

Let There be Light is a very powerful account by survivors of spiritual abuse at the hands of Mike Pilavachi and we commend their bravery in coming forward. Last September the internal Church investigation into Mike Pilavachi, conducted by the National Safeguarding Team, NST, and the diocese of St Albans concluded that these concerns of abuse of power and spiritual abuse were substantiated. These related to conduct in his leadership and ministry, both before and after he was ordained in 2012, spanning 40 years from his time as a youth leader through to current day.

The NST subsequently brought a complaint under the Clergy Discipline Measure. It was concluded whilst no further action would be taken on the main allegation, Mr Pilavachi's conduct had nevertheless fallen short of that expected of a priest in the Church of England and in accordance with the Clergy Discipline Measure Code of Practice a written warning and advice was issued to him. Mr Pilavachi currently has no authority to minister, and should he wish to return to any ministry in the Church of England this will be fully risk assessed. The appropriate statutory referrals have been made.

Following this CDM decision a statement was made from the lead safeguarding bishop Joanne Grenfell and national safeguarding director Alexander Kubeyinje

'Neither the behaviour described in the Mike Pilavachi investigation, nor the culture that permitted it to take place and continue, is acceptable in a church setting. We all need to take responsibility for creating a healthy culture where abuse is seen and prevented, and where power is held with humility and accountability. If our disciplinary processes are not robust enough to hold to account those who harm others, then they must change, in order to signal to the wider world that abuse in any form will not be tolerated.

We are aware that the outcome of the complaint brought by the National Safeguarding Team against Mike Pilavachi under the CDM, Clergy Discipline Measure, process has upset survivors and victims and we continue to offer support to all those affected. We want to acknowledge and repeat the Church's apology to all those came forward and shared their experiences. We are truly sorry.'

Support and contact

If you would like to speak to anyone connected to this investigation or have been affected, please be assured that any concerns raised will be treated with the utmost sensitivity and support / access to counselling is available. Please contact safeguarding@churchofengland.org

If you or anyone you are in contact with are affected by this news and want to talk to someone independently, please call the Safe Spaces helpline on 0300 303 1056.