

An Abuse of Faith, the independent report by Dame Moira Gibb into the Church's handling of the Bishop Peter Ball case, has been published today. Peter Ball was convicted in 2015 of misconduct in public office and indecent assaults against teenagers and young men. The report was commissioned by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, following the conviction.

Read the report

Video statement by Dame Moira Gibb

Video statement by the Bishop of Bath and Wells

In her foreword Dame Moira states:

"This report considers the serious sexual wrongdoing of Peter Ball, a bishop of the Church of England who abused many boys and men over a period of twenty years or more. That is shocking in itself but is compounded by the failure of the Church to respond appropriately to his misconduct, again over a period of many years. Ball's priority was to protect and promote himself and he maligned the abused. The Church colluded with that rather than seeking to help those he had harmed, or assuring itself of the safety of others.

We were asked to consider changes necessary to ensure that safeguarding in the Church is of the highest possible standard. The Church has made significant progress in recent years in its understanding of abuse. We have no doubt that the Church has a genuine commitment to meeting its responsibilities towards the victims of abuse. However we can see how difficult it is to make change across the complex structures of the Church. Progress has been slow and continuing, faster improvement is still required. It is the leadership of the Archbishops and Bishops which will determine whether change is effective."

The report has 11 recommendations for the Church focusing on a range of issues including focusing on getting the right support in place for survivors, the leadership of bishops, strengthening guidance, reviewing the Archbishops' Lists and the effectiveness of our disciplinary measures with regards to safeguarding related cases.

Receiving the report on behalf of the Church, Bishop Peter Hancock, the CofE's lead safeguarