

Open Letter to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York

June 12th 2023

Dear Archbishops,

Re: Notice of Complaint re Mr. William Nye LVO

Having taken careful soundings with several serving bishops over the past few months, I write to you on behalf of many survivors, victims and complainants of abuse and culpable negligence in the carriage of safeguarding. This letter has been precipitated by the suicides of victims and some falsely accused, together with an extensive catalogue of frequent failings, gross incompetence, misconduct, corruption, deception and cover-ups. The bishops we have consulted with agree that a significant increase in safeguarding related suicides would **not** result in changes to church policy and practices, and merely prompt repetitions of earlier PR-led empty promises of some further 'lessons learned review'.

It is factual to state, and universally acknowledged, that no current senior person from the NST, or in a senior safeguarding role, including the Lead Bishops, responds to serious issues in a prompt, timely or helpful manner. In the vast majority of cases, there is simply no response at all. Plainly, survivors, victims and complainants are therefore left wondering if the church cares. Or if the church is intentionally communicating its lack of care and concern through its ongoing silence and lack of support. Or, does not have the expertise and resources to deal with serious safeguarding issues. Or all of these.

All this has been previously brought to your attention. We have kept careful records of what has been sent to you, and your sparse responses to serious allegations. Your public statements on these matters are few and far between, though you have previously written to many of us, pleading that you "cannot possibly intervene", "are not responsible", and "unable to act". Occasionally you have told us that you are "working behind the scenes to achieve change", and assured some victims of "more pastoral care". But otherwise, you do little to alter the systemic culture of abuse that is still being consistently perpetrated against us.

As you know, all of the potentially culpable individuals and structures that may have some case to answer are ultimately accountable to Mr. Nye. All of us are well aware that Mr. William Nye has ultimate directive operational control over the running of Lambeth Palace, Church House Westminster, all NCIs, the NST, NSG, NSSP – and is currently endeavouring to reassert full control over the ISB by imposing Ms. Munn as Chair. She has absolutely no track-record of delivering any independent service or voice for safeguarding victims, and shows every sign of being another tetrarch under Mr. Nye's despotic control.

In theory, the Archbishops' Council and its Audit Committee, with the General Synod, ought to be able to call the above to account. Except it cannot, as Mr. Nye largely controls the agenda and theatre of General Synod, running the Archbishops' Council and externally representing it. He has own subordinate tetrarch in the person of Ms. Cole to control the Audit Committee. By allowing this manipulation of these key instruments of accountability and scrutiny, bonds of trust between bishops and their clergy, laity and the wider public have been severely damaged, if not irrevocably broken. It is also apparent to us that Mr. Nye appears to control both of you which is cast as "advises".

Over the past months we have been speaking with serving bishops and other senior church officers. All agree there is now **a very substantial body of evidence** – credible, concrete and serious instances – that Mr. Nye has been engaged in the following:

- Consistently acting against safeguarding victims, survivors and complainants if he deems this to be in the better interests of the church, bishops and/or himself (as he sees it), whom he purports to represent.
- Obstructing and preventing Lead Safeguarding Bishops, senior personnel in the NST, and if he can, the ISB, from going about their roles in the manner in which General Synod, the wider church and public might naturally be entitled to expect.

- Wilfully obstructing, delaying, corrupting and interfering with safeguarding investigations, attempts to call the church to account, and audits to change this.
- Creating and perpetrating a culture of fear, deference and total control, such that individual victims seeking emergency support, proper redress, or some genuine independent investigations into their grievances are informed that this can only be achieved through “a word with William as he will be the person who ultimately has to agree to this...”. This is completely and utterly unacceptable.

Since Mr. Nye answers to nobody – and has invested heavily in ensuring that all of the organisations and instruments of power and control under him are never subjected to any authentic independent scrutiny, transparency or accountability to any organisation or group within or without the church – a culture of toxic despotism has now emerged which is causing serious damage to the integrity and wider reputation of the Church of England, and especially to your clergy. More grievously, this continues to perpetuate extremely serious systemic abuse and harm towards safeguarding victims, survivors and complainants. All of the senior people we have consulted with for much of this year agree there will be no change as long as this extremely dysfunctional and corrupt culture prevails.

We cannot use any of the established complaints procedure for senior personnel that might be brought to bear on issues with Mr. Nye. He controls those procedures and persons who may be party to such, and they are accountable to him. William Nye would also be in a position to control any result. There is no operational conflict of interest policy at work in NCIs, the delays over which its introduction is almost certainly attributable to this conduct, and plainly benefits Mr. Nye’s modus operandi. We therefore request the following:

1. The immediate **stepping back/suspension** of Mr. Nye from each and every sphere of safeguarding within the Church of England, and any organisation or work that is cognate with such activity.
2. An independent KC or Judge-led **Investigation/Inquiry** into these allegations of cover-ups, manipulation, corruption, gross misconduct, serial incompetence and deceit that riddles church safeguarding, which Nye is allegedly concealing and/or perpetrating. We repeat, these are *only* serious allegations at this stage.
3. A KC or Judge-led Investigation/Inquiry to be **normative**, commencing with immediate effect, in cases of highly contentious and scandalous allegations, such as the Pilavachi and Percy cases where (once again) Mr. Nye currently retains ultimate control, so are seemingly subject to deliberate and extended delays, along with numerous obstructions, interferences and *obfuscation*.
4. That Bishop Steven Croft is treated in the same **equal** way as Lord Sentamu, and therefore must step back promptly from ministry with immediate effect, so that new evidence which has come to light can be properly tested, either through a CDM or other means. We note again that senior church figures requested to act in this case are informed that this is Mr. Nye’s decision.
5. The **immediate removal** of Ms. Munn and Ms. Cole from their roles on the ISB, NSP and Audit Committee – since neither demonstrate any form of meaningful independence from Mr. Nye, and effectively function as subordinate tetrarchs – thereby enabling the bodies tasked to bring critical-independent scrutiny to bear upon these (now frequent) concerns to be freed to do so.

We entirely accept and expect that Mr. Nye must be treated fairly in relation to these allegations, as must those complainants and other potential victims who may wish to come forward. In the meantime, his suspension or stepping back are neutral acts which plainly cannot prejudice any outcomes. You will doubtless restate your claim that you are powerless to take action. If that is so, and reporting abuse, corruption, gross incompetence or culpable negligence in safeguarding are something you are unwilling to take responsibility for, we will report that to General Synod next month.

Sincerely, *Name and Address Supplied*