate ‘homosexuality’ and ‘abuse’ (intentionally or not).

### *Social climbing and courting the 'rich and famous'*

While the desire to be seen with 'important', 'elevated' and influential people (e.g. celebrities, politicians, high-ranking officials) is not something confined to members of the clergy or religious communities - although one might have assumed they would have been among the last to be tempted by such self-aggrandisement and preening – in the context of this report, 'social climbing' was done to impress their 'prey', as well as to normalise their own abusive behaviour. Mixing with the 'rich and famous' allows the sexually abusing priest to rely on the assurance that a child who starts to question what is happening to them will soon also think 'if this person is so well-known by such important people, then who am I to question him?'.

This was very much part of the feelings expressed in correspondence to us from the three individuals (who communicated with us together):

*'An example of (X), who was not only grooming his victims but also grooming the public, including those in the Church, was his prolific cultivation of relationships with people in power to protect himself and make himself untouchable from scandal by association with members of the aristocracy, other institutions, politicians and members of the judiciary as well as Church leaders'.*

Ryan described his/her father as a narcissist, and said that,

*'Despite coming from a working class family, L had a sense of grandiosity, and had cultivated associations with famous and elevated individuals. Dad was introduced to the high life by his abuser who had an affair with a well-known literary person.'*

### A vortex of psychological and interpersonal dependence and acceptance

#### *Buying expensive clothes and being taken on 'treats'*

Max described how one abuser took him/her on visits and providing treats, or taking him/her on holidays abroad. Their behaviour was normalised, making it impossible for young people to question. For example, Max said s/he was introduced to another offender as (X)'s 'special friend' and told that '(Y) has special friends too.' We were told that foreign holidays became a way of isolating the children, taking young people abroad as a 'treat',

which the families had unwittingly approved. The cost of these trips and holidays was covered by the priest so the parents invariably were extremely grateful. On one such trip to France, Max said s/he was taken to visit (priest X). S/he described being taken to a photo studio where on the walls there were pictures of young semi-clad boys posing. It was said that (X) had wanted Max to undress for a photo, but s/he refused. However, ignoring protestations, 'he climbed on top of me and forcibly kissed me on the mouth while photos were taken.' Max thought that there was an international component to this i.e. photos being taken and used abroad, a theme that emerged again when, it was said, children were taken to a hotel in the south of England where the manager had a basement flat, and where Max again said s/he saw pictures in the same style as those displayed in France. Max added that 'other victims who came forward said that further abuses took place there'.

#### *The deliberate use of alcohol during 'grooming'*

One person, Val, thought that the wider culture of alcohol being part of social interaction was reflected in the social life of the Church, and that alcohol was 'an accessible drug of disinhibition'. Ronnie recalled priests engaging in being 'outrageous together, "bitching" about people and drinking gin in the Chichester Diocese'.

Max recalled being given alcohol from the age of 9 or 10. His/her view was that,

*'If you give them (children) illicit things, then they've got a hold on you, whether that's money, drink, cigarettes. You think they're being nice to you, but actually they are controlling you. It gets so deep, there's no way out. Abuse is enabled by secrets. Once an abuser creates one secret that the victim thinks they may get into trouble for or be judged by their peers, this is built upon with more secrets and elicit behaviour until everything is secret, elicit and abusive. This is the main means of control and a key reason why children almost invariably do not report their abuse at the time. The other key factor in maintaining a child's silence is shame. The victim may enjoy the attention and affection, the "special treatment", the gifts, money and even aspects of the abuse itself. This leads the child to feel complicit in the abuse, they feel that they have allowed it to happen, somehow given approval or permission - they often think it's their fault. This shame and guilt often lasts a lifetime'.*

The theme of heavy drinking among the abusing clergy was repeated among the survivors interviewed. Ryan and (name withheld) said he and his brother were taken to (town) to see (X) when Ryan was about ten or eleven and given sherry to drink. Similarly, it was reported that alcohol was freely available, as it was on other occasions, sometimes with other adults present; but often also when taken on pilgrimage. Ryan recalled:

*‘On group walks and trips boys were encouraged to drink. There were large crates of beer in dorms. And on coaches, whisky was being passed around by young teenagers – even when other adults were present, but it was never challenged. There was a whole culture of drinking’.*

It appears that not only were children and young people unable to disclose the abuse that was taking place, adults who were present in situations where young people were being offered alcohol also seemed unable to challenge the appropriateness - and the illegality - of this behaviour.

#### *Other ‘grooming’ methods*

Drew observed that ‘they say victims don’t just appear, they’re selected’, and in some instances it started with the grooming of the child’s family. The parents, often attenders at church themselves, would hold their local priest in high regard and were naturally flattered at the solicitousness and kindness being extended to them and their child/ren. In one example, it was reported that grooming involved offering to be a childminder to a young child while the mother visited her husband who was ill in hospital. It was said that he used the opportunity of being alone in the house to abuse the child, and this continued in different settings.

Max said that one priest (X) used opportunities in his travels officiating around the Diocese to legitimise calling on his/her family who lived near to the cemetery. When conducting funerals for example, we were told that (X) would call into the home, and he would make arrangements for Max at the weekends (without any consultation with Max). The lack of choice adds to the sense of powerlessness which was a common theme among those interviewed.

In the following longer extract, the graphic details have been retained to emphasise the insidious nature of different kinds of grooming. As Max said,

*'I was never asked, it was just done. My life was totally controlled. My family were victims as well, they were young and naïve and were the victims of what today we call "grooming". One key method of normalising and desensitising children to sexual matters was by constantly joking about it. Between the priests concerned there were constant references to masturbation, erections, ejaculation, bottoms etc. This was routinely done in front of children. This was particularly the case on trips where the priests had a captive audience with no other responsible adults present. Examples included: referring to speed limit signs as the number of strokes of masturbation before changing to the other hand, so that when we passed a sign that said 50, for example, the boys were encouraged to call out "change hands"; when passing a steeple or tower it would be described to the group as "an impressive erection"; in the manner of 'I-Spy' the boys were encouraged to look out for birds and call out "swallow" if they spotted a swallow; naked statues were always sought out and particular attention and comment was made about any visible genitalia. Often postcards would be purchased of such statues and given to the boys'.*

Children and young people were introduced to alcohol and sex, often during social occasions, and sexual innuendo and jokes were sometimes reported as being part of the grooming process: 'we are all boys together'. We were told that lude jokes and comments about masturbation were used to desensitise young people, which in turn set a tone among the group, and which deliberately or unwittingly perpetuated the abuse. One interviewee said, 'their justification should it be challenged was that it was "just schoolboy humour"'.

It was stated that perpetrators used their own specific methods to abuse children and young people. We learned that some took their time, insinuating themselves into families, grooming parents by offering favours, for example, keeping a pew at the front for them, or socialising with parents. This made families feel special and favoured by someone with

status in the Church and in the community. One offender had a reputation in a community for having 'an open house'. Pat, whose family was living in the area, said that there had ...

*'Always been rumours about boys always being round at his house. They'd (the boys) think it was great, a party atmosphere.'*

This priest was convicted, and s/he recalled a shocking example of what went on at these 'parties',

*'A 12 year old boy was tied to a bannister in his underpants and was urinated on (not whilst tied to the bannister). He would choose boys. They did not generally see each other being abused. The parents were not aware; they just thought he was being nice and taking them out to dinner, for example.'*

Whereas some priests, we were told, used these grooming methods to gain control over families and their children, other priests, it was said, deployed different methods. For example, from other reports (X) was seen as a profoundly manipulative groomer whereas (Y and Z) were seen as predatory and opportunistic abusers. It had been noted that despite (X) appearing to have a humble persona by, for example, wearing a basic monk's robe, implying that he led a 'simple' life, it was clearly at odds with the lifestyle he enjoyed. This persona made him more charismatic to some outsiders, and it allowed him to foster relationships, both in this country and abroad, which gave him access to boys and young people in public schools, as well as allowing him to develop a residential community. This gave him *carte blanche* to manipulate the vulnerability, often of wealthy families, whose sons had been excluded from public school, or who were perhaps 'unruly', as a way of giving some 'time out' for their child. It has been suggested by those involved in the criminal proceedings that (X) would 'assess' them when they went to (a residential opportunity) and that he would syphon off those who showed signs of being sexually confused, or who were 'pretty' boys and, we were told, he would then have them sleep in his room, insist they showered and then pray naked with them. Thus, through prayer, they became his prey.

There were some offenders who did not use grooming to facilitate their abuse. Groomers usually take their time, they spend time observing, they plan, and they often have a number

of potential victims in train at any one time. Conversely, 'opportunistic' abusers, as the word suggests, pick up on serendipitous or favourable circumstances. They might find a child isolated from a group on a trip out, or abuse a young person during a 'pastoral' meeting. (Y) was seen by many as an opportunistic abuser. He was described by Lee as 'predatory', seeking out potential victims.

### Mechanisms of maintenance and reinforcement

It was reported that when new individuals had been successfully absorbed into the network the next task for its members was to keep them there. We were told that this was accomplished in a number of different ways, each designed to secure permanent and yielding acquiescence from network members, especially new recruits. There was no suggestion that sexually abusive members of the network were necessarily discussing with each other these methods of maintenance and reinforcement. Social networks do not operate like that. The practices, customs and values of network members evolved and develop organically over time. Nevertheless, there was a similarity in the interviews about how the network operated.

### *Priests watching each other perform sexually abusive acts*

It is possible that in their day-to-day activities within the Church, some members of the clergy subtly 'tested' one another to see if they would be challenged. For example, Max recalled being placed on a priest's lap while in the presence of another priest. S/he said a priest stroked Max's thigh right up to the groin. Both priests concerned appeared to be sexually aroused by this, something s/he well remembers feeling uncomfortable and very frightened about, as s/he feared that s/he would have to sleep with both men simultaneously, but given the extreme nature of the other abuses s/he suffered, this appeared mild by comparison. Indeed, it was only in adulthood that Max realised that an indecent or sexual assault could be over clothing, such was the level of conditioning. Unwanted touching and physical affection towards children of both sexes was completely normal and routine.

This describes the pernicious nature of grooming, normalisation, coercion and fear instilled in Max, as it is with the sexual abuse of other children and young people. Such subtle 'testing of the waters' may have been a strategy that allowed abusers to flush out like-minded priests, perhaps by testing out whether - and how - they would comment. If they looked concerned or disapproving, the priest could simply say something reassuring and 'normalising', brushing it aside.

*The realisation you won't be believed if you tell someone*

The children and young people quickly learnt, or intuited, that simply by being a priest this person held great sway and power in the community. These children had been initiated into a 'secret world' by and through which they were psychologically and emotionally governed. When Ronnie described the strength of the priests' influence, s/he seemed almost to be 'back in the moment,' at one point by using the present tense ('have to')...

*'There was a rule of obedience. The young people naively had respect for the priest's greater knowledge as demonstrated by letters after their name. They'd been to theological college so they have to be listened to and (we) should be obedient to them. The whole culture was to be obedient and not to question ...'*

It seemed as though the grooming processes described in the previous section had mesmerised some young people, the priests having effectively 'deified' *themselves*, making it all but impossible for their victims to recognise what was happening to them at the time, and thus reinforcing the idea that it would be inconceivable that anyone would believe them if they were to say anything. Ronnie went on to comment '... Then if you add on the charismatic, mysterious, magical element where the minister (or priest) not only has this scripture, he also has this "hotline to God" which has a magical element to it'. Within this logic it becomes all too clear why people felt that it would be not only futile to tell anyone, it could be seen that they were going 'against God' if they did.

For Ronnie, who said s/he was groomed as a teenager, the dependency led him/her to return to the Church after being away at college, whereupon the full extent of the abuse was said to have begun. Ronnie said s/he 'was not able to develop an authentic or even personal 'world view'' and in retrospect said s/he 'saw how vulnerable this had made him/her'. S/he said that this meant s/he had fallen between the two categories in terms of

definitions of abused people – i.e. those of ‘child’ and ‘vulnerable adult’ and that this ‘did not really lend itself to disclosing what had happened’.

Another survivor, Drew, unexpectedly experienced a degree of levity among other people when s/he sought to tell them of his/his abuse. S/he thought there exists a public narrative for survivors which influenced the extent to which s/he felt able to talk about experiences of abuse by a priest. This may reveal something about public perceptions of the Church:

*‘If ever I tell anyone I’ve been abused, I’m almost loath to tell them it was a priest because they almost roll their eyes as if to say “well of course”. It’s almost like they don’t feel sorry for me because it’s like, “well you joined the choir”, as though it’s obvious that’s what would happen! It allows it to be part of the human consciousness and public acceptance of it, so nobody is surprised’.*

This resonates currently with some attitudes surrounding recent revelations about actors’ and producers’ abuse of other actors. Again, there was a narrative (and indeed jokes) created about ‘female actors’ and the ‘casting couch’, such that many people thought that if an actor<sup>22</sup> ‘slept’ with the director, they therefore did it willingly and thus failed to understand the true nature of the dynamics of the abusive manipulation and coercion deployed by that director.

#### *Perpetuating the abuse*

There are a number of ways abusers found to maintain and perpetuate the abuse. We have already seen how personal power was used but, in addition, the awe-inducing space and edifices of churches, the gold, the embroidery, the vestments etc. were also thought by some, as already mentioned, to have contributed to the sexual abuse of children, young people and adults.

The long-term effects of early abuse for one person who went on to be imprisoned was very telling. This individual was quoted (by Ryan) as saying he had ‘loved’ his abuser. This is not

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<sup>22</sup> Many thought it was ‘actresses’ but now we have learned that male actors were also abused.

unusual and one is reminded of the term ‘Stockholm Syndrome’<sup>23</sup> – or ‘trauma bond’ - to describe a situation where victim assumes a kind of love for or devotion to their captor. This may reflect the deep dependence and the particular type of grooming which took place with this person.

Some of the survivors recalled that, in their experience, they (and others) were put aside in favour of younger victims whom they were grooming. Ryan said, ‘They prepared the next one and then cast the last one aside’. This was no doubt a welcome relief, but for some it may well have also led to feelings of rejection which would have added to their growing sense of confusion.

Speaking about whether the disclosures and court proceedings over the past few years would deter abusers from going into the Church, Drew thought it may partially be an inhibitor but feared that instead, it might lead people into other places where there are vulnerable people:

*‘I do think it less likely that people will go into the Church, thinking it’s a safe haven. But you won’t stop people being like this. They’re going to go somewhere, so what we might be doing is moving them on the other “accepting” places’.*

### Inter-connections of abusive relationships

Whether an organised ‘paedophile ring’ operated in the Diocese of Chichester is disputed but one survivor, Max, felt that a paedophile ring had, in fact, been in operation. When asked about the reason for saying this s/he said,

*‘Yes absolutely (there was). They swapped victims, they communicated with each-other: they were orchestrating and organising (the abuse). I knew they all knew each other and not just that they were colleagues. Regarding (X)’s assertion that he did not see (Y) any more than anyone else is not true. He did find any opportunity to be in*

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<sup>23</sup> *Stockholm syndrome* is the psychological response depicting a situation when a captive identifies closely with their captors, and/or with their *beliefs*. (It derives from a failed bank robbery in Stockholm, Sweden).

*different parts of the parish. He would find 'reasons' for contact with (members of the Clergy) and others. He would show up for the opening of an envelope! I don't think that this was a paedophile ring in the way that people understand it today, this was pre-internet days, however it was clear that there were a large number of similarly-minded priests who knew one another and there seemed to be an acceptance of abusive behaviour and inappropriate relationships with vulnerable children. It was normal!*

Max retained feelings of being let down in that 'it has never been acknowledged by the Church that it was "organised"'. Max was not alone in this view as another survivor, Drew, confirmed that, in their view, there had indeed been connections between abusers, recalling having been taken to France where there were people that (the priest) knew and photos were taken. S/he said s/he knew of another victim who was a victim of two priests and that 'they went to each other's places and tried to swap victims with other priests.'

Although it is understood that the police investigations have not found evidence of an established 'paedophile ring' according to the legal definition, there may have been collusion between abusers, and even complicity, notably between (X) and (Y) for example. It has not, as far as we are aware, been established that there was a specific individual leading the group, but others were implicated in the abuse at (residential opportunity), notably (Z).

Lou felt that the number of gay priests within the abusing group could represent a 'criminal conspiracy', but explained that this apparent preponderance of gay priests within Sussex was not a 'problem in itself, but that it did provide an opportunity for multiple priests to operate'. A question s/he found difficult was how much knowledge they had had of each other's offending. S/he summarised this by saying:

*'(X) and (Y) were abusing in (County A) and were eventually convicted in (County B) ... I've not complained that they were operating together but I'm quite convinced they knew what each other were doing. You've almost got a criminal conspiracy going on and again, when you think of priests, then that's just outrageous. The person who presided over that in (Town A) was (name withheld), so I haven't got a good word to say about him.'*

Despite there being no legal evidence to indicate that an organised 'paedophile ring' was in operation there were, as we described at the beginning, clear and extensive links between people, many of which appeared to be subtle or opaque.

### *The subtleties of abusive connections*

Some agreement emerged among survivors, the clergy and other professionals that the justification for priests to abuse was not primarily because they would be 'forgiven' for their abuse, but rather that they knew they would be trusted and were therefore in a position to initiate it and thus find it easier to 'persuade' their victims not to disclose.

Within that group there were, it seems, gay men who were also seeking sex with boys and young men. From Max's experience of seeing a number of priests, and of being abused by more than one of them, s/he had the view that some of those were conflicted sexually, and were loners who did not have heterosexual relationships. S/he thought there were exceptions to this among the abusing group, but they were few by comparison. One of these was the father of Ryan who, as mentioned elsewhere, may not have gone into the Church specifically to groom children but who, as Ryan said, gained status by being in the hierarchy in the Church, which gave him a cloak of respectability. In making an argument in support of the existence of an organised 'ring' of abusers, Drew recalled how, even at a young age, s/he had recognised links in the area of (Town A) between abusers:

*'I knew from a very early age that (X) was either a ring leader, hiring his friends and putting them in the Church, or that they had met years before. It seems people were sent to that corner of the country because, it was like, "that's where you can get away with this stuff". (Town A) was cleared for take-off; this was allowed to go on.'*

Lou surmised, the Anglo/Catholic tradition may have contributed to the preponderance of gay single priests in the Diocese. On the other hand, Stevie, said 'in the absence of evidence to the contrary, I think we have to conclude that most who claimed celibacy were indeed celibate'.

Robin contended that detailed research has not been done on how and why Chichester is different from other dioceses in the Church of England. This is an interesting point, but given

the publicity that the abuse has attracted it is of interest why other survivors have not been reported widely to have come forward in such large numbers. However, it is understood that another, similar investigation is currently being undertaken in another English diocese (and there have been other notable but seemingly isolated cases recently reported).

Notwithstanding Robin's suggestion, in the view of some of the interviewees heavily involved in the investigations, and among those who were abused, the preponderance of abusers may have arisen because people had 'turned a blind eye' or had developed a particular tolerance of it in parts of the Diocese.

Finally, many of those interviewed expressed dismay at the notion that the people who abused them were the very people who one would expect to have a higher moral code than others. There was a difficulty in reconciling the priests' professed Christian beliefs with the acts they perpetrated. Max said, 'These are grossly sick people who don't have a conscience' and s/he wondered 'who would want to treat another human being in the way we were treated? It does not, and never will, make sense'. Max described a disturbing example of how, over one weekend, s/he recalled having been taken to another county by (X), who met with (Y), and that s/he was plied with drugs and alcohol which s/he believes may have been drugged and that s/he has no recollection of his/her time there other than knowing that s/he 'came round' with awful physical injuries as evidence that s/he had been severely sexually abused.

## FINDINGS 2

### Understanding the Effects of the Culture in Religious Organisations on Individual Behaviour

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Unless we are talking about a 'lone operator' sexual offender, we have argued that the individual *and* - not 'or' - the organisation in which the abuse took place has to be taken into account and understood more fully. Having devoted the previous section of this report to contemporary research alongside interviewees' accounts into what is known about individuals who commit sexual offences we now turn our attention to the organisation in which it took place.

We have used the phrase 'religious organisations' in the title of this section of the report rather than 'the Diocese of Chichester' to reflect the view expressed by some respondents that sexual abuse to children, young people and vulnerable adults is very unlikely to be confined to one Diocese. What is *not* known is the extent to which, if abuse is taking place in other Dioceses, then the characteristics converge.

Any organisation that has experienced major problems with the sexual abuse of children and/or vulnerable adults needs to ask itself questions about the reason why it happened 'at that time, in those places and by those specific individuals' because the reasons will be different in each organisation. So, for example, what happened in the BBC that 'allowed' Savile, Harris and others to 'hide their darkness in the light' will have been facilitated and 'overlooked' under very different circumstances than, say, in Hollywood, the Old/Young Vic, in the recent exposures within football coaching, within a number of residential schools, with ... who knows where the next example will emerge, as this list is now very long and is added to almost on a weekly basis.

To tackle this endemic problem, it is now not enough simply to understand the motivations of 'errant priests': we need also to explore the organisational features and prevailing conditions at the time which, albeit sometimes unwittingly, sustained, maintained and possibly even encouraged such abuse.

In joint correspondence from three survivors, they made reference to the ‘concentration of sexual offenders in the Diocese’. They refer, as did others, to it having a reputation, ‘spoken of in rumours and whispers as a safe place for those in the Church who wanted to practice this kind of criminal assault’. They suggested that the ‘Church’s response to the external culture of the ‘sexual revolution’ of the 1960s and 1970s, where boundaries were breaking down, was at best naïve.’ They offer two alternative and opposite hypotheses:

*‘The church was so enmeshed in society at that time without intelligently critiquing the radical movements of the sexual revolution, that it failed to take seriously Jesus’ words to be “in the world but not of the world.”’*

On the other hand ...

*‘The church at that time, as an isolated, insular institution, was so out of touch with the sexual revolution going on in society that it didn’t notice that some in their ranks were being empowered and given “permission” in their own mind by society’s new freedom to sexually experiment and in the end, abuse others’.*

This resonates with Brook’s and Kim’s observations about the past behaviour of student priests at their college/s. Brook had as a young person embarked on a life in the priesthood and was given an opportunity to spend time with students at the theological college in Chichester (now closed). S/he said that the behaviour of the students had been shocking because of the ‘degree of ribaldry, licentiousness and drunkenness in evidence’. It was described as ...

*‘A dualism, a split between training as a priest, and then on a Friday night getting totally bladdered. It made me wonder if they even had faith’.*

As with the previous *Findings* section, before moving on to consider interviewees’ thoughts, insights and reflections on the research questions, we offer a short review into how organisational culture can affect an individual’s behaviour. There is much less ‘research’ into this topic partly because, compared to individuals, organisations are far more difficult to study. So, for example, whilst much is written about how an individual, ‘lone operator’ sexual offender first grooms a victim and then later justifies his behaviour to himself, less is

known about how an organisation has a profound effect on the behaviour and attitudes of individual members.

What is written derives from two main sources. Firstly, the work of post-structural<sup>24</sup> theorists, such as Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, Ferdinand de Saussure and Jacques Derrida, forms much of the sub-strata of the insights of many writers in this field. Post-structuralists contend strongly that understanding the ways in which 'language' itself shapes our behaviour offers a more powerful analytic framework. The second set of insights come from well-established work in the area of 'organisational culture', especially that of Chris Argyris, Kurt Lewin, Warren Bennis, Edgar Schein, Charles Handy, Daniel Denison and Peter Drucker.

A simple way in which language, and more particularly 'metaphor' (see the work of Lakoff & Johnson, 2003<sup>25</sup> as well as Shemmings, D, 1991<sup>26</sup>) reflects but also progressively constructs meaning can be illustrated with two examples of (X). He used the term 'anointing the penis' of a boy he was sexually abusing rather than 'masturbating' him. This change of language becomes what discourse analysts call 'performative' i.e. its use undertakes important 'meaning work'. By using 'anointing the young person's penis' the offender consciously or unconsciously reconstructs the more Onanistic term 'masturbation' and then reifies it - in his mind at any rate - into an act of spiritual salvation. When he sexually abuses young men, in his terms (X) was performing a necessary act for their purification. He may well have believed this himself after a while; of more concern, however, is that the young men might have too. Similarly, when asked if he had ejaculated, (X) eventually admitted ... 'I had an emission'. The term 'emission' is often paired with 'nocturnal' to imply an ejaculation during sleep, possibly as a result of an erotic dream, and that it was 'unprompted', 'unexpected' or even 'unwanted'. So, (X) again reifies the whole event into something 'casual' or 'misplaced.'

Language routinely used in this way both reflects meaning whilst simultaneously creating and re-creating it. As a consequence, a culture is formed and maintained through the use of

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<sup>24</sup> Structuralism is a branch of philosophy - and sociology - that stressed how certain key social structures, such as 'class', 'education', 'employment' etc., could affect individual and group behaviour.

<sup>25</sup> Lakoff, G. & Johnson, M. (2003) *Metaphors We Live By*, University of Chicago Press.

<sup>26</sup> Shemmings, D. (1991) *Client Access to Records: Participation in Social Work*, Avebury Press.

language. When the language and behaviours of those who have the power to define its use and interpretation are present then the conditions exist for the 'organisation', in effect, to ignore the individuals who are its constituents. Those in control then have little regard for those beneath them. So it is of little surprise that, as far as we know, (X) did not offer an apology to those he sexually molested; he appeared only interested in explaining away his own behaviour, but not it appears, understanding the effect of what he did on his prey. He might have sought forgiveness from God ... but it appears that he didn't need it from his victims.

We chose these two examples, along with the graphic language, because they illustrate how language, actions and events may begin to reinforce 'the way we do things round here'. Such largely unconscious processes will have operated in the BBC during the time of Savile and others' depravities; but the abusive clergy in the Diocese deliberately and maliciously – and some might argue blasphemously – recruited something else into their vortex of abuse. By sometimes telling their victims that it was 'God's Will', the sexually abusive priests had created for themselves the ultimate justification for their corruption.

The writer and playwright, Alan Bennett, with his usual facility of getting straight to the point, also draws out how language is performative, rather than merely random or even serendipitous, in a short passage in his book *'Smut: Two Unseemly Stories'*:

*'When you are as old as Canon Mollison', Mr Forbes said patiently, 'one of the few perks of the job is talking to young people about the sexual act. What in any other context would probably get him arrested, in the vestry passes for spiritual advice'.*

Arguably, the performative intent of Mr Forbes' statement turns on the word 'patiently'.

We return now to how the question of why this happened when it did can be explored without relying on the 'errant priest' explanation. One author who has consistently applied ideas about religious organisations to sexual offending, and whose insights draw upon both traditions identified above, is Marie Keenan so we again consider her work in this section as it can shed light on the subject. They directly and indirectly feed into the suggestions set out towards the end of this report.

We use a number of extracts from Chapter 10 in her 2013 book *Child Sexual Abuse and the Catholic Church: Gender, Power, and Organisational Culture* which summarise her arguments, the first of which addresses the nature of male violence and sexual violence in particular:

*'... "[m]ale violence, sexual or otherwise, is not the unusual behaviour of a few 'odd' individuals, neither is it an expression of overwhelming biological urges: it is a product of the social world in which we live" (Cowburn et al., 1992, pp. 281–282). By extension, I will argue that sexual abuse by Catholic clergy is not the unusual behavior of a few 'odd' individuals or an expression of overwhelming biological urge; rather it is the product of the social world and the organizational structures in which these men live and work'. (p.231).*

As a reminder, Keenan's research looked at the Catholic Church but whilst there are obvious differences with the Anglican Church, when considering subsequent extracts about the effect of the organisation and the culture on sexual offending, readers can determine for themselves the extent of congruence or dissonance between the two traditions, particularly in relation to the imperative for unmarried clerics in the Church of England to remain celibate.

Keenan goes on to stress that,

*'In an attempt to control clerical male sexual expression, sexual activity and erotic sexual desire have been calcified and set as one ... In effect, sexual activity must be eliminated altogether and sexual desire must be sublimated. (p.233) ... For some men, the loss of that opportunity is especially problematic and a personal burden, especially if the loss is in part imposed ... (and) it is rarely conceptualized ... as a major human 'loss'. No grieving is facilitated or takes place. Instead, celibacy is presented as a 'gift' or part of the 'sacrifice' and is largely presented in religious or spiritual terms ... Given that they must pray for the gift, failure in this regard is often internalized as personal unworthiness or personal failure, especially by those men who ultimately became the clerical perpetrators'. (p.234).*

Keenan brings her concluding arguments together in the following extracts. We find them a compelling analysis that, as we will outline in our final section 'Suggestions for a Way Forward', could well form the basis for early discussions within the Diocese.

*'I am coming to the view that the ontological<sup>27</sup> change that belongs to a particular theology of priesthood sets otherwise healthy men, who have chosen a life of priestly and consecrated service, apart from ordinary men, in an unhealthy manner'. (p.236).*

She goes on to explicate a particular form of 'clerical masculinity' which she terms 'Perfect Celibate Clerical Masculinity'. She contrasts it with four other forms, the most important of which, for our purposes in this report, is what she calls 'Compassionate Celibate Clerical Masculinity':

*'In terms of lifestyle and environment, the man who embodies a model of Perfect Celibate Clerical Masculinity avoids and denies sexuality and sexual desire. He tries to become 'holy and detached' and 'sexless'. He avoids relationships ... and friendships with men ... He feels lonely and unfulfilled. He conceals emotional distress and turns his attention to God and the needs of others. He works too hard and strives for excellence and perfection in his public ministry. He lacks supervision and support. He is outwardly a rule-keeper, whose rigid adherence to rules and regulations is devoid of internal reflection and emotional engagement. He adopts a subservient position in relationships, particularly towards Church leadership. Many of these men live overtly quiet and compliant lives. However, an outwardly compliant demeanour masks an underlying unhappiness and discontent, which is not expressed. Life takes off on twin tracks. The internal struggle and the public personae are compartmentalized. He learns to live in 'no man's land', a place where gendered identity is avoided. At a psychological level, the man who embodies Perfect Celibate Clerical Masculinity as a way of 'doing' priesthood and religious brotherhood intellectualizes his emotion. He denies anger and resentment. He feels lonely and emotionally isolated. He feels disconnected from the brotherhood of priests and is more likely to be emotionally connected to young people, who become like 'friends'. He feels connected to and interested in those to whom he ministers and is often seen as a very good priest. He internalizes shame and personal failure in living a life of internal conflict and struggle ... For some men who embody Perfect Celibate Clerical Masculinity, children and adolescents are both 'friends' and emotionally connected, while other children and adolescents are a means to a sexual end'. (pp. 245-246).*

*'Those clerics who adopt a Compassionate Celibate Clerical Masculinity experience themselves as emotional and sexual as well as spiritual beings that embody their maleness as part of their lives, even if awareness of body brings 'trouble' in the face of the celibate commitment. These men seek out emotional and at times sexual*

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<sup>27</sup> A term used by philosophers meaning the 'nature of being'. In other words 'how we come to know who and what we are as individual human beings'.

