

Safeguarding Case Review - Mr X

This is an abridged version of the Independent Safeguarding Board's review of Mr X's case. The full version of this report has been provided to Mr X and has been submitted to the Church of England for action. This abridged report has been redacted in accordance with independent legal advice to ensure compliance with data protection legislation, with minor amendments being made to the text to allow the reader to fully understand the content.

Mr X has approved the publication of the report.

1 The Independent Safeguarding Board

The Independent Safeguarding Board exists to provide independent oversight to the National Safeguarding Team and to challenge internal cultures when they prevent best practice being the normal practice expected of all institutions of the Church of England.

The work of the Independent Safeguarding Board is undertaken without fear or favour, the purpose being to improve, and maintain improvement in, safeguarding policy and practice, as follows:

- To ensure good safeguarding, including preventive work, is done as a matter of course across the Church of England, including timely responses to recommendations.
- To ensure the involvement of victim/survivors of safeguarding failure in both the Independent Safeguarding Board's activity, and the wider Church of England.
- To give or withhold assurance that processes overseen by the National Safeguarding Team are undertaken in a timely fashion, thoroughly and without bias, reaching clear conclusions which are shared with victims/survivors/complainants, those against whom complaints are made, the Church of England, and wider society, including through the media.

The Independent Safeguarding Board has more detailed terms of reference, available on its website, which include a responsibility to receive complaints about the National Safeguarding Team's handling of cases.

2 The Church of England

The Church of England is not a single body or legal entity but comprises many office holders and legal entities which are separately governed. We refer to Church of England as a shorthand for these office holders and legal entities.

3 Background

This report responds to a referral made to the Independent Safeguarding Board by Mr X, who is a survivor of church abuse.

In 2001, as an adult, Mr X made a report to police about abuse he experienced as a child at the hands of individuals in specific positions in the Church of England. This was preceded and followed by prolonged periods of ill-health and mental distress. This adversely affected Mr X's well-paid employment; he later became self-employed, with the expectation that greater flexibility in his work

would help to manage the consequences of his ill-health. While initially successful, Mr X's business ultimately failed, leaving him with both debt and no financial income.

In late 2015 Mr X took steps to commence a civil claim against the Church of England. It was later decided that Chichester Cathedral was the respondent. Mr X found the process to be unnecessarily challenging. The claim was settled in 2017, without going to court.

In November 2020, with the support of an advocate, Mr Y, and following communication with senior members of the Church of England with responsibility for safeguarding, Mr X made representations to the Church of England for additional financial support.

Mr X believes that the Church of England agreed to support several of his requests, both financial and pastoral. Indeed, agreement to provide support is evidenced by several payments which amount to a significant figure, in addition to the settlement agreed in the civil case.

Mr X has since been in ongoing communication with the Church of England, asserting that its representatives in the civil claim had conducted themselves unethically and that it had later failed to honour its commitments, which he considers to be the cause of ongoing distress and harm.

Throughout this period Mr X's contact with other survivors of Church abuse has increased and he has joined the Survivor Reference Group. Mr X had the strength to share his experiences safeguarding conferences and meetings, as well as giving evidence to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA). Mr X has used the learning from his abuse to try to improve the understanding of the way survivors are treated by the Church.

4 Referral to the Independent Safeguarding Board

Mr X referred his case to the Independent Safeguarding Board and requested that it:

- Respond to the complaints about the National Safeguarding Team's handling of this case in the period since 2015.
- Consider whether the processes used in the period since 2015 were just to all involved, timely, and done in line with best practice in the wider safeguarding environment.
- Make any recommendations that arise from this case to enable the Church of England to embed a proactive, preventative, safe culture.
- Recommend improvements in policy, procedures, and practice where the Independent Safeguarding Board considers the evidence in this case shows that these are necessary.

Mr X has prepared a List of Complaints with 19 specific points, which span the whole period of his interaction with the Church of England. These complaints include perceived failings at a cathedral, two dioceses, the church's legal advisors and insurers, and the Archbishops' Council's National Safeguarding Team.

We do not underestimate the impact of creating documents like this. We accept that it retraumatises and revictimizes survivors and therefore needs to be handled with extreme sensitivity.

Those complaints falling within the terms of review (i.e., occurring from 2015) are addressed in this report. We make an additional recommendation about the resolution of those occurring pre-2015 at Recommendation 5.

5 Review Process

The Independent Safeguarding Board lead member for this review is Steve Reeves. The Board instructed an independent investigator, Peter Spindler, a former Chief Officer of Police with extensive experience of safeguarding in both statutory and non-statutory contexts.

Our independent investigator encountered several difficulties in the course of this work, which go to the heart of the complexities of reviewing safeguarding cases. The Church of England have had to carefully consider their obligations to data protection and the GDPR, confidentiality, information sharing, and the discussion of potentially legally privileged material in relation to a previous civil action.

Our independent investigator met with 20 people, conducting 17 interviews. Interviews were held on MS Teams or in person. Our independent investigator's first meeting was with Mr X and his advocate, at Mr X's home. This was an initial discussion about the complaints and how the investigation would progress. Our investigator was surprised to discover that this was the first time anyone connected with the Church of England had met Mr X in person at home. Our independent investigator was able to be introduced to Mr X's family and gain an insight into his lifestyle and suffering that could never be achieved from simply reading a case file.

In reviewing the List of Complaints raised by Mr X, it was identified that the first seven do not fall within the remit of this review, which (with Mr X's consent) commences in 2015 when he decided to start the civil action. Our independent investigator explored some of Mr X's earlier points as there is important context that needs to be explained to Mr X, which may help his understanding of why matters were handled in such a poor manner.

The Diocese of Chichester began to draw together what was known about Mr X's case at the latter end of 2022 when, after an approach by Mr X's advocate, the National Safeguarding Team informed him that the Diocese of Chichester would take a lead in being the primary interface for his contact with the Church and the Independent Safeguarding Board's review had been announced. The Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor has a good level of understanding and is well placed to explain points 2 to 7 to Mr X.

In the specific points raised by Mr X, numbers 8 to 16 relate to the handling of his civil action against Chichester Cathedral, commencing in December 2015. The final three complaints relate to adverse experiences of the Interim Support Scheme.

This report does not attempt to retell the story of Mr X's abuse or interactions with the Church of England but will identify where there have been failings and why. The church must reflect on the learning from this review and ensure nothing like this is repeated.

The findings and recommendations in this report are those of the Independent Safeguarding Board and not of our independent investigator. This review report has been approved by the Independent Safeguarding Board.

6 The Civil Action

Having lost his employment and spent a considerable amount of money on counselling, Mr X first explored the possibility of support from Chichester Cathedral in February 2006, in response to a letter from the Dean in May 2001 offering sympathy and help after the criminal trial.

After seeking legal advice via their insurers, Mr X received a reply denying liability and stating that “...[perpetrator] was not at any time an employee of the Dean and Chapter” and no financial support was provided.

In September 2001, an independent safeguarding professional, was commissioned by the Bishop of Chichester to conduct an internal review. That review was not made public until July 2014 and Mr X was not made aware of its existence until October 2015. In an open letter to survivors from Bishop Martin of Chichester in July 2014, explaining the context to the publication, an offer of support was made from the Diocese of Chichester.

The review was carried out after the two criminal trials had concluded and was to the standards of Chapter 8 of Working Together to Safeguard Children 1999, where serious case reviews were not normally published in their entirety. The report had in fact been completed a decade earlier in January 2004.

In October 2015, Mr X was made aware of the existence of the independent safeguarding professional’s report, in which his case features, and in December 2015 he took steps to commence legal proceedings against Church of England.

By 2016 the legal advice to the Cathedral had changed and it was recognised that case law on this issue had moved on considerably; it was accepted that the perpetrator’s role would now be deemed to be akin to employment. To its credit, the Cathedral did not raise a defence and accepted liability from the outset and authorised the settlement of the claim. What followed next arguably sets off the chain of events that perpetuates Mr X’s feeling of re-abuse by the Church of England and its agents. This persists to this day.

Points 9 to 16 on the List of Complaints relate to these issues. Our independent investigator had access to a limited amount of documentary material regarding the civil action, mainly because of reasonable issues around legal privilege/client confidentiality. The following findings are clear:

- In the interim meeting at the beginning of the process, Mr X stated he would accept a specified sum in full and final settlement.
- Subsequently at the Joint Settlement Meeting in early 2017 a counteroffer was made on the Cathedral’s behalf.
- Following this offer being made, the Church insurers / lawyers decided to obtain their own desktop medical advice and then withdrew this, offering a reduced figure because of revised decisions on attribution.

It is extremely troubling that this reduced offer was made in the full knowledge that Mr X had been admitted to hospital following a suicide attempt and that the case had been identified as the prime stressor.

The decision to reduce the settlement figure led Mr X’s lawyer to comment that “...in 28 years as a practicing lawyer, to have that offer pre-emptively withdrawn without warning is unprecedented in

my experience". After much deliberation over Mr X's ability to withstand a litigation process and more detailed forensic medical examination, his lawyer reluctantly agreed the lower offer in April 2017 within a 21-day time limit set by the cathedral's insurer.

We have found no evidence that the cathedral was actively involved in the decision-making processes on how this reduced offer was made, which is the norm in such cases. The Dean and Communar were however being kept updated by their insurers and lawyers at key stages and were aware of the *"...concerns raised throughout this claim that the damages which have been offered have not met the expectations of the claimant"*.

In July 2017, the then Dean wrote to Mr X offering his unreserved apologies for the abuse he had suffered and offered to meet in person.

Those close to Mr X, who understand the impact on his mental and physical health of the way in which this settlement was arrived at, have expressed their disgust at the handling of the case. One very senior member of clergy told our independent investigator of their "deep concern" over the way in which the case was handled.

There appears to be an acceptance by some of those spoken to by our independent investigator that processes within the relevant insurer have changed and such an approach would not be taken again. We were told that during a subsequent conversation about the case in November 2018 between a lawyer and the then claims director for the insurer, the latter stated words to the effect that *"we know we got that wrong"* and by implication that they had learnt from it.

Mr X's legal representative was clear that in the circumstances then prevailing, particularly as regards Mr X's mental health, he had little alternative but to accept the reduced offer; the trauma of fighting the case through litigation would be far too great.

Mr X's experience featured in the Insurance Post in February 2020 and the journalist, Jen Frost, was awarded Story of the Year at the Headline Money Awards in September 2021.

Regardless of the basis for the eventual settlement figure and the reasons behind it being accepted, it has meant that Mr X has never been able to recoup the financial losses resulting from his incapacity to work for a prolonged period and fully re-establish his financial independence. This case was the eventual catalyst for the creation of the Interim Support Scheme.

In 2018 Mr X suffered a heart attack and it was not until 2019, after appearing at the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse as a core participant, that he tried to challenge the way the civil action had been handled.

Mr X made several complaints to the respective oversight and professional bodies about the behaviour of the lawyers, insurers and medical expert involved to no avail. This triggered a further suicide attempt in July 2020.

7 Non-financial support

Point 8 on the List of Complaints relates to the lack of support or interaction from the church during this process.

Correspondence indicates that, in April 2016, when the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor at Chichester first became aware of the claim, the support of an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor was

considered, and the insurer's legal advisors were asked to pass on the offer to Mr X. Files held by Mr X's solicitor show no record of this offer reaching them and there is no recollection of the offer. The insurer's legal advisors do pass on the offer of Independent Sexual Violence Advisor support from the diocese to the Communar at the Cathedral for his consideration.¹ This is followed up by the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor who provides the Independent Sexual Violence Advisor details to the Communar who speaks with the Independent Sexual Violence Advisor by phone some seven weeks after the initial suggestion was raised.

Our independent investigator, having reviewed the available documents and interviewed current church officers, was unable to determine what the outcome of that call was, but the offer of support never appears to have been made to Mr X.

The Church of England is unlike most other institutions in that it has ongoing spiritual and pastoral responsibilities for those it has wronged in the past. Survivors of abuse who take civil action or seek other forms of redress against the Church of England may still have an entirely reasonable expectation of care and support whilst doing so. It is reasonable that expectations of the Church are higher than those placed on other institutions.

The need for appropriate support in this case was actively considered, but the process by which this offer was made was flawed and ultimately led to Mr X feeling alone and badly let down.

8 Interim Support Scheme: Background

The survivor community had been advocating for a more structured form of support from the Church of England and met with three leading bishops in September 2019. Bishop Jonathan Gibbs, as the Lead Bishop for Safeguarding, presented the case to the Archbishops' Council and funds were made available to help bring a scheme to life. At the same time work commenced on developing a more formal Redress Scheme, with the Interim Support Scheme being seen as a temporary solution to assist with emergency financial support.

The Interim Support Scheme was established in September 2020 on an entirely charitable and benevolent basis, and, according to its first draft terms of reference, to *"improve the Church's response to current and historic survivors of Church-based abuse."* It was not intended *"to provide restitution to survivors, nor is it intended to be a Redress Scheme"*. The scheme *"aims to provide support in a way that helps the survivor to achieve self-sufficiency to move forward in their life."*²

There appears to be a consensus that the Interim Support Scheme was set up in haste, observed as *"underthought and under resourced,"* by one senior church figure, in response to the very specific needs of a small number of chronic and enduring cases. Others involved with the oversight of the scheme have described its creation *"as less than ideal"* and felt like *"building a bridge whilst crossing the river"*.

We have found no evidence to indicate that the Interim Support Scheme was set up with anything other than a genuine intention to provide survivors of church abuse with much needed financial support, with a low burden of proof. The Interim Support Scheme has grown organically rather than in a structured methodical way. It began life without any clear criteria being published and was

² Undated Version 1 paper to Archbishops Council re Interim Support Scheme

managed with good intent, initially by the Advisor (Lead Safeguarding Bishops' Support) in the National Safeguarding Team drawing on his experience from a similar scheme elsewhere. Lessons were learned along the way and practice developed in response to the needs of the survivors engaged with the scheme. It is acknowledged at senior levels that the *“architecture of the scheme is not established as formally as is required”*.

One of those charged with overseeing the scheme reflected that *“the initial conception of the ISS [Interim Support Scheme] being a one-off request for emergency payments meant there was no need for any longer-term case management, since the scheme was not set up for that kind of work. The moment we went into monthly support for subsistence of therapy - which was then extendable to twelve months, and then beyond - was the moment when case management became a necessity, and where we could have done more to put a better system in place.”*

The decision-making panel itself has an independent chair, a Church of England official and a survivor representative. The panel is responsible for the day-to-day management of the scheme and have strong backing from the trustees of the Archbishops' Council, who generally endorse their recommendations accepting that they have the detailed working knowledge of the cases under consideration. The scheme itself appears flexible and accommodating. The scheme has provided large sums of money, albeit within the constraints of the charitable articles, in some cases.

Three individuals have served as administrators for the Interim Support Scheme, the role which manages the day-to-day interaction with claimants and the decision-making panel. Those close to the scheme's administration acknowledge that its resources do not match the demand. The scheme has a very transactional and, at times, legalistic process which militates against a trauma informed response. The administrators become, in some instances, de-facto key workers for the individuals involved and have only limited interaction with the diocese other than to confirm that the abuse has taken place.

All three Interim Support Scheme administrators were drawn from different backgrounds and brought with them diverse skills. It is evident that the administrators of the scheme have each had a commitment to make the Interim Support Scheme work for survivors. One spoke to our independent investigator of putting their *“heart and soul into understanding the needs of survivors”* but could only operate within the parameters of the scheme and the charitable objects of the Archbishops' Council to which the scheme answered.

The absence of a support worker to assist those with greater needs is a cause for concern as it places an unfair burden on the administrators, one of whom we understand left the role because of the stress caused. The Interim Support Scheme is not resourced to carry out additional functions such as personal needs assessments. This lack of resilience and the possibility of a single point of failure needs to be addressed urgently. One commented on how in some cases *“...the ISS [Interim Support Scheme] has become the main point of contact for survivors with the Church”*.

9 Interim Support Scheme: Mr X's Experience

Mr X is in the category of 'ringfenced' survivors, as someone who receives regular subsistence support from the Interim Support Scheme.

Point 17 on Mr X's List of Complaints relates to his interactions with the Interim Support Scheme and its failure to address one of his key financial challenges: the settlement of an outstanding debt.

Mr X received a letter written by the administrator of the 'Interim Pilot Support Scheme' dated 13th November 2020, detailing the decisions of the panel regarding his claim. The letter includes a table detailing three columns headed - *item funded*; *amount granted* and *comments* covering four specific claims (counselling and monthly essentials including mortgage payments), next on the list and approximately halfway down the table, in the same format under the first column heading, is an entry "*Items requiring further work*". Included in this second section under the column headed "*amount granted*" are two further entries. One relates to "*debts*" and says, "*Necessary portion of overall figure...if required*". In the *comments* column the author has written "*The scheme wishes to work with you to consider what of these company debts can be appropriately mitigated or rescheduled. In principle, after this process, this could if necessary, include a financial contribution towards reaching a resolution.*"

The construct of the table in the letter is poor and the phraseology misleading. It gave Mr X a perfectly reasonable expectation that his needs were to be met. In addition to this, our independent investigator found a strong feeling from those interviewed, who know how the scheme was managed at the time, that this outcome would have been communicated verbally in positive terms, although there is no written record of that.

Mr X reasonably considered that these interactions with the Church of England meant that his HMRC debt would be addressed.

This letter and the expectations it created is key to understanding why Mr X feels so aggrieved by a subsequent email from the Secretary General of the Archbishops' Council. On 29th March 2021, the Secretary General wrote to Mr X about the payment of the company debts to HMRC in these terms: "*the trustees – on the basis of legal advice – have concluded that meeting those debts would not have been within the charitable objects of the Archbishops' Council.*"

This email may present the accurate legal position of the trustees, but it fails to offer any other suggestions as to how these debts could be addressed. No one appears to have considered whether this decision changed the overall balance of the support package being provided to Mr X and whether the remaining elements were still suitable to address his needs.

This decision left Mr X with a very significant challenge, compounding his seemingly intractable financial position and exacerbating his financial dependence on the Interim Support Scheme.

The time-critical issue of Mr. X's housing is another ongoing point of contention, which continues to create significant stress and anxiety. Mr. X has raised issues associated with his housing repeatedly, with the Interim Support Scheme supplying funding to repay the interest of the mortgage secured on his home. While this is a valuable support for Mr. X, the absence of a coordinated plan in his case is evident. The Church of England has been content to pay this ongoing cost, but there is no coherent plan for what will happen in April 2023 when the capital of the loan becomes repayable.

Mr. X and his representatives have made suggestions as to how this issue could be addressed, but none of them has been adopted. It is not reasonable for Mr. X to have to continue to be propositional on such fundamental points of need. The Church has indicated that the repayment of a capital amount is not within their scope but have not yet adopted a problem-solving

approach to find an equitable solution that ensures that Mr. X can continue his recovery without this looming threat to his home.

In January 2022, Mr X wrote two emails to the Interim Support Scheme in which he shares suicidal thoughts, driven by the inability to pay his company debts. These emails trigger a report to the National Safeguarding Team resulting in the police undertaking a 'safe and well' visit to his home.

This is an area of concern for Mr X and points 18 and 19 in his List of Complaints relate to statutory services being dispatched on three occasions to his home. The Church does not provide an emergency response and has no statutory powers but under its safeguarding protocols has a duty to share information when there is perceived to be the potential for a serious risk of harm to a vulnerable or at-risk person. Mr X has been in that category on numerous occasions and the National Safeguarding Team was correct in passing their concerns to police, however they failed to grasp that a longer term, co-ordinated, intervention was required to help Mr X get back on his feet.

Mr X has experienced substantial health and financial impacts arising from the abuse he experienced and the subsequent handling of his case. In 2023 Mr X has a failing business he cannot close, a debt, and a not insignificant interest only mortgage coming to the end of its term with no means of repayment. Mr X has repeatedly told the Church of England that he holds it responsible for the personal and financial harm caused to him as he strived for justice, *"The Church owes me a DEBT. 10+ years of working in my prime."* This is an understandable position.

At no stage is there any evidence of effective central grip or oversight of the Church's response to this case despite the numerous red flags.

10 Management of Support to Survivors with Chronic & Enduring Needs

A small number of survivors have prolonged and ongoing engagement with the Church of England with the aim of ensuring that their needs are met, if not properly managed this can result in repeated re-traumatisation. This is a serious safeguarding issue for the Church of England and needs to be addressed as such.

In most cases it is the responsibility of each diocese to manage the response to survivors, although each will be resourced differently. The ability to respond effectively will depend on local funding arrangements for support such as therapy and availability of Independent Sexual Violence Advisors.

In some cases, the needs of survivors cannot be met solely by a diocese and their cases need strategic oversight and management. We found no evidence of a centralised case management system where all the information held on a survivor in this situation can be accessed to gain a clear picture of all the interactions and available material, which is a significant obstacle.

Levels of national case management and oversight are achieved by the National Safeguarding Team in response to allegations of abuse involving senior clergy and in some complex cross diocese matters. There is no reason why this cannot be achieved for those survivors who need a similarly co-ordinated response.

There are significant consequences of the lack of strategic oversight and management of the response to survivors with chronic and enduring needs. Two notable examples are:

1. An absence of any form of long term, problem solving, approach being adopted. We found no evidence of systematic problem-solving by the National Safeguarding Team, nor any form of exit strategy being developed between the Church and the survivors of abuse in this category of cases. Our independent investigator was told of discussions at a senior level as part of Interim Support Scheme oversight meetings; these do not appear to be minuted and seem to be of a general nature with a focus on the enduring challenges faced by the survivor and those who are providing ongoing support to them.
2. An absence of any form of individual survivor engagement strategy to ensure effective communication between the church and those it is supporting over the long-term. Single points of contact or a nominated key worker would ensure a consistency of response and message. At present there are too many points of contact for individuals with chronic and enduring needs. This results in a, completely justified, view that survivors are “pushed from pillar to post” by the Church.

There needs to be active discussions with survivors about how the Church of England meets its obligations in a way which avoids transactional dependency and seeks ways to return agency and independence to the survivor. Mr X is a survivor with chronic and enduring needs, for which multiple church bodies carry some level of responsibility.

It is significant that there is an absence of any formal strategic oversight or co-ordination of the response to Mr X’s needs. Information in this specific case is likely to be held at a school, a cathedral, a diocese, the National Safeguarding Team, the wider Archbishop’s Council as well as by the Church’s insurers and lawyers.

In August 2022 there was evidence of an attempt to grip at least some of the issues in Mr X’s case, when the then Acting Director of the National Safeguarding Team and the relevant Diocese Safeguarding Advisor agreed that the Diocese of Chichester should take responsibility for providing support to Mr X. This intervention occurred after a letter was sent by Mr X’s advocate to the Secretary General of the Archbishops’ Council and the Archbishop himself, urging them to take *“appropriate and coordinated action.”*

There have subsequently been protracted email exchanges between the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor and Mr X’s advocate with both sides arguing on issues of remit, permission to discuss private matters, or sharing of information. Whilst the decision that the Diocese should take the lead in providing support may be the correct one, it has been taken many years too late. This has made it even more challenging to ensure that the Diocese can regain the trust and confidence of Mr X. While the Diocese has made an offer to meet Mr X in August 2022, which it has repeated on more than one occasion. Mr X has felt unable to accept those offers and it is worthy of note that they came at a time when Mr X was dealing with a number of complex issues relating to his health and financial position. At the time of writing the two parties have yet to meet.

While co-ordinated case management for survivors in Mr X’s position is made more complex by the Church of England’s governance it is not impossible. This fractured relationship need not have developed in this way.

11 Conclusions

Responding to Mr X's case and addressing his ongoing needs have become a contentious and complex matter for the Church of England, although much of this difficulty could have been avoided. There has been no co-ordinated or coherent attempt to resolve the issues raised by Mr X or his advocate since the civil settlement.

Due to the management of the resolution of the civil action in 2016 by their insurers Chichester Cathedral was unaware of the detrimental effect the management of the case would have on Mr X, who was at his most vulnerable.

The Church of England has yet to acknowledge in any meaningful way the contribution Mr X has made in campaigning for survivors and supporting the National Safeguarding Team.

There was a lack of coherent communications or engagement plan with Mr X or his advocate until the summer of 2022, when it was decided that the diocese should take the lead in providing support. To date the diocese has not managed to regain the trust and confidence of Mr X and, while an offer to meet has been made, no such meeting has happened.

The Church has yet to establish a clear understanding of its interactions with Mr X and has no central repository of the information available in its systems.

Whilst the Interim Support Scheme has paid for Mr X's therapy there has not been any evaluation of the effectiveness of this provision. There is no evidence of adequate emotional or pastoral care being provided, it was first considered by the diocese at the commencement of the civil claim and re-offered in 2022. Mr X has felt unable to accept the offers made and, therefore, has not received such support. No single point of contact or keyworker has been provided other than the Interim Support Scheme administrator, who is not equipped to manage such complex cases.

The pursuit of adequate and reasonable responses from the Church has taken a heavy toll on Mr X's mental health, with him reporting that the handling of his case and his communications resulting in multiple instances of suicidal thoughts and, on occasion, actions.

A cycle of dependency has been created for Mr X and his family through the engagement with the Interim Support Scheme which failed to address the root cause of his financial challenges. There has been no attempt to work with Mr X to develop an exit strategy or resolution, other than to await the Redress Scheme. Mr X's needs are more complex and immediate than that.

It is not appropriate for the Independent Safeguarding Board to make specific recommendations about levels or scope of financial redress. It is, however, clear that a just exit strategy in Mr X's case will require the Church of England to provide financial support that allows the cycle of dependency to end and recognise the harm done by the lack of strategic oversight and management of his ongoing needs.

12 Recommendations

We accept that the Church of England is not a single body or legal entity, but comprises many office holders, and legal entities which are separately governed. We refer to the Church of England as a shorthand for these office holders and legal entities, except where we are more specific about where the responsibility for action lies.

We accept that the Director of Safeguarding is not operationally responsible for all the functions affected by these recommendations, but we do consider it to be the Director's role to co-ordinate and communicate the Church of England's response to this report.

- 1 The Church of England should ensure that a case management solution is delivered across the various entities that make up the Church of England, including the Interim Support Scheme, to enable a holistic view of interactions with chronic case survivors to ensure central oversight of support provided. The solution must facilitate effective case management and remove the need for survivors to be retraumatised by having to repeatedly explain their circumstances.
- 2 The Church of England should ensure the appointment of a single point of contact within the Church for each survivor receiving protracted care and support from the Interim Support Scheme or locally arranged provisions. This approach should mitigate the risks presented by the current lack of a coherent approach and minimise the potential for re-victimising those survivors who remain engaged with the Church for the purposes of interim or longer-term redress.
- 3 The Church of England should institute a case management group approach to oversee chronic cases being handled by the Interim Support Scheme. Case management groups should adopt a problem-solving approach with a view to ensuring that survivors retain agency and are able to have a clear view of the exit strategy that helps them to move forward in the context of financial support. As a minimum, a case management group should include:
 - A suitably qualified and experienced chair.
 - Survivor representation.
 - Clear terms of reference for each group focussed on developing a just and equitable outcome for both the survivor and the church.
 - Representation from each part of the church involved.
 - An effective communications strategy.
 - A risk and issues register.
- 4 The Church of England should review the terms of reference and resourcing for the Interim Support Scheme, as they are not currently fit for purpose. A more resilient model for 2023/24 is required and should allow for a trauma informed approach to the assessment of needs and decision making. This should include the provision of a case support worker(s) to assist with managing workload and liaising with dioceses.
- 5 The Diocese of Chichester should ensure that a senior safeguarding professional, with a good understanding of the history of this case, is available to meet with Mr X to discuss the background to the complaints made that pre-date 2015, when and if he wishes to do so.
- 6 The Church of England should institute a mechanism to ensure that that Diocesan Safeguarding Advisors are made aware of all civil actions from the outset, that formal contact is made directly with complainants to assess their needs, and that offers of

additional support are made where appropriate (for example spiritual/pastoral care or access to an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor).

- 7 The Director of Safeguarding should ensure that an urgent case management group meeting, consistent with recommendation 3, is convened within four weeks of this report with the active participation of Mr X and/or his representatives. This meeting should adopt a problem-solving approach with the aim of breaking the cycle of dependency that has been created for Mr X and seek to address the root cause of his financial challenges. A report on the progress and outcomes of this meeting should be sent to the Independent Safeguarding Board within two weeks of the meeting taking place.
- 8 The Director of Safeguarding should seek urgent assurances from the church's insurers that approaches to the settlement of claims are managed to an acceptable standard and consistent with a survivor centred approach.
- 9 The Director of Safeguarding should assess whether there are survivors known to the National Safeguarding Team who may be experiencing similar difficulties to Mr X and seek to apply the principles of recommendations 2 and 3 as soon as is practicable.

Steve Reeves

Independent Safeguarding Board

15th March 2023

Issued on 11th April 2023 following accuracy checking.