*relationships with other adults ... which they understand as part of the project of their humanity. Although they experience guilt and conflict because of their breaches of Church discipline, they are able to forgive themselves for their transgressions, without shame and severe damage to self-esteem and respect. Although these men experience guilt, they do not live with shame-based identities. They have friends of both sexes and they “do their best” in their approach to their work, often working too hard, which is rarely motivated by a need to compensate for private shame’. (p.244).*

Whether humans can live without having sexual relationships – i.e. celibacy – is one thing but, as Keenan reminds us, this is different from living without ‘intimacy’. This leads her to make this telling point ... ‘it is my contention that children and young people were chosen for sexual and emotional expression by the participants in my research because they believed that all routes to adult sexual and emotional relationships were closed to them as part of the project of clerical life’. (p.247). In this context, Stevie offered the following quote from Jackie Craissati, expressing a similar sentiment: ‘Thus, whatever the nature of the sexual offending, the offence always represents failure of the perpetrator to achieve intimacy – integrating both emotional and sexual needs – in pro-social ways’<sup>28</sup>.

Another important distinction to make in this background section of findings is between ‘guilt’, which is ‘feeling bad about something *one has done*’ and ‘shame’ which is ‘feeling bad about *who one is* (albeit as a result, probably, of what the individual has done). The concept of ‘restorative shame’ can, however, form an important part of a sexual offender’s pathway towards being restored to the community (but, we stress here, that this is *not* the same as being permitted to minister to children or vulnerable adults, or be left alone and unsupervised with them).

Before moving on to discuss how those interviewed spoke about a number of related themes, we conclude this short review by presenting her final, key argument:

*‘I wish to offer another explanation for how we can understand the factors that distinguish those clerics who abuse minors from those who do not, partly by asking a different question—Why do some clerics sexually abuse children and adolescents when others who may have had a similar training and life circumstance do not?—is replaced by what I consider to be more useful one: What*

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<sup>28</sup> Craissati, J., (2009) ‘Attachment Problems and Sex Offending’, in Beech, A.R., Craig, L.A. & Browne, K.D. (2009) *Assessment and Treatment of Sex Offenders: A Handbook*, Chichester: Wiley.

*happens to some clerical men that enables them to lose contact with self during the course of formation and priestly life so that they become candidates for rigidly adopting a lifestyle that is clearly impossible<sup>29</sup> to live and in which they<sup>30</sup> end up sexually abusing minors? In essence, I am asking how it happens that some Catholic clergy 'buy into' the model of Perfect Celibate Clerical Masculinity as an ideal type and how others resist this in favour of adopting other more socially acceptable, if not fully Church acceptable, models of living as clerical men in which they meet their sexual and emotional needs in socially acceptable ways'. (p.248).*

*'For some seminarians, contact with the home world, level of maturity, age, experience, or just pure luck sometimes in having a wise mentor provides immunization against the bleak world of the institution and its demands for the mortification of the self. They adapt to the institutional demands for self-mortification in clever and mature ways, developing alternative models of priesthood, either by sheer luck, pure intellect, or sheer cunning, or for reasons to do with psychological and emotional resilience'. (p.249).*

Finally, before turning to what the interviews revealed we would suggest here that Colin Perkins<sup>31</sup> recent article, written with the psychologist Craig Harper, in *Child Abuse Review* in 2017, offers a complementary perspective. Here is the key extract from the Abstract:

*... we set out two conceptual frameworks that have some potential to help to explain such practices: system justification theory and moral foundations theory. Further, we describe how these frameworks could be adopted in research moving forward in order to make sense of the ways in which members of religious groups respond to allegations of child sexual abuse within their institutions. We close the article by arguing that gaining a deeper understanding of the psychology underlying reporting practices, it may be possible to communicate more effectively about child sexual abuse within religious institutions, and therefore encourage more widespread reporting of allegations before more children are harmed.*

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<sup>29</sup> We would have preferred 'very difficult' or 'not without consequence' to 'clearly impossible'.

<sup>30</sup> Again, we would have preferred 'some' over the all-inclusive 'they'.

<sup>31</sup> Colin Perkins is the Safeguarding Adviser for the Diocese. The reference is Harper, C. A. & Perkins, C. (2017), 'Reporting Child Sexual Abuse within Religious Settings: Challenges and Future Directions', *Child Abuse Review*. DOI. 10.1002/car.2484.

## ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEWS

### *Deification, the promotion of 'omnipotence' and the denial of victims' allegations*

Interviewees spoke about the ways in which priests, but especially bishops, were seen by parishioners as above reproach, as a result of their position as 'holy men'. The way the clergy were seen was different to the kind of respect or even deference people may show to individuals in positions of authority. This 'deification' helps us understand the view, expressed early in this report by Ryan, that 'you cannot say no to God', and that this was felt to be enmeshed in the Church culture. Pat thought that survivors had feelings of confusion and that they had found what had happened difficult. S/he said that one person had told him/her that,

*'my head is saying to me it's wrong but my heart is saying, "he's a Bishop, he's the next closest thing to God", so if he's asking me and he's a Bishop, it's God asking me, so that's what he wants me to do'*

Arguably this is compounded by Canon law which, as we were told, allows for people to retain their titles despite having been convicted of a criminal offence. As Pat said, almost incredulously (using, as other interviewees did, the word 'outrageous') to express a view that:

*'In terms of sanctions, I think they should be treated like people in other organisations. If you've been convicted or cautioned by the police, you should not be a priest anymore, and you should not be allowed to use the title or take on any responsibilities or roles within the Church. (A convicted bishop) is still called a Bishop, it cannot be taken away. It's like being employed by God, so he cannot be stripped of it. I think it is outrageous. If I'd been convicted or cautioned I could not continue in my job. That is his job or vocation, but in social services, teaching, nursing, doctors, the police, you would lose the right to do that job. But they (the Church) don't take away their titles. I think they should be publicly banned from using the title, and they should not be given permission to officiate (PTO).'*

But, despite these sincerely held views they cannot currently be acted upon because, as Stevie added ...

*'... if someone is convicted or cautioned for a sexual offence against a child (for instance), they would certainly not be given a job or permission to officiate. But the title of Reverend or Bishop remains, in the same way that if a surgeon is struck off, they would remain 'Dr' so-and-so, or if a Professor is sacked, they would also remain 'Dr' so-and-so. There are theological reasons regarding a belief in what happens at ordination (the indelible anointing of the Holy Spirit or something like that), hence the permanence of the title even if the job remains out-of-reach. As it happens I disagree with this on theological grounds as well as safeguarding ones, but I still think the context is helpful to understand why the Church does this. (Also ... as Archbishop Justin has explained, in order for this to change, we'd actually need an Act of Parliament. As the established Church, we can't just change these things after internal debate.)'*

For Max, and for many of the other interviewees, the sense of power was imbued by the paraphernalia of the Anglo/Catholic tradition which was instrumental in the maintenance of the abuse. For example,

*'In the very High Church rosaries are given to children and Mass is sung. This may be how power over vulnerable children was exerted by the clergy. Further, (X) operated his area as a fiefdom, and that area was seen by him as an independent place and was (therefore) inviolable.'*

Max and Kim also expressed the view that, in future, more should be known about the backgrounds of priests, more about their early lives, including their family and educational backgrounds. Max was of the opinion that the abusing priests had a 'highly developed social veneer and were very adept and manipulative'. This has been a feature of accounts already described by survivors and professionals alike. This also made it difficult (or sometimes impossible) for some members of the public to accept that priests were capable of such acts. In answer to the question as to whether priests were different from other abusers, Kim thought that because the Church offers a community identity, and that a strong social life is all part of that identity, it influenced people's credulity: 'This decade has seen an absolute denial of members of three priests' congregations that this could possibly be true, many of whom have children'. It was thought that some parishioners believed the priests had been ...

*'set up, that this does not resonate with people they have seen in the pulpit, to the people that have christened their children, because it's such a tenet of their belief system: if they accept that this is true then it's threatening and their whole social network crumbles.'*

So given this dynamic, it is perhaps not surprising that some would try to place the blame on the victims. Several people reported that many in the congregations blamed 'trouble makers', calling them liars. In one case, Bernie, who said s/he was abused as a 12 year old, was questioned, when older, by a priest as to whether s/he had 'lead the priest on' (when Bernie was a child). This kind of reaction is similar to the response of some Children's Social Care departments, and the Police, to allegations of child sexual exploitation which was revealed in the last couple of years in different parts of the country.

The status of the priest had generally been viewed differently to abusers in other walks of life. So when people hear about abuse by a manager of a football team or a swimming coach or a PE teacher at school, Kim thought that there was a distinction in the public reaction to priests who abuse as opposed to other abusers,

*'If they hear about a PE teacher who's put a camera in the changing room, they'd think 'dirty pervert' but if it's a local priest, for some reason it elicits that whole lens for people about what is 'right' and what is 'wrong'. It's almost like a personal attack. When I talk to people it's like they are saying "are you're sure you're right about this?" You can see it affecting them. People are overlaying it with their experiences in other churches and thinking 'what can I believe now?'*

This echoes what three of the survivors have said. Drew, Max and Ryan, all independently, said that the mismatch between what their abusers said publicly in the pulpit and what they were engaged in when not preaching was astonishing.

Strong feelings were expressed in one church where two young men were abused. As Kim recalled 'Many people in the church were angry about it, disbelieving them, saying they were making trouble. The boys were seen as difficult kids and trouble makers'.

Of course, if church-goers thought these acts were unconscionable and unthinkable, then it is possible that they would not have been alert to any signs that their child was not safe

when they send them off alone to Sunday school or on church trips. One member of the clergy, when talking to Stevie, had said,

*'If you can't deal with the stuff you see, you're never going to be able to deal with the stuff you don't see'.*

### *A Culture of Normalisation and Minimisation*

The term 'historical abuse'<sup>32</sup> has been used to describe what happened in the past but this can serve to minimise and distance the events. There are numerous messages on social media available, for example, written by those expressing the view that as 'all this happened in the past'. Consequently, 'everyone should move on from it'. Although individuals who have died cannot defend themselves, this should not override the fact that other people are still living with the consequences of the abuse. It also can imply that 'that was then, this is now' and therefore it could not happen again.

Some argue that as the culture was 'different then', those practices cannot be judged by the same standards that now exist. Ryan said, 'people thought that if something was viewed not as a crime in those days then it didn't happen'. When abuse did start to come to light, it sometimes became *de rigueur* to defend the Church. Drew (and others) suggested 'Their first instinct is to protect their job or organisation. They go into protection mode'.

The idea that the victims were trouble-makers, and that it was 'all in the past', was thought by some to have been held in the higher echelons of the Institution. Pat described how 'In his book, (Z) described Neil Todd as a 'trouble maker' and discounted other accounts from people as being because they were mentally ill'.

Neil Todd was deeply affected by the abuse perpetrated on him and had, for many years, tried to come to terms with it. As reported, he moved to Australia and finally took his own life. The use of language played a powerful role in people's perceptions, and the denial and minimisation that is present in the phrase 'historic abuse' can serve to rub salt in the wounds of those affected. For them it remains to lesser and greater degrees ever 'present'.

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<sup>32</sup> The preferred term now is 'non-recent' abuse.

Even when one person, Max, said that s/he told the vicar prior to conducting their wedding what had happened in general terms (without identifying the people or the area) 'The vicar did not seem at all surprised that this had happened.' He also did not offer to report this at a higher level. This response would likely serve to stop many people disclosing abuse.

A culture existed whereby people, like Drew, were now reluctant to tell anyone they'd been abused while in the choir. S/he said that people scoffed when telling them that abuse occurred during time as a chorister, as if 'well, we know that happens don't we'?

Some young people said they told someone at the time about their abuse. Similarly Bernie was abused as a twelve year old and was so troubled that s/he had stopped attending church. When the priest said he wanted to visit the child's home, Bernie had a strong reaction:

*'I know my parents confronted my abuser, who denied it. The priest was going to visit us and I collapsed in a heap in a terrible state. I can remember that ... it was 41 years ago and I can remember as if it was yesterday, and how I felt like my life had been drained from me. I didn't know if my parents would believe me, but they did. Several weeks later (the priest) was in the local paper for having abused a woman when he was drunk, so my parents always felt that it validated what they thought of my situation'.*

Bernie, like Neil Todd, said his/her complaint was ignored, and added 'Poor Neil Todd told someone and the poor man lost his life'. When s/he met a senior clergyman at an event during which the matter arose, he suggested to Bernie that s/he 'must have led him on'. Bernie was astounded that this should be levelled at him/her and said s/he had replied, 'I was an innocent twelve year old!'

The use of language demonstrates the level of normalisation that took place. (X), who publicly supported (name of Police Operation), said that he'd been 'a bit naughty'. This was a phrase a number of interviewees had heard to describe abusers' actions (and it is mentioned again in this section).

The expectation that those serving in the Church would be of the highest moral standing prevailed with many of the interviewees. There was an expectation that 'men of God would tell the truth', but it transpired that this was not always the case. For example, Max said that

(X) had 'submitted to the CPS that he did not deny taking him on holidays and giving him money, and had convinced the police that he was "just being kind"'. We were told that this was eventually shown not to be the case, but nevertheless he persisted in denying and minimising what he had done despite having been convicted and imprisoned. Pat had powerful feelings about the pain this caused his victims in an attempt to 'save their own skin', and that was not confined to (X):

*'In interviews (they) weren't admitting stuff, because they wanted to get away with it. You'd assume men of God would tell the truth when interviewed. It makes me cross that all six have lied. Some of them like (X) are in prison will acknowledge what they did, but he didn't say it before trial to save those poor victims months on end of wondering whether they were going to court, worrying they were going to give evidence. (X) got all his cronies to support him by saying it was a miscarriage of justice and that Neil Todd was a liar and an attention seeker. But in the end (X) conceded that what Neil had said was true, so he knew what pain he'd caused that man.'*

Respondents talked about the respect in which the clergy were held during the time of the abuse. Sheridan thought that the way society viewed priests made it very difficult for many victims to tell anyone. Sheridan said that,

*'Many priests, made a separation between their personal morality, their personal life, and the "public speak". The culture of the priest as being lofty - lifted up - made them think they were untouchable. The culture of them being more than normal human beings made them even more untouchable'.*

Bernie thought that this is not now the case and that priests are now thought of as 'ordinary men' and therefore not deified and respected as 'above us' as previously they had been. S/he noticed a difference in the way the clergy are perceived nowadays and thinks that this will go some way to reducing the aura of power that surrounded them in the past:

*'Over the past thirty years the deference and untouchability that the clergy seemed to have has disappeared. They are now seen as ordinary human beings who are equally responsible and culpable as others for their actions. When I was growing up there was definitely deference for the priest. I grew up in the Anglo-Catholic community and there was never a concept of questioning Father's authority. There was an arrogance on the part of the clergy; they were in charge; they said what*

*happened. They told you what to do, what to believe. Social attitudes changed and the position in the Anglo-Catholic Church have changed. Their status had been on a pedestal. But I don't think they have the moral high ground any more'.*

Stevie made the point, however, that a 'culture of deference isn't limited to Anglo-Catholics' and went on to describe his/her earlier experiences within a different religious tradition.

Like many of the interviewees, Bernie said s/he no longer has 'respect for the office of clergy; no respect for the office of clergyperson'. For this interviewee 'what matters is the way they live their life, how they treat people and how they convey their Christian faith'.

### *Misogyny and Celibacy*

A number of interviewees mentioned that the traditions of the Church of England were centuries old, and that the ordination of women has led to schisms within the Church. They said it has been male-dominated and this is where the power has resided, especially in the 1970s and 1980s when a large number of abuses took place, and Ryan said, 'there was a culture of "it's just a thing that happens here"'. As we have seen, Marie Keenan draws connections between misogyny, celibacy and abusive practice towards children, young people and adults. So too did some of those interviewed, but without always drawing the same inferences and conclusions about the relationship between them.

The Diocese of Chichester, as described by Stevie, has had a strong Anglo-Catholic stance which is 'infamous in the outside world', saying s/he was once told that 'if you want to find out what the Church was like one hundred years ago, go to Chichester'. Another respondent Max, described Chichester as the 'last bastion of misogyny'.

Ronnie described the culture as being like a 'male club comprised of dangerous assumptions and a poisonous cocktail made up of superiority. There was the superiority of men and authority'. As an example, s/he said that at a gathering it had seemed more like a masonic lodge, where the clergy, and then the Archdeacons and Bishops were set apart and unapproachable.

Ronnie went on to talk about how s/he saw how this tradition is played out in Chichester, and how this in effect subjugates women. It complements Ryan's observation that 'the power of priests goes back many hundreds of years of men controlling women, and the institutional subjugation of women by the Church. Historically religion has been about social control and the control of women'. Furthermore, Ronnie said,

*'In this tradition, men have the leadership and the women are subservient, and therefore they do not have an equal voice. So in the Conservative Evangelical Church you'd expect men to have the leadership role, and you would defer to their authority. It's very subtle. If someone in the congregation questions the scriptures or what the preacher is interpreting, then they are seen not to be questioning the person, they are seen to be questioning the word of God'.*

There is clearly a distinction to be made between sexism and 'misogyny', and it is likely that, statistically, few people would admit to the 'dislike of, prejudice against', or even 'hate for women' as dictionaries tend to define it. There is however continuing sexism present in the general population and in the workplace, as evident over the recent concerns about unequal pay at the BBC, for example. So naturally it is not surprising that sexism is present within the congregations in the Diocese of Chichester, and is likely to be present within the clergy group. This was arguably the case in the previous safeguarding group where there were only two women appointed, one of whom, it was argued by some, worked hard and at personal cost to gather the evidence needed to take action against abusing priests. It is understood that apparently, not only was her advice not taken, important information was said to have been withheld. It was also said that when dissatisfaction was expressed, the person was actively discouraged from pursuing it. This in itself may not have indicated 'sexism' or misogynistic behaviour, but observers at the time did have sympathy for her with one person saying,

*'(...) had a hard time, partly because she was not working full time, and partly because she was a woman. It's true to say she was battling'.*

Of course parishioners are a segment of the general population, some of whom hold stereotypical views about the role of women, as Kim noted:

*'There are priests who freely say they are against the ordination of women, but what they are less overt about is what I'd call the undiscussed misogyny. For example, when out in the parishes I am frequently seen as 'the helper'. I was not seen as someone who had a professional role, it was like I was there to make the tea.... It's very traditional...., and it filters into every layer'.*

Examples of sexism were not uncommon when listening to interviewees. For example, Rickie recalled,

*'If I'm honest I haven't seen much misogyny. I certainly haven't noticed any misogyny against me ... I think there is still some misogyny out there in the parishes. And I was always struck by the female Archdeacon who said to me shortly after I arrived that she'd done a presentation or something and someone came up to her afterwards and said "that was very good .... for a woman"'*.

The ordination of women has been progressing, but has been slow in the Diocese of Chichester, and although several interviewees noted that more women had been appointed in recent years, changing attitudes was a slow process. It is possible that women may be reluctant to go to an area where there was (in some quarters) an atmosphere of dissent which would not be conducive to ministry. Ronnie described Chichester as being a 'no-go area for women'. Stevie said that 'You don't get the women's voice, it's just a massive male echo chamber' and went on to describe a case where a woman had applied to Chichester and that,

*'She reported that people from her own parish in another Diocese had said "why on earth would you do that, go to a Diocese where someone has opposed female ordination and doesn't respect your priesthood?"'*

Robin also felt that it may be uncomfortable for some women in the Diocese, and that one of them had expressed 'surprise' that there were not more there. Whilst for some this may seem somewhat at odds with true inclusiveness, it has been argued by some priests that, for theological reasons, the tradition should not be changed. But as Max pointed out, 'the scripture can be used to justify or legitimise misogyny'.

It is hard to avoid the view that in the past misogyny and/or sexism have had a part to play in the decision not to appoint more women. It is suggested by Ronnie that although the Anglo-Catholic Church and the conservative Evangelical Church disagree about a lot of things, there is agreement on where the leadership should come from, 'and that is, from men'. S/he went on to describe his/her view about how power laid the foundations for his/her abuse:

*'They'd been to theological college so they have to be listened to and the congregation should be obedient to the leader. The whole culture was to be obedient and not to question. Then if you add on the charismatic, mysterious, magical element where the minister not only has this scripture, he also has this 'hotline to God' which has a magical element to it.*

In Ronnie's abuse s/he said 'he used to say that he'd had pictures, a vision, so he would "relay" a picture of you, which was God telling you that he wanted you to do this or that. So it appeared not to come from the minister, but from God himself!'

We were told that the position of the role of women in the Diocese is in contrast to other Dioceses in England which, it was felt by some, have modernised and embraced the ordination of women as right and natural. However, it has been pointed out that historically, the Diocese had a powerful group of Anglo-Catholic clergymen who were, it seems strongly opposed to the ordination of women. Bernie described it as follows:

*'I think that (X) would have said his objections were theological, but he was surrounded by misogynists. (X) said the "ordination of women will not exist because it's not happening in this Diocese ... because I'm not ordaining these people".'*

The appointment to the Diocese of Bishop Martin Warner was mentioned by some respondents who said they have seen a change in attitudes since his arrival. Bernie described him as 'a breath of fresh air', and stressed that, while the Bishop will not engage personally in the ordination of women, this is for theological reasons. Bernie powerfully described the effect Bishop Martin's actions of removing the sexually abusing priests as having 'drained the Diocese of bile'.

In 2017 the Right Reverend Sarah Mullally (the Church of England's most senior Bishop) was appointed Bishop of London, and this has been seen by some as a powerful message to other Dioceses. Bernie thought it had isolated and broken down some of the previous power base in the Diocese of Chichester and put a stop to the previous 'unsavoury culture,' as s/he described it. It is impossible to know whether, if there had there been more women in positions of authority in the Diocese, then the abuse of children and young people might have been less prevalent, or exposed more quickly.

Perhaps controversially, Drew thought that celibacy is not simply something decreed in scripture; rather, it is socially constructed as a means for the Church to gain inherited money (because there are no children to inherit the estate of the deceased person). It was further contended by Drew that, with homosexuality until relatively recently being illegal, and marriage being the way to have a sexual relationship, it made it possible for the Church to promote celibacy as a (worthy) 'sacrifice', thereby passing any inheritance money or properties into the Church purse.

Drew was keen to point out that celibacy was not a precondition for the sexual abuse of children. As we see in the next example, which resonates with some of the ideas presented in the previous section of findings, Kim hypothesised that it may contribute to why some priests turn to having sex with children and/or young people:

*'This is where (I think) things have gone awry. Celibate priests are unable to sustain celibacy safely' (saying this was only guesswork) 'They see these vulnerable boys as 'safe'. They do it to boys because they can. They are available because they have the power and access, because many are charismatic and charming, and they have gathered young people to them. Whether they went into the Church as a cynical ploy to get access to young people, I don't know, but there seems to be a connection.*

It has been noted that some were of the view that the Diocese had attracted a group of homosexual men into the Church in various capacities over the years, and that some had known each other from college days. It has been suggested by some respondents that there are similarities with other institutions where there are children, such as in education, particularly within boarding schools. From her experience of a review into non-recent abuse

in a school Edi Carmi<sup>33</sup> learnt that there was a culture whereby some teachers and pupils developed friendships (not necessarily sexual). The pupils went to university and then got a job back at the school on completion of their education. This contributed to a closed culture and a lack of challenge of the ways staff behaved with pupils.

Some interviewees mentioned that, in their view, it had been known that gay men were drawn to the Diocese and although an openly gay priest might have been seen as 'shocking', here they were able to be with other gay men under the cloak of the Church. Sheridan thought that it also gave people with a criminal sexual orientation cover as well, a view shared by some others.

Although Chichester contained a number of homosexual male members of the clergy who went on to abuse children, young people and vulnerable adults, it has been emphasised already that some respondents thought that this may not be confined to that Diocese. And, as we indicated earlier, the connections referred to here are complex, which Stevie explained as follows:

*'... there is no connection between homosexuality and abuse, but there is a connection between secrecy and abuse. The combination of overt conservatism and covert liberalism in the history of the C of E vis-à-vis homosexuality, at least since the sexual revolution of the Sixties, may have combined to create an omertà culture around sex. Whilst much of this may have (legitimately) protected gay clergy and laity who were just trying to have a healthy relationship with another adult, it provided a cloak under which other more sinister behaviours could hide. But, the problem is not the homosexuality, but the disconnect created by overt conservatism and covert liberalism that forces some healthy adult sexuality (gay or straight) into the shadows. This can only create cultures of secrecy and hypocrisy, which can in turn only be unhealthy on a number of levels.'*

For some respondents the issue of homosexuality and the priesthood needed to be addressed by the Church. Edi Carmi, author of a seminal early report into one case of abuse in the Diocese in 2004 (published in 2014), concurs with the views of some other people in the study, and gave an example in what follows:

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<sup>33</sup> Edi Carmi asked for her comments to be attributed to her own name.

*'I believe there is hypocrisy in the church regarding homosexuality which in effect leads to priests having to be dishonest'.*

She spoke about someone who had (in the course of her earlier review) expressed feelings of responsibility and regret that they had not identified the child abuse that occurred. Edi Carmi said that this person,

*'... felt responsible and that s/he thought s/he should have recognised what s/he was seeing. In retrospect s/he knew that her/his prejudice against homosexuality was founded in her/his Christian belief, that as a Christian you cannot countenance homosexuality theologically. However, this person knew that it was accepted in society, so it was therefore difficult for him/her to bring those two things together. How this person achieved this was to ignore it completely, like it doesn't exist, when you see it, it becomes blocked out. This person came to a realisation in retrospect that this is what had happened personally to her/him. They had been unable to see homosexuality, that two males would have sex, so then it would be impossible to contemplate that it would be that one of those males would be a child. Therein lay the conflict for this person as a Christian.'*

Stevie thoughtfully added,

*'One case ... involved a priest later convicted of abuse, taking 16-year old boys out to dinner in what to any observer would have looked like a date. Another priest, who was overseeing the priest taking boys out for dinner, did not intervene. When ... asked ... whether s/he would have done so if the priest had been taking 16-yr old girls out to dinner, s/he replied "Of course". S/he swiftly realised the problem: because s/he had unconsciously excluded the possibility of sexual activity occurring between two males, s/he had missed the inherent riskiness of the dinner 'dates', which would have been obvious to him/her had they involved a male cleric with 16-yr old girls'.*

Edi Carmi was concerned that despite some changes in attitudes about homosexuality in the Church it remains the case that there is still denial about homosexual relationships within the priesthood. Therefore, it is possible that the feelings and beliefs of the person describing their dilemma above could also be the case for other people within the Church at all levels.

As Edi explained,

*'If you can't be open about it, you're making people close their eyes because it's the only way you can live your life with this dichotomy, this double standard'.*

This raises a point about celibacy which is touched on earlier in this report, and its possible role in the sexual abuse within the Diocese. However, in addition, Edi Carmi felt that ‘if priests are in a civil partnership then the assumption by the Church is that they are celibate within that relationship, but that is likely to make the couple become secretive’.

### *The Keeping of Records*

Until computers were routinely used for keeping typed (and electronic) records it was usual to hand-write letters, memoranda and reports, and most organisations had a policy regarding the timely destruction of records. More details regarding the Diocesan files is available in other reports, but it seems that there was a surprising lack of information in the HR files of priests and others. As described by Val, the files in the Diocese of Chichester,

*‘focussed on the practical, such as family issues, alcohol misuse, debt, school fees for their children, financial affairs or accommodation. However there had been a couple with sexual concerns where there was a “breach of professional standards”’.*

Max told us that some important data about a complaint of hers/his were lost within the relevant police service. S/he said it was rejected on the grounds that s/he did not know the name and number of an officer who lost the record. It was therefore treated as a ‘management and control’ matter - meaning that it would not appear in the ‘complaints statistics’.

Furthermore we heard that the same survivor received a letter from the police saying the case would remain open to enable links to be made should a similar complaint (of abuse) come forward. In fact, a similar case was reported in another part of the country but, we were told, the original letter to (police service name withheld) had not actually been retained, and various reasons were given for this, none of which satisfied the survivor. Whether this was ‘simply’ incompetence or whether it constituted duplicity, obfuscation or even dishonesty is unclear.

A perceived lack of openness has compounded the frustration felt by many survivors in the investigative procedure and in what could be garnered from the records. As mentioned in other reports it is claimed that there was an infamous bonfire in the garden upon the

retirement of the Dean of Chichester cathedral which was thought to contain the records of (X) jailed for 16 years in 2001. The Dean was investigated for perverting the course of justice but, as any proof, had it existed, seemed to have been burned, it could not proceed. The disappointment for one survivor, Drew, seems enhanced by the feeling that it was likely that 'more than one person would be culpable in the loss or destruction of records, not just the one person asking for it to be done'. In another example of alleged subterfuge and perceived cover-up, described by Ronnie, someone had made a phone call to (X) on the retirement of (Y) who, it is claimed, said he was 'busy shredding records'.

### *A Culture of Unheeded or Ignored Warnings*

Even when it was known that abuse had taken place, as in the case of Roy Cotton (who was known to have been convicted in 1954 for a sexual offence) past records of associations were ignored. We were also told that there was no 'firm evidence that his abusive behaviour within the Diocese was known ... but he was certainly known to have had a conviction prior to his ordination. But the Diocese of Chichester had no involvement in his ordination, which happened eight years before he got here and involved Bishops from a number of other Dioceses and even an Archbishop'.

Moreover, it was thought that sympathy with him led to the fast-tracking of his appointment, and no reference of his history was passed on during his transfer. We were told that no records were kept of this history, nor of any complaints, nor of meetings (other than brief notes). Ryan was shocked that a priest was still licensed to practice even though s/he said he had 'wrestled with half-naked boys and physically abused another boy' known to Ryan.

For Drew the response from the Church to the abuses was (almost) worse than those who perpetrated it. Comparison was made with how a member of the public would respond upon discovering a crime:

*'If for example you knew your neighbour had murdered someone, and you don't do something about it, then you are involved. Similarly, if you are an employer and one of your staff does something reprehensible, you're obliged to do something. In this*

*instance, they (the Church) hide behind the fact that it's not the law they think they have to adhere to'.*

### *Delays and Cover-up*

There were different, and sometimes strongly held, views among those interviewed and in the Diocese more widely, about whether – and, if so, to what extent - there was a 'cover-up'. For example, Lee reminds us ...

*'During the 60s and 70s big care homes existed and children were placed in what should have been the care of a benevolent state. In fact (in many) there was poor practice, few policies and lots of opportunities for those people to carve out opportunities to abuse children – who's going to know? Back then you couldn't prosecute against a child unless it was corroborated, so it was very much a case of 'behind closed doors', and 'what the Chaplain says, goes', so who were children going to complain to? There was no avenue of complaint.'*

What has emerged from the various inquiries into abuse in the Diocese is that there have in the past been varying degrees of minimising, subterfuge and 'cover-up'. For example, Stevie said that 'Lots of examples of low level cover-up were found, in the sense that groomers were heard of, and there were whispers and innuendo, and no-one did anything about it.'

When finally the truth did emerge, about what had been happening to the survivors, there was a deep feeling of shock across much of the Diocese, not least because of the lack of response towards the survivors. Lou said,

*'The amount of abuse taking place was nothing short of shocking, and (name withheld) culture was one of "whatever it takes, we must protect the organisation, we don't give a damn for the victims"'*.

This resonates with others interviewed or corresponded with. Max said that one survivor, who was in the same class as him/her, and who did find the courage to go to the police, found that the power of the abuser was complete when s/he was actually sent back to the abuser, and no record was made by the police of the visit.

Kim was of the opinion that ‘There was a lot of looking away, just not recognising what was going on. I don’t think there was active cover-up, (but that remains to be seen) - rather, that it was omission’. Progress at getting to the truth of what happened is thought to have been slow, possibly for several reasons. Drew saw that ‘the Diocese had a history of burying abuse, not putting adequate funding into finding the truth’.

Another reason s/he thought that the diocese was not proactive and that progress was slow was the view that,

*‘Everything’s been done slowly and seems designed to show “we couldn’t have known, we didn’t do anything wrong”. For example, they initially insisted there had not been a cover-up, but that had been found to be the case, and was confirmed in a reply to a letter ... The Church is not proactive, but when I write to individuals they respond. This may be because they worry that if they don’t they will be criticised in the press ... it seems that doors opened when these communications took place.’*

In a similar vein, Rickie said,

*... I have found immense frustration since I’ve been here that everything takes longer than you think it’s going to. I think it’s partly due to the fact that we are a charity and we don’t have enough money to do everything that we’d like to do, and particularly to employ as many staff as we’d like to, and we’re always under-resourced and we’re always trying to do too much with too little time. And partly due to the fairly ... how can I describe this? ... the lack of clear structure in the C of E. So in a company they typically have a hierarchy, a structure – it would be clear who needs to know what, who needs to sign on what. Whereas in the C of E there are all these different layers and all these different tiers. So huge numbers of people need to be involved in agreeing things, in communicating. They’re all busy, so even when you identify them all it takes a long time for everything to get back ... So I don’t think it’s deliberately slowly, but I think that it is frustratingly slow. But I don’t think it we can sort that. It’s very diffuse.*

Some believed that other ways of ‘covering-up’ came in the form of i) a lack of sharing of information ii) deliberate undermining of a police investigation and iii) offering ‘forgiveness’ to abusers rather than reporting them, keeping silent and, in some cases, deception.

Max said, ‘(X), an evangelical leader, was more inclined to forgive, and was very friendly with the abusers. S/he knew about the arrest history and allegations. There were similarities

in the Catholic and Anglican churches in the Diocese, in so far as errant priests were moved around’.

So, for some, there had developed an ‘atmosphere’ that promoted cover-up. Stevie recalled,

*‘In the case of (X) a serious sex offender, the Bishop (Y) had said in a letter ‘we must get him the best lawyer’. He did not go on to advise that he should now tell the police what he’d told the Bishop. Despite admitting his offences, it took a further fourteen years for the information to be passed to the police. There had been no sense of transparency, proactively looking at it’.*

Perhaps the following comment from Stevie captures the complexities underlying the question of whether a ‘cover-up’ took place:

*‘It is very difficult to decide exactly what happened in Chichester. It is easy to look at the extent of abuse and conclude that there must have been a deliberate, conspiratorial cover-up. We have very little direct evidence for this, although of course when people cover things up, they rarely record that they are doing so. It may be that the Diocese has to reverse-engineer from what we do know, and conclude that there must have been some sort of cover-up. However, there is a difference between ‘gaze aversion’ and conspiratorial cover-up, and I think this is important because responding to those two things is very different. Was it that senior people knew that abuse was going on and deliberately obscured it, or was it that they could not cope with what might have been happening and averted their eyes? The motivations for the two are very different; otherwise well-meaning people can engage in gaze aversion, whereas conspiratorial cover-up requires a level of malice. Cover-up is what ‘other people’ do, but we are all capable of averting our eyes from what we should be able to see. It is important that we understand the nature of the failing, so that we can address it and do all we can to ensure it never happens again. However, the Diocese must appreciate that from the perspective of victims, in some sense it makes little difference: there was a failure to protect which the organisation must hold its hands up to’.*

## *The Culture of - and confusion about - 'Forgiveness'*

It seems that many of the abusers were either explicitly or implicitly 'forgiven'. The views of other interviewees are encapsulated in the following quote by Drew:

*'To be forgiven in the Christian faith the person has to repent their sins, turn to Christ and ask for forgiveness. That is a public declaration: you own up first and that's how you absolve yourself. The victim also has to forgive him. But it was swept under the carpet and people were moved on to new territory and the place did not know what they were capable of doing. Wiping the slate clean was a requirement of forgiveness.'*

Where the practice of the confessional exists, it remains sacrosanct. This is discussed in the Edi Carmi report, where at points 8.54-8.58 she quotes the diocesan procedures as stating that 'the "seal of the confessional" is absolute, but advises on the need for clarity between a confessional and other forms of pastoral conversation and the possibility of making absolution conditional on self-reporting the matter to the police.'

This whole question of forgiveness is clearly a very contentious one, and is unlikely to change as it is a part of the historical and theological tenets of the Church. However, the role of priests in the granting of forgiveness seems to have been problematic which, in turn, may have adversely affected the trajectory and velocity of bringing abusers to justice. However, the spectre of a culture of blame was never far away when decisions were made about what to record, and how the victims were viewed. Stevie thought that this posed the question whether there 'was a culture of forgiveness, or was it blindness'?

Stevie suspected that, from the files, that there had been 'a pretty woeful reaction to reports of abuse' and gave the following example:

*'A convicted abuser wrote to the Bishop (at the time) asking for a reference to aid sentencing. He replied that of course he would and said that the father of one of those he'd abused was causing a lot of problems, but that hopefully it would die down soon.'*

Stevie went on to say that this was the most 'egregious example, but that it was definitely not the only one.'

### *Delays in reporting*

Although it may be factually correct that there was no evidence of some issues being covered up when abuses were reported, questions arise about the speed of 'reporting'. As we have seen, the formal reporting of abuse was not on the whole completed until years after the events, with some exceptions (see Max's and Bernie's experience above of trying to do so). As we have seen, some of those interviewed, were of the view that, where allegations were made locally, they were often dealt with 'informally', or the person was moved on. So in that sense, allegations were often seen as being 'swept under the carpet.'

Max said there had been other examples of non-cooperation or even, indeed, of deception. S/he said s/he had found that 'assertions made about meetings being held had not been the case' and that 'the Church had said they had given the Police all they had asked for, but s/he, and indeed others, had found the information had not been disclosed, things which would have helped enquiries, because the police had not asked for it'.

Delays in reporting and getting the information from the Church authorities compounded the effects of abuse to the survivors. Getting justice generally is important to people who have been wronged, but where sexual abuse has been perpetrated, for them it becomes an affront then to have to cope with delays, non-cooperation, dishonesty and obfuscation.

The local police service is confident that it has developed an expertise in the particular field of abuse in the Church, something which interviewees from all settings have commented upon favourably. We were informed that there are now established systems for reporting, the obtaining and giving of advice, as well as the sharing of information. This has not necessarily been the case in some other areas of the country, which has caused delays in getting abusers brought to justice. Ronnie first reported abuse some three years ago, and although there had been a specific problem associated with the abuser living abroad, it is understood that the whereabouts of the person had been known for some time by U.K. police. Ronnie was very concerned that his/her abuser was still officiating, and that he could be abusing people. Further details about the police operation are not known by us, but we understand the person had recently been arrested with plans for extradition in progress. Ronnie described how the wait was impeding recovery and how the police response, at times, had the effect of feeling personally intimidating. Similar to what several of the

respondents found from experience, it was felt that there had been a lack of a proactive stance and feedback on progress or otherwise. Ronnie found that making regular calls to the police was the only option in obtaining information, and in getting action taken.

### *Nepotism, Favouritism and Conflict of Interest*

Some interviewees were of the view that new appointments to the Diocese are recommended by the Bishop (but others challenge this assumption). Because of his position, Max thought that those who then interview the candidate are unable to challenge the recommendation, and therefore the appointment is simply 'rubber stamped.' Max was not alone in commenting on recruitment practices. Val also had thought that the 'selection process should be tightened up' and that a DBS check was not sufficient in itself. In the case of (X) it was suggested by some interviewees that abusers may have been drawn to the Diocese because they knew of his predilections. Ronnie said,

*'Posts were not advertised, people would be head-hunted from the Old Boy network. This was thirty years ago, but it still is the case to some extent. You'd have had to have been introduced by the 'right person', with the 'right pedigree' and you'd have had to have gone to the 'right college' within that Diocese's church tradition. In effect the interview was a formality. Churchwardens were just told which candidate they were going to get'.*

We decided to check the point made about the involvement of the Bishop in appointments and were told that ... 'The Bishop has no involvement in most parish appointments and none whatsoever in most laity employment practices'. Similarly, when the point about churchwardens (made in the last sentence in the quote above) was checked, we were told that this is not what happens. Here we have two examples of how 'perceptions' can lead to misunderstandings (although the 'misunderstanding' could simply be that the person was referring to practice in the past – whereas now things are said to be different).

*Secrecy (but more related to organisational culture, rather than to individuals)*

From the range of reports that have been written about abuse in the Diocese, and from talking to a number of people for this study, coercion and covertness were seen as rife. Stevie independently raised a similar point to that mentioned previously about the behaviour of student priests; it was felt that the seeds of a culture of secrecy had been established early on in the career of priests.

*'Sex between priests is known about in the hierarchy but it's hidden. This in turn leads the way to other secrecy: for example, the concept that student priests are no different from other students, but people will think they should be, and would expect that they should be different morally, and therefore it must be all kept secret. This results in everyone has got something to hide and therefore something that can be held against them. An idea that "we all have secrets don't we Father?" The extent that a person would come forward if they suspected someone of abuse (or anything else) would depend on how many secrets they've got themselves. For instance he may be sleeping with the Curate and have a dreadful alcohol problem that he wouldn't want anyone else to know about'.*

'Cultural secrecy' has a number of consequences. It prevents victims talking about concerns to each other, or of disclosing it to anyone else. This has been discussed previously, but for one person the abuse had been so secretive and coercive it took the distance of time to be able to process what had happened. Ronnie said,

*'There wasn't one person I was able to talk to about what was happening to me. It was only just before he left that I realised what had been happening to me. I didn't know. It didn't dawn on me until years later. I didn't have any words to express it. I couldn't describe it'.*

This is a feature commonly seen in child sexual abuse, when children or young people lack the vocabulary to describe what is or was happening to them. Children who are abused often act out their confusion and despair, showing challenging behaviours, or become withdrawn, often at school. (Disabled children are particularly vulnerable as some may not have speech, and deaf children may not have been taught 'sexual' language when learning British Sign Language or Makaton).

Rickie thought that caution was needed regarding the question of confidentiality, which should not be confused with secrecy, especially when allegations are made against another individual. This, Rickie thought, had led some people to a perception of protectionism, but Rickie said ‘In one suspension we’ve been dealing with in one parish, it has caused an immense amount of frustration in the parish that we won’t say more. But it’s not fair to a suspended person to say more because you don’t know what the outcome is going to be.’

### *Sexuality*

With some exceptions it is apparent that most of the abuse was inflicted on boys and young men from the Anglo-Catholic section of the Church. This has unfortunately led to an assumption in the minds of some individuals that ‘homosexuality’ and ‘abuse’ are connected (which we pointed out in the early part of this report is not justified).

As a young person of 19, Bernie experienced the social atmosphere of the Church as predatory and ‘unsavoury’:

*‘I can remember as a teenager going to an Anglo-Catholic function, and all the gay clergy made a bee-line for you, to come and talk to you. They were all odd – even the married ones who were gay were odd. I was gay and I could recognise this. When things happened to me when I was very young I wouldn’t have known. I was very sexually naïve for some time. When you’re in your late teens and someone takes notice of you, regardless of who it is, there’s a sense of “Ooh, someone’s noticing me!” As young people, you are impressionable’.*

These are difficult subjects to discuss but those interviewed were both measured and sensitive to the accusation that could be levelled against them – even though they would remain anonymous – that they were implying that being gay was in any way related to sexual abuse. So although it may be thought by some that the Anglo-Catholic Church attracts single gay priests, it was the expectation of celibacy that was considered by some to be full of challenges (in the way Marie Keenan argued earlier).

There were some people who thought that the issue of homosexuality, although quietly ‘accepted’, remained an undiscussable subject in some parts of the Church: an ‘elephant in the room’. It was thought by some that the history of its illegality has cast a long shadow

over the Church and that, for some, it was still a taboo subject. Pat thought that, even today, the Church is not truly ready to accept homosexuality or women priests, thinking that,

*'There may be a token appointment here and there because they want to show they are modernising, but I don't know that they really are.'*

Turning to the Evangelical Church, it was considered by one interviewee that it might attract a certain group of people, some of whom may be vulnerable women, others, dominant men. To the outsider it may give the impression of having an old-fashioned and sexist ethos. The view was expressed that, compared with the sexual abuse of boys and young men in the Anglo-Catholic Church, when abuse took place in the Evangelical Church, the victims were more likely to be girls and/or vulnerable women. We understand from interviews that in the conservative evangelical arm of the Church homosexuality is not acceptable, and priests are encouraged to get married and have children. Ronnie surmised,

*'The scriptures are the ultimate thing for the evangelicals, and the scripture says it's wrong to have sex with the same gender, so you would not be tolerated if you had gay relationships.'*

It has already been mentioned elsewhere that the leaders in the Evangelical Church are seen as being encouraged to take on patriarchal masculine roles, giving no opportunity for 'difference'. The message is 'be strong, be a leader in both your family and the Church'.

The vulnerability of women in the Evangelical Church to the idea of male influence, and arguably, the idea that they were superior, in Ronnie's view fed into women tending to be submissive. Ronnie thought their backgrounds may have 'contributed to their attraction to this type of philosophy, having possibly had domineering fathers or husband'. Ronnie said 'that having power over women in the evangelical tradition could lead to sexual abuse as a way proving their manhood: the culture meant that it was easy to get away with it.'

### *People Moving On*

The HR disciplinary practices common in other organisations appeared not to be applied in the Diocese. Even when abuse was discovered and passed on to higher levels, it was considered to be the custom and practice to remove the accused priest to another parish. An example given by Ryan was that of (X) - known to some as (nickname given) who was removed to another parish, rather than the organisation dealing with it. In the view of Max, 'these transfers gave them further opportunities to offend'. In one example given by Ronnie, 'church wardens knew someone was abusing had stepped in and told him if he didn't leave they'd go to the police, but people were quietly moved on within the Diocese'. This was another situation in which we felt it was important to check details; we were told that ... 'some priests moved *after* they (as we now know) were abusing, but we can't say for certain in most cases that they were moved *because* they were abusing. That may have been the perception but it's very difficult to establish. Of course, when people cover things up, they rarely record that they are doing so (this has been a constant issue for us in what we are able to prove).'

### *Betrayal of Christian Values*

When sexual abuse is perpetrated within the family survivors usually describe feelings of a loss of trust, particularly if the abuser is someone who was meant to care for and protect them. Similar feelings of betrayal are described by the survivors of abuse by those in positions of power and authority, such as abuse by teachers, sports coaches, movie directors and actors. In the case of priests, an additional feature emerges because of the incongruence – and some considered it to be hypocrisy - someone from an organisation that espouses 'compassion and looking after those who need looking after' is sexually abusing children or the vulnerable people. Lou poignantly continues,

*'This is what disappoints me. It's almost the ultimate betrayal of trust. They say "trust us, we represent God, we represent Jesus, our job is to teach our congregation how to be better people", to follow their religion, then to go on to abuse is just outrageous! When I started (this job) I was quite a religious, never fervent, but I've completely turned off. What I've seen of the abuse in the culture, I feel it doesn't represent my interests.'*

Other interviewees' comments chimed with Lou's experience, who said that they had lost belief in the institution of the Church (but not necessarily in their religious belief). Val said that 'It's the spiritual abuse which is hard to accept, abuse from trusted people in a position of helping people.' For Drew, such feelings were compounded when abusers did not take responsibility for their actions and when some within the hierarchy deliberately failed to take action. Drew said,

*'It's incomprehensible that an institution allegedly based on "loving thy neighbour", "repenting of one's sins", and "taking care of one another" should be acting in such a way. Not only did they not own up to their failings, or worse, they were actively trying to shut people up. They hired an abuser after he had been convicted of child abuse in the 1950's.'*

Kim reflected a similar sense of shock at the betrayal of Christian values that many felt about the nature and extent of the abuse that had occurred. The personal impact was profound, despite a great deal of experience in other settings of dealing with sexual abuse:

*'I was quite shocked when I came here. What was shocking was that so called "caring professional people" could behave in such a way, by priests in particular because of their public role, the public persona which was very much at odds with their private behaviour. Many people in society have built respect which is there for the clergy, and (we) do think they're better than most of us, and are more likely to present themselves as having the high moral ground. So what I was reading was far from the case. Twenty years (in this work) did not prepare me for this relentless sexual abuse.'*

#### *Now and the Future ...*

The abuse that occurred has had a deep impact within the Church community. It has led to some people questioning their faith, in losing trust in the Church. Val said, 'The reputation of the Church has taken a massive hit, and I think it's only just started to improve now (in a specific area). I think there is a better understanding, but it's a huge job'.

Progress towards change is considered to have been slow, but it was said that the Visitation made by former Archbishop Rowan Williams was a catalyst for 'kick starting' change. Lou said, 'The Church started realising that there were real problems with Chichester and this was at a high level'. And we were also told that:

*'Whilst yes the Visitation was the catalyst for increased attention on the problem nationwide, the catalyst for the Visitation itself was the concerns that a few of us in Chichester raised repeatedly during 2011 with the national Church. It was only when we went back to them again and again that the Visitation was finally put in place.'*

The survivors were the ones who experienced what they saw as inertia and thought that not enough had been done to publicly acknowledge the past failings. Drew remained sceptical about the level of change that has taken place:

*'I have low expectations for the Church making progress. I don't think the Church will wholly "come out". It's like a slow-burning wick in a candle. They will go as slowly as they can and ultimately they will move on. They will paint a very rosy picture and say "that was then". They won't come out and say "this is what we've done, we are responsible for this, it was horrific", they won't say it. Even the good people that are there now, they won't say it.'*

Those tasked with dealing with the revelations in the Diocese have found themselves in uncharted waters. There was no blue-print available to guide the various teams hearing the survivors' stories and bringing the perpetrators to justice. The scale of the abuse revealed in the Diocese had not been seen on this scale before (but some thought that it is likely to be as prevalent elsewhere in the UK). It involved a variety of individuals in the Diocese, and allegations and court cases are still ongoing. Not only were they dealing with events that took place over a protracted period, they were investigating people who might be expected to have high moral standards i.e. priests. It was said that the nature of what they were dealing with differed from those in, for example, the scout movement, which involved volunteers. One person thought that the most comparable examples were investigations into health professionals, such as surgeons. However, Lee reiterated the distinct difference in the dynamics when it involved priests and the Church.

One notable precedent has been achieved in the legal proceedings concerning (X) as a result of him having been charged with 'Misconduct in Public Office'. Previously a Bishop had not been considered to hold a 'Public Office'. This not insignificant precedent now recognises that the Church of England is an Office within UK law.

Some of those involved were scathing over the way the Church had managed the situation in the past, and felt that the Diocese remains vulnerable in some aspects. For example, Pat acknowledged that 'Procedures are better, but it's how people use them or don't use them properly which will determine if things change around reporting and responding'.

Implementing change in any organisation takes time and requires good leadership and the Church is no exception. Creating change in the large Diocese of Chichester, with in excess of 450 churches is challenging. Kim was optimistic about progress, citing the impressive number of training courses which have been undertaken by hundreds of people at different levels within the Diocese. But Sheridan thought that whilst some leaders said the 'right thing' sometimes their true feelings 'leaked out' uncensored. An example was given by Sheridan who felt that two members in particular had not really grasped the gravity in the following example. It is understood that a document that contributed to the Independent Review by Roger Meekings in 2009 - a document of some twenty two pages - was distributed at a meeting. It listed details of people who were alleged to have 'behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child, possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, or behaved in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children'. Apparently, one key person looked at it and said, "what a lot of naughty boys there are in this Diocese'. Sheridan was incredulous, and retorted that 'this isn't "naughty", it's criminal'. Another interviewee, Sam, said, people (name/titles withheld) and members of the laity – 'who may be reluctant or even resistant to change can be frustrating, and it is the hope that when new people join the Diocese, they will "infect" the culture with new ways of working. It is possible that the recruitment of more women would dilute the male influence'. However, as long as they are still in a minority, the Diocese will likely continue to be viewed as not 'female friendly'; and, as Kim put it,

*'There's been a change over the last couple of years and there are now more women who are young, bright and capable. But if I was a female priest, I would have to ponder whether I would want to come into this Diocese. I'd need to be very clear about which parish I went to and I'd pick and choose. I am aware that some women are struggling because they feel they are not taken seriously'.*

Sharing information was thought to be a key requisite for making improvements in how allegations of abuse are dealt with, although there were some fundamental points which

some people suggested needed to happen outside of the disclosure and investigative process. For example, they felt that the Church should ensure that the recruitment of priests should be more robust. It is understood that those entering the seminary now have psychological tests, but it was also put to us that one should not become too sanguine about the 'possibility of such tests identifying those most likely to abuse' (and we were given an excellent reference about this<sup>34</sup>). Val suggested that the DBS checks represented only a small part of the recruitment process and that recruitment locally required a more robust approach: 'People in the parishes (involved in recruiting people) may not have the experience of asking the right questions'.

Kim agreed that continued work within the parishes was needed to help people in the church community recognise potential abusive situations early. Naturally, it is impossible to say that abuses will not ever happen again in the Diocese but, as Kim added,

*'I hope it's not going on now, well not on the scale it was. There's a huge amount of training which will make grooming behaviours stick out more. It's making people understand how "safe" adults behave so that people who are not safe stick out. There may be still isolated single instances, but not the abuse of multiple victims. If there are, I'd be very disappointed'.*

A cautious optimism was expressed by several people about whether abuse would be recognised within the Diocese, and that 'people are more likely to come forward with confidence that they'll be heard'. Lou pointed out that there were strategies in place now, as a direct result of the hard work of Colin Perkins, the Safeguarding Adviser in the Diocese – and his colleagues in the team - and felt that the 'number of abusers would be unlikely to be the same as in the past, that there would not be a web of abusers'.

Also, some thought it would be better if the threshold for action were decided upon by an outside independent body, while others thought it should stay in-house.

As the saying goes 'the proof of the pudding is in the eating'. If and when new cases come to light, the systems will be 'tested' and the victims will hopefully tell a different story about

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<sup>34</sup> Amrom, Aria, Cynthia Calkins, and Jamison Fargo. "Between the pew and the pulpit: can personality measures help identify sexually abusive clergy?." *Sexual Abuse* (2017): 1079063217716442.

how their allegations were dealt with and how they were treated afterwards compared to those reflected in this report.

## Conclusion and Suggestions for a Way Forward

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### *Conclusion and Summary of the Responses to the Research Questions*

We were asked to explore the views of key individuals and relevant published documents about i) patterns of victimisation and offending behaviour and ii) factors within the Diocese which may have contributed to the initiation and maintenance of the abuse.

Perhaps unsurprisingly there were differences of opinion and perspective that can best be summarised in the following four points:

1. Some, but not all, felt that there was nothing unique to the Diocese of Chichester about these tragic events, and surmised that this kind of abuse had occurred - and may still be taking place – in other parts of the country.
2. There was a difference of opinion over whether the abusers were i) predatory sex offenders to begin with, who then chose the vocation of priesthood as a gateway to young males (and sometimes females) and/or vulnerable adults *or* ii) whether they took the opportunities when they arose, but didn't actively set out to abuse *or* iii) whether there was something endemic about the 'closed' (some said 'secretive') community within the Church which, coupled with the requirement for homosexual priests to remain celibate, produces in *some* men, an unquenchable and unrequited need for intimate close relationships that can *sometimes* cross a line and become abusive and even coercive.
3. A divergence of viewpoints was noted around the extent to which those in authority were seen as 'initiating or maintaining' the abuse (one interviewee disagreed with the suggestion that anyone in the Diocese had 'allowed' the abuse to flourish or continue). From official reports, and court transcripts, it does seem now to have been shown that different individuals overlooked or ignored allegations or moved offending priests to another diocese but this, it was suggested, isn't the same as saying that members of the Diocese 'allowed' the abuse to start or 'encouraged' it to continue. Nevertheless, there were examples in our interviews of individuals saying

that priests had, on occasion, watched each other abusing victims. There were also claims, from a number of respondents that warnings were unheeded and sometimes ignored, and these also appear in official reports.

4. Finally, (but not mentioned in the Findings) the question of whether or not certain statues or other memorabilia of priests should remain in view divided those interviewed. Some felt they should be destroyed as they represented for them an affront to those who were abused. However, one respondent felt that it was inappropriate to remove them from the history of the Church.

And as we saw in the previous section there was some disagreement about the extent to which an organised ring of offenders operated in the Diocese. Perhaps 'social network' is a more accurate term to describe what happened. One way of capturing how such a network operated is to consider the effect of one incident that we were told about. We stated earlier that one senior priest met with a new member of the clergy in his room, while sitting with a boy on lap, with his hand on the boy's thigh. This is, we believe, a powerful example of how cultural values, beliefs, opportunities and even expectations could have been transmitted, in a 'deniable' way.

Everyone we interviewed agreed that these events were shocking and terrible for those who had endured the abuse. It was also agreed that survivors had been let down in terms of the validation and support they had received.

#### *Moving Forward ...*

In a recent edited book entitled *Protecting Children and Adults from Abuse after Savile*<sup>35</sup> Anne-Marie Mcalinden refers at the end of her chapter to the trial and conviction of the notorious child sex offender, Frank Beck, who abused children living in residential establishments between 1989 and 1991:

*'The scale and extent of Beck's abuse seemed, at the time, unthinkable and surely unrepeatable. Presciently the inquiry chair, Andrew Kirkwood, QC, wrote: "It would*

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<sup>35</sup> Edited by Marcus Erooga (18 Jan 2018), published by JKP.

*not be wise for anyone to approach this Report on the basis that it all happened a long time ago and that nothing like it could ever happen again" ...'. (p.22).*

Kirkwood was right to issue this caution as, since then, we have seen a relentless and almost incomprehensible number of revelations involving the sexual abuse of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

We would like to suggest that Kirkwood's caution still rings true today and, hence, we would urge the Diocese to heed it deliberately and consciously, and not be tempted to approach the future by adopting the mantra 'That was then; this is now'. Inevitably there is now an understandable need to move on from what many believe has been a terrible stain on the Diocese but this can, in our view, only be safely and respectfully done by regularly training everyone's collective eyes and ears on what happened in the past.

We would like to commend a suggestion made by Bernie which is to hold an official Day of Reconciliation across the Diocese. It was also suggested that the focus of such a day – a Sunday, it was recommended - could become a feature of the Diocese calendar on an annual basis ... 'lest we forget ...'.

We now present three proposals which we believe would, if implemented fully, take the Diocese into the future without turning its back on the past. Each proposal, we argue, should be developed as an organic, co-produced, open and transparent process, with diverse individuals and organisations to achieve genuine 'ownership', because it is now well-known and accepted that the protection and safeguarding of individuals from sexual abuse and exploitation requires the whole community to take an active part.

We also believe strongly that these proposals will be of considerable interest to other organisations facing the same challenges - whether or not they realise it, or want to believe it even when it is staring them in the face. We share the view expressed by a number of those interviewed that the abuse would not have been confined to the Diocese of Chichester. It will almost certainly have been happening elsewhere, and in other religious

organisations; and we have seen it more recently in football, gymnastics, music and artistic academies ... and tragically this list will, no doubt, be added to.

Because they has been gained through the experiences of survivors, some of whom one of us (Yvonne) was privileged to meet, we believe the Diocese is in a strong position to take the central messages further afield, to other organisations just beginning to discover their own horror stories.

Before considering the proposals we strongly urge that, if it hasn't been undertaken already, a review of all existing recommendations is undertaken and that progress is plotted on a GANTT-type chart to see what actions still need to be taken.

### **A WAY FORWARD: THREE PROPOSALS**

A common thread running through these proposals is our hope that this report becomes a part of a platform for debate and discussion, rather than just left on the shelf to 'gather dust'. We believe that a good place to begin would be to have a round table meeting with the people interviewed, to begin to discuss openly the key points of discord and disagreement that emerged in the research (for example over the notion of 'cover-up', the existence of an organised paedophile group etc.). If it proved difficult to conduct such a meeting we would suggest the use of trained mediators, so that individuals can be helped to 'hear' one another without becoming defensive or intransigent.

Proposal 1:                    *A series of filmed conferences and seminars*

We offer for consideration that the Diocese convenes a series of conferences and seminars for different audiences on different subjects e.g. 'Supporting Survivors', 'Screening New Applicants', 'Maintaining Openness', 'Celibacy and Close, Intimate Relationships', '(so called) Desistant Paedophiles' etc. The aim would be to invite key and renowned speakers to these events which we would suggest are filmed. For example, depending on the focus of the conference/seminar, one might consider inviting Dame Moira Gibb, Edi Carmi, Marcus Erooga, Craig Harper, Theresa Gannon, Sarah Mullally (the new Bishop of London), Sir Roger

Singleton ... and others. We are also of the opinion that survivors should be invited to these events as a matter of course - as full participants, either as presenters or as respondents in plenary sessions (or both).

We suggest further that the first set of conferences/seminars is aimed at members of the Diocese only, but that later on it would be important to take the papers and presentations to a much wider geographic audience as well as to other organisations currently facing similar challenges e.g. the BBC, sporting organisations etc.

Proposal 2:                    *An Action Research<sup>36</sup> programme to evaluate progress on key changes*

There are clearly a number of areas which need to be addressed in the future (some of which we know are already being discussed). An Action Research (AR) approach ensures that progress is systematically reviewed and practice amended or altered throughout each step during the change process. Typically, a team is established whose members can have access to each other's ideas and observations about the progress of change through a facilitated online platform offering secure chatroom features such as *BaseCamp*<sup>37</sup>.

We suggest six innovations be considered as part of an Action Research Project:

A. Recruitment, Selection and Training of New Clergy and Lay Members

Many of the findings in this report relate directly to recruitment, training and selection at all levels in the organisation. The aim of this part of the programme is to explore more recent innovations in screening to exclude potentially abusive individuals from entering the organisation. The NSPCC regularly runs training in *Safer Recruitment Practice*<sup>38</sup>. We heard a view expressed that recruitment and selection practices had improved, for example, with

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<sup>36</sup> *Action Research* is a well-known and documented method of evaluating the effect of change *while it is taking place*. It focusses primarily on process but, equally, it can be extended to outcomes. The point of the approach is that changes can – indeed, should - be made during the innovation, rather than waiting for the results of the research to emerge.

<sup>37</sup> Visit <https://basecamp.com/how-it-works>

<sup>38</sup> See <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do/get-expert-training/safer-recruitment-training>.

some psychometric testing at the stage seminary training, but more may need to be done at a local level (and there may be value in considering additions to the testing battery).

Another development that might prove useful is the introduction of ‘serious, interactive games and simulations’<sup>39</sup> that have been developed at the University of Kent’s *International Centre for Child Protection*. Such supplements to traditional training can be used for clergy, members of the laity as well as for awareness-raising among parishioners and members of the public within the Diocese.

#### B. Prevention of Abuse within the Diocese

Here the aim is to question the idea that there is, or is ever likely to be, homogeneity among sexual offenders, hence strategies to prevent abuse need to take account of the myriad reasons that abuse happens within an organisation. Marcus Erooga in his recent edited book<sup>40</sup> wrote a chapter entitled ‘Thinking Beyond a Single Type of Organisational Sex Offender’ and it might well act as a source for this part of the Action Research Project. He distinguishes, for example, between *preferential sex offenders* (‘those with a conscious desire to sexually abuse children’), *opportunistic sex offenders* (‘those who are motivated to abuse and do so because potential victims are available ... and the organisational setting either inadvertently facilitates, or fails to prevent, abusive activity’) and *situational sex offenders* (‘whose propensity to abuse is previously unknown or unacknowledged, and their offending is specific to the set of institutional factors which potentiates their offending’).

#### C. Restricting Access to Children (on their own or unsupervised)

It is presumably now accepted that events and activities that give unrestricted and/or unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults need to be reviewed urgently (this may already be taking place, but it will need to be evaluated *in operation*). This requires a

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<sup>39</sup> See <https://www.kent.ac.uk/sspsr/ccp/simulationsindex.html>. The Centre for Child Protection won the University Faculty Teaching and Learning prize and Enterprise and Innovation award in 2014, the Guardian newspaper award for Technological Innovation and, very recently (November 2017), the Higher Education Academy’s UK Teaching Innovation Award.

<sup>40</sup> op cit Erooga, M. (2018)

Diocese-wide understanding - among the clergy, the laity and with parishioners and congregations more generally - that certain events such as residential or camping weekends, pilgrimages and trips abroad etc. which have been a feature in the past should be reviewed for the future. Similarly, the practice of adequate and effective supervision of children and vulnerable adults would need to be considered during Sunday school, as well as in youth club attendance and Bible study groups.

Perhaps another relevant point to consider within this theme is found in the following extract from a new book edited by Richard Gartner entitled *Understanding the Sexual Betrayal of Boys and Men*<sup>41</sup>. Again, the aim is to promote debate through open discussion. In a chapter written by Gartner himself, he states:

*'The more victims accept the familial implications of calling someone Father, Mother, Sister, or Brother, the more the sexual abuse has incestuous connotations. So, many victims of priests are psychologically dealing with a form of incest. And, a priest is not simply "a" father. He is a direct representative of "The" Father, a living representation of Christ. p.248*

*Boys most easily preyed upon by priests are likely to come from families with deep religious convictions ... They may be altar boys or choir boys who feel engaged in their religious lives and have idealized views of their spiritual mentors. p.249*

*As boys, they looked to their abusers for solace and support, and were betrayed. The trauma for each was shattering. Overlaying their betrayal was the specific effect on the child's spiritual life following abuse by a trusted "representative of God." Each man had a terrible crisis of faith. When that faith was destroyed they were thereby further alienated from their religiously observant families.' p.259.*

#### D. Prosecuting Offenders (and the working concept of 'forgiveness')

We would suggest that there needs to be a very clear message to everyone connected with diocesan matters, but especially those in ministering roles, that 'if you abuse children or adults then you will be investigated and if found guilty you will be punished and your career in the Church will end (but not your membership of it)'. The reason for this level of clarity is

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<sup>41</sup> Published by Routledge in August 2017.

that, from the reports we read and from many of those interviewed, it was not clear if this was the message given or, if it was, whether it received with this intention in mind.

We also wonder – respectfully, as this next point is both outside of our own knowledge and the brief for this research – if all members of the Diocese understand precisely what is meant ‘in practice’ when a sexual offender who is a priest or member of the clergy is said to have been ‘forgiven’. From our interviews there emerged different and contradictory viewpoints. This might, therefore, be a suitable topic for discussion and open debate.

#### E. Offering Continuing Support for Survivors

There are now many therapeutic services available to survivors of different kinds of trauma. We would urge the Diocese in the final component of the proposed AR Project to undertake a review of the different approaches available along with an analysis of the evidence base for their effectiveness.

#### F. Changing the culture of the organisation

During the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) in March 2018, Sir Roger Singleton (chair of the Independent Safeguarding Authority and former Chief Executive of Barnardos, UK) made a number of points during his testimony. We suggest that the Diocese obtain the transcript from the IICSA session and consider whether and how to apply his insights.

#### Proposal 3:                    *Research to Understand Sexual Offending – ‘FIND OUT WHY?’*

The final proposal is the most ambitious and, if embraced and implemented, would send a clear message that the Diocese - as well as the wider Church of England - that it wishes to do something radical about the pernicious problem of sexual abuse, which continues to surface in different settings and different organisations across the world.

There are a variety of different views about why (mostly) men want to sexually abuse children and vulnerable adults and why, when they are finally apprehended, many show no remorse. What was in the minds of Jimmy Savile, Rolf Harris, Paul Gadd, Ian Watkins etc. when they consciously and deliberately subjected children to the most cruel, depraved and relentless abuse? In this study, why did some priests abuse their positions of trust?

We argue that existing explanations of sexual abuse fall short in one key respect: they do not explain why it is that some adults *want* to molest and sexually assault a young child, for example. Consider one of the commonly-held explanations for the depravities of Savile, which is that he did those things 'because he could'. This is true at one level, but at another it leaves unanswered what, for us, remains the central question: 'Whilst, no doubt, he did it because he *could* ... but what we don't know is why he *wanted* to do it in the first place?

Until we *Find Out Why* - and far more than our current understanding permits – we believe that children and vulnerable adults will remain at risk of being sexually abused. (Our use of the word 'understanding' here means 'fathom' or 'comprehend' the perpetrator's behaviour and motivation; we do not mean 'agree with' or 'sympathise with').

To *Find Out Why* we need to conduct research in a number of areas which so far haven't been examined in much depth, partly because such studies are costly to fund. We need, for example, to look at neurological, biochemical and genetic research with convicted perpetrators (with their consent, naturally). But it is also important to step back from purely individualised insights and examine how and in what ways the society and culture we live in legitimates and perpetuates misogyny and violence towards women and children. Hence the research will also need to be informed by anthropological, sociological and social psychological insights from around the world.

The reported examples of sexual abuse by priests, religious teachers, certain 'celebrities' in the broadcast media and now more recently in sporting organisations have all eroded people's trust in some of our most established organisations. Churches should be safe havens, places where followers can turn for comfort and peace. Instead, for some, they have become the source of fear, distrust and cynicism. Similarly, children should have felt

confident that if they appeared in the media, they would have been safe from the people they thought they could trust. But they weren't. Funding research into what motivates child sex offenders could restore people's confidence in these institutions.

We wonder, therefore, if the Diocese would be prepared to lead a consortium of organisations to bid for finance to fund such pioneering research. It seems to us that the obvious organisations to form this consortium would initially include the Church of England, the Catholic Church, the British Broadcasting Corporation, and the Football Association.

#### *A FINAL WORD ...*

Although the circumstances of Larry Nassar's appalling sexual offences, against many child and adult members of the winning US Olympic gymnastics team - for which he received a 175 year prison sentence - were different to those experienced in this study, we suspect that this short film, taken from their 'victim statements' will ring true for many of the survivors in the Diocese We hope, therefore that it will would be a suitable tribute to their courage and fortitude: so finally, we invite you to watch ...

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=22&v=AyacXMwXGKQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=22&v=AyacXMwXGKQ)

## Appendix A List of Reports

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Bishop Gladwin, J, Chancellor Bursell, R. (2012) '*Archbishop's Chichester Visitation – Interim Report.*'

Butler-Sloss, E. (2011; 2012) '*Historic Cases Review of Roy Cotton and Colin Pritchard.*

Carlile, A. '*Carlile Review.*' (2017)

Carmi, E. (2004) '*Case Review CO1*'

Gibb, M. (2017) '*An Abuse of Faith: Independent Peter Ball Review*'

Meekings, R. (2012) '*Independent Historic Cases Review Roy Cotton/Colin Pritchard*'

Perkins, C. and Harper, C.A. (2017) '*Reporting child sexual abuse within religious settings: challenges and future directions*', *Child Abuse Review*, 20 July 2017 DOI:10.1002/car.2484.

Scott, E, (2016) '*Historical Child Sex Abuse Investigations*', *House of Lords Library Briefing – LLN 2016/033 UK Parliament*

Sussex Police Scoping Exercise (on Connections within the Diocese)

Final Report of the Commissaries appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury in relation to a Visitation upon the Diocese of Chichester, 3 May 2013

## Appendix B Selected extracts from the Report by Dame Moira Gibb

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3.4.15 Bishop Yates had also sought advice from the Archbishop's adviser on ecumenical affairs, who provided a note on Franciscan spirituality (which was subsequently passed to police). The aim of this was to evaluate whether Ball was justified in relying on Franciscan practice to support his professed belief in the spiritual importance of physical nakedness. The advice concluded that there was no Franciscan tradition of either individual or corporate nakedness as part of the expression of Christian spirituality.

3.4.16 On 29th December Dr Robson wrote to Bishop Yates. He explained the various types of sexual offence that might be at issue, advised on the options open if the CPS decided to prosecute and considered possible subsequent developments:

- If Ball admitted guilt he must resign as bishop. He should probably do so even if he pleaded not guilty because of the damage a trial and the attendant publicity would do to the Church and to Ball's ministry.

3.4.18 On New Year's Eve the Diocese of Gloucester issued a message from Lord Carey, to be read at churches throughout the diocese. This contained the following passage "At my request Bishop Peter went away while the police are investigating the accusation. It was clear to me that he was under great strain. I want to say that I am as equally puzzled as you are ... We all hope and pray that the investigation will clear his name ...". There was no reference to the situation of Neil Todd.

3.5.17 Mr D visited Cambridge to see Michael Fisher, a retired suffragan bishop who was Minister General of the Franciscan Order within the Anglican Church. Fisher was strongly critical of Ball's interpretation of Franciscan practice, in particular his ideas about praying naked. Mr D recorded that he said 'This is all rot ... this is only an excuse for his lustful way of life.' Mr D further records Fisher telling him of a number of other complaints against Ball, going back over years, involving mutual masturbation.

3.5.20 On 5th February, following his briefing, Lord Carey wrote to the Chief Constable. His letter, which is supportive of Ball, repeatedly emphasises that he would not want to interfere improperly in a police matter but suggests that, if Ball were guilty, such criminality would be "unrepresentative of his style." While writing this, Lord Carey was aware that allegations had been received about Ball's improper conduct with other young men and had already appointed Bishop Gordon to investigate them.

3.5.28 A subsequent submission by CPS to the DPP at that time concluded that 'there was no prospect of successfully prosecuting Ball in respect of any earlier allegations than those advanced by Todd for the following reasons: time bar or age bar in respect of gross indecency; consent of victims in respect of indecent assault.' The submission went on to list a number of "public interest factors" which were judged to point towards a decision to issue

a caution. These included the potentially damaging consequences of court proceedings for the victim. The inevitability of the end of Ball's career was also seen as significant: it would prevent any further abuse or breach of trust. The submission from the CPS advised the DPP that: "Had it been possible to bring charges against Ball in respect of more than one complainant, our unanimous view would have been in favour of prosecution on the basis of systematic breach of trust. In the circumstances as they are, however, we share the Police view that a caution would be a proper disposal and be in the best interests of all concerned". (Following Ball's imprisonment the CPS acknowledged that this conclusion was unsound).

3.6.11 There was some wider support for Ball in the Church. The Bishop of Southampton, Bishop John Perry, wrote to the Archbishop after a large conference on evangelism. There had been discussion of Ball's situation and, he reported, an emerging view at the conference that after a proper process of penance and absolution he should be restored to public ministry. Lord Carey replied (less than six weeks after Ball's resignation) '.....it may be that you haven't heard that he is actually retired on medical grounds, so the formula that some of you are asking for cannot happen. It will of course be my intention to see him in some retired ministry in the future, but there is still a lot of healing to be done.

3.7.1 The enquiries being made on behalf of the Archbishop into concerns about Ball's conduct, led by Bishop Gordon, had effectively fizzled out without reaching any conclusion. From mid-1993 the emphasis of concern at Lambeth Palace was on whether, when and how Ball should be rehabilitated. Various initial steps were considered and discussed with Ball. The Archbishop of Cape Town, The Rt Revd Desmond Tutu, and Lord Carey corresponded about an invitation to Ball to minister in a diocese in South Africa. There was a suggestion that Ball might minister in prisons. These options were not acceptable to Ball. The energies of the Ball brothers were channelled into a drive to secure Peter Ball's return to public ministry.

3.7.12 ... In January Lord Carey gave permission for Ball to go to the USA to lead Holy Week and Easter services in a parish there. In his correspondence with that parish the Archbishop wrote that "Peter was Bishop of Gloucester but was deprived of his episcopal ministry two years ago because of a criminal act against a minor... Peter was possibly the victim of a plot but that, of course, cannot be proved".

3.7.16 In January 1996 Lord Carey agreed that Ball should be permitted to preach at a public school, provided that the school were made aware of possible hostile press interest. He further agreed in March that Ball could conduct confirmations and preach at two more schools. Ball was still the President of the Anglican Fellowship in Scouting and Guiding and the Archbishop agreed that he could attend their Annual General Meeting and celebrate the Eucharist at their headquarters in Gilwell Park.

3.7.21 ... Lord Carey then wrote to Ball in May 1999 that "I want you to have a wider role in the Church ... but regretfully, one diocese will remain a no-go area as far as public ministry is concerned".

3.7.23 Bishop Kemp was to retire in 2001. Shortly before his retirement, following correspondence from Bishop Michael Ball, Bishop Kemp appointed Peter Ball as Emeritus Canon of Chichester – an award usually made in recognition of long and honourable service.

3.8.3 In 2001 Bishop Thompson<sup>42</sup> ... asked if he could use Ball as an assistant bishop and the Archbishop agreed provided Ball did not conduct services in schools. However, a few days later, it came to light that Ball was already booked to conduct confirmations and other services in a number of schools. The Archbishop now said that it was never his intention that Ball should work in schools without restriction and advised Ball to withdraw. Ball referred the Archbishop to the permission he had been given in 1996 and Lord Carey's subsequent circular to the effect that Ball be treated "like any other retired bishop". He said that he had been involved with between 20 and 25 schools since then. It appears that Lord Carey had not intended his permission in 1996 to be interpreted so liberally but he withdrew his objections.

3.8.10 In August 2004 a routine criminal records check was carried out by the Church and indicated that Ball had no criminal record, when the check was expected to show that he had been cautioned. No action was taken. In December 2004 it came to light, following an enquiry initiated by Lord Williams that Ball had been staying on the premises of a public school in Oxford and carrying out confirmations there. It is not clear how Lord Williams became aware of this. Ball had not sought any consent to do so. No action was taken by the Church.

3.9.7 ... Professor Mellows stresses at the start of his report that Neil Todd was 17 years old, not an adult, at the time of the offence for which Ball accepted a caution. He details how a number of informants had written to Lord Carey in the 1990s, making allegations about Ball's conduct. There was a common theme involving nakedness. The informants referred to matters such as stripping naked and caressing, being asked to masturbate in front of Ball and sharing the same bed as Ball. There were further suggestions of "genital contact" and assault or flagellation.

3.10.1 Bishop Hind had learned that the Ball brothers were considering returning to live in Sussex. In April 2010 he told Ball that he would not be given PTO in that diocese. He received in response a letter from Bishop Michael Ball, complaining strongly about his brother's treatment, saying "People almost queue up to have him baptise their babies (he is doing two at this moment), marry their children and so on" and alleging that "the assessor saw no reason why he should not continue to minister and the child protection officer said ... that he was no danger to anyone".

3.10.2 A subsequent letter to Bishop Hind from Bishop Michael a few days later complained that Lord Williams was not treating them fairly: "we found it very distressing that when Peter did exactly what (Lord Carey) told him to do, another archbishop sixteen years later

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<sup>42</sup> Our footnote: the Bishop of Bath and Wells

told him he ... was going to hang him after all and put him through a very painful process before doing so”.

3.11.8 He (Ball) variously argued that as a bishop he was “not in public office<sup>43</sup>”, that he had never obtained sexual gratification from the practices he engaged in and that the complainants had been spiritually energised and refreshed by their activities with him. He did not accept that what he had done was a criminal abuse of the public's trust in him. He denied that he had used various Christian practices, and the teachings of St Francis of Assisi, to disguise his criminality. None of these challenges was successful but they served to delay his trial until late 2015.

#### *The nature of the abuse and grooming*

4.1.5. We have summarised the evidence of Ball’s abusive behaviour as there are striking similarities across the accounts of those abused by him. He had a well-worn “modus operandi”, in which he would target and groom boys and young men. His abuse was charged with religious intensity. The men we interviewed spoke of how he “exploited the significance, particularly within the Anglo Catholic tradition, of ritual”. For Ball religious rites became “a mask for abuse, and theology (was) used as a way of justifying abuse”. The evil of what he did was “compounded by his message that this made the victims more special and more holy”.

4.1.6 We were told how Ball would “groom” some young men, telling them that they had great potential for holiness. They would then be chosen to share his bedroom. One man told us how as a teenager he contacted Ball to talk about joining his community. He was told by Ball that it would be a requirement that he take naked cold showers. He reluctantly agreed and was watched doing so by Ball. Sometimes the abuse involved cruelty. One man told us of being asked in confession whether he had masturbated. For doing so he was required to serve a penance which was to roll around in snow naked, before being towelled dry and beaten by Ball, to the extent of drawing blood. This man was one of those whose abuse Ball eventually admitted, accepting that beatings had taken place on three occasions and that, as described in the opening speech at Ball’s sentencing, “on the third occasion he suffered a lot of bruising to both buttocks ... (which) lasted about three days”.

4.1.7 Some men reported Ball anointing their penis while they were naked. Ball would tell them that it was a way of enabling every part of their body to be part of God. One described how he was “taken aside in a chapel, told he had a special future as a priest, asked to remove all his clothes, anointed with holy oil and touched intimately. The curtains were drawn, the doors were locked and he was told never to discuss what had happened with anyone”. (Ball was aware that this young man had been sexually abused in childhood.)

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<sup>43</sup> Ball originally argued that a bishop was not a ‘public office’ for the purposes of the offence of misconduct in a public office. A preliminary hearing was held at which counsel for the Crown and for Ball argued the case.

4.1.8 One man was abused for many years. He made efforts to leave the situation but Ball persuaded him that his unhappiness was appropriate, that it evidenced the sacrifices he was making for God. This man described how there was some awareness in their community of how controlling and deceitful Ball was – he was referred to (covertly) as “Snidey Pete”. However he was skilled in exploiting an ethic of forgiveness – he would express contrition and, in that religious environment, it was always expected that he should be forgiven for what he had done.

4.4.7 Lord Carey played the lead role in enabling Ball’s return to ministry – that was not a decision taken by anyone else. He wrote to police saying he was considering this before the end of the month in which Ball resigned. He had a degree of personal compassion for Ball that is not matched by an understanding of the nature and consequences of Ball’s abusive conduct. He wrote to Bishop Michael Ball in September 1993 that “I had to face the searching question – if the same allegations and admissions had been made against and by a parish priest, would one not have expected the diocesan bishop concerned to have put him on the List? I did not do so, for in the end I believed him to be basically innocent, and ... my personal regard for him is very high”. This reference to Ball being “basically innocent” is alarming – Ball was basically guilty and had admitted that. Lord Carey was also aware that the Church had received further allegations of potentially criminal actions by Ball.

4.4.10 Lord Carey wrote to Bishop Llewelin in 2000 that “Peter Ball lost everything ... I stand by a man who, overall, has been a wonderful priest and bishop.” Lord Carey set the tone for the Church’s response to Ball’s crimes and gave the steer which allowed Ball’s assertions that he was innocent to gain credence.

4.5.4. The Mellows review was commissioned by Lord Williams after he received representations from someone with a national reputation within the Church. That correspondent made his concerns very clear, writing that what he had learned of Ball’s conduct “stands in a class of its own for the level of deception dressed up in the cloak of holiness and piety”. Yet, when the review was concluded, the report sat with Lord Williams for five months before any action was taken. One of its most important recommendations, that the Church should contact Ball’s victims, was not followed up.

4.5.5 Lord Williams inherited a confused situation regarding Peter Ball but he and his staff missed the opportunity to review and clarify it at the start of his time in office. He did oversee real change but at a pace which now seems lamentably slow.

5.2.1 The Church’s management of those seven letters, containing allegations against Ball, is perhaps its greatest failure in these events. The letters came from a range of families and individuals quite independently of each other. They raised concerns which were all either indirectly or precisely suggestive of sexual impropriety, or worse, by Ball. These were not people who were at war with the Church or had any axe to grind. In fact some of the correspondents go to great lengths to try to avoid rancour and find a constructive way forward. Lord Carey had been briefed about the matters raised and replied personally to two of the letters.

5.2.3 In due course Bishop Gordon wrote to Bishop Yates: 'I've been having a final look at the letters the Archbishop received ... from (the complainants). If [Ball] resigns, or is sent to trial, I feel sure no more need be done about them. If he were to resume ministry as [bishop of Gloucester] it might be wise to prepare a defence against the possibility of any of these correspondents complaining that no notice had been taken of their representation". The emphasis continues to be on protecting the Church rather than unearthing abuse or ministering to those who may have been mistreated.

5.3.1 In August 2014 Mr Peak, in correspondence with the Church on another matter, wrote that "I handled a ... crisis involving Bishop Peter Ball over 20 years ago. I managed to keep the matter out of Court, upon the basis that he admitted guilt in respect of gross indecency and indecent assault offences, accepted a formal police caution and resigned as Diocesan Bishop. I thereby saved the Diocese and the Church enormous embarrassment, to say the least".

5.4.6 When they reviewed events in 2000 Bishop Llewellyn and Mr E wrote to Lord Carey that "one might have expected Peter Ball to have been asked to resign and be put on (the List) ... for a minimum of five years. ... Even after five years, precedents suggest his restoration to ministry might have been more gradual, since there is little or no apparent acceptance of responsibility or recognition of the harm he has done to his victim(s) and the Church more generally. There are only brief glimpses of penitence or remorse and these vanish altogether once the Ball brothers retire and live in the same house".

5.4.7 Lord Carey responded brusquely: "I am sure it was right to be compassionate and tender. I don't have any qualms in this area". Bishop Llewellyn sent an emollient reply, noting that "All my statements in the earlier memo about your pastoral response and indeed gifts of money were not in any sense meant critically but were placed there to record how totally inaccurate it is of people to say that Bishop Peter (was treated shabbily) ... In the light of your conviction at the time that it was Bishop Peter who had been wronged more than anyone else, and in this - as you say - you were fully supported by Bishop John Yates and Bishop Frank Sargeant ... it is understandable that he was not put on the Caution List".

5.6.2 We have seen that Ball was:

- older than those he abused;
- in a position to identify and exploit troubled boys and young men;
- able to rely on and exploit connections with famous and powerful people.

But, most significant of all, he was a bishop. In the structures of the Church, a bishop has a crucial and central role, underpinned by an essential autonomy. Even a retired bishop could draw on a particular spiritual authority over those he might seek to exploit.

5.6.3 We were struck during this review by a manifest culture of deference both to authority figures in the Church, particularly bishops, and to individuals with distinctive religious

reputations – or both. This deference had two negative consequences. Firstly it discouraged people from “speaking truth to power”. Then, on the few occasions where people did speak out and were rebuffed by a bishop – the summit of the hierarchy – there was nowhere else to go. That reinforced the barriers to stepping up in the first place.

5.7.2 There was, in some parts of the Church, an inexperience and naïveté in relation to homosexuality, certainly during the early years under review. Ball successfully conflated abusive sexual activity with practices which were towards the margins of intense spirituality. There was also a trivialisation in the Church of the nature and consequences of conduct which was known to be wrong – Roy Cotton was ordained despite having an acknowledged conviction for the sexual abuse of a boy, while, for the same matter and in the same era, he was permanently excluded from the Scouting movement. That overall context of confusion and denial contributed to the inadequacy of the Church’s response to Ball’s misconduct. It promoted the view that a person of Ball’s religious stature was incapable of truly abusive behaviour, so that the accusations against him must be misguided or malicious

6.1.1 There has been public speculation that the response of the Church (and of public authorities) to the allegations against Peter Ball, his caution and his subsequent requests to return to active public ministry, was improperly influenced by Ball’s connections with prominent and influential figures, and that he was able to use those connections to obtain preferential treatment by the Church (as well as by public authorities). There is no doubt that Ball did have such connections. There is also evidence that he sought to use his connections to his advantage in his dealings with the Church authorities. For example, in a letter to Lord Carey in August 1998 he said “I get more and more invitations.... to let you know some of them I have spoken to 400 voluntary workers in Eastbourne with the Lord Lieutenant... I am shortly to preach to the Grenadier Guards in their Chapel; preach at Wellington College, confirm at Radley College and next year preach at Dartmouth to what looks like a full turn out of the Royal Family “.

## 7. COMMENTARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The context and the challenges

7.1.1 Peter Ball betrayed his Church and abused individual followers of that Church. The Church, at its most senior levels and over many years, supported him unwisely and displayed little care for his victims. Much of what we have described took place in different times and should be viewed from that perspective. But such perverse and sustained abuse by a senior figure in the Church and the Church’s failure to safeguard so many boys and young men still casts a long shadow. The Church needs firmly to reassert the priority it places on achieving the highest possible standard of safeguarding practice.

7.1.3 The Church has already taken steps to understand better the theological implications of abuse. We have considered the Faith and Order Commission’s two reports, “Gospel, Sexual Abuse and the Church” and “Forgiveness and Reconciliation in the Aftermath of Abuse”. These works represent a determined effort by the Church to provide a firm theological basis to its responsibility for preventing abuse and responding well when abuse

does take place. They seek to mitigate any risks that distorted Christian teaching, or teaching which over-simplifies issues of forgiveness, might create conditions in which abuse goes unchecked or where the harm of abuse can be compounded.

#### Reparation

7.2.1 This is the first time since 1992 that the Church has provided an opportunity for those abused by Ball to be heard – albeit heard by our review team and not yet by the leaders of the Church. What those men have told us most emphatically is that the Church must not stop listening, with genuine openness and empathy, to the experiences and concerns of those who have been abused and their advocates. They made those comments with a view to the future not the past. Churches will always be a target because they profess authority and enable access to vulnerable people. Leaders should recognise that and take responsibility for ensuring that their Church is properly equipped to listen, support and take action. Most importantly those leaders should take steps which demonstrate their active engagement in the Church's safeguarding provision and which enhance the determination, clarity, consistency and accountability of their leadership.

## About the authors

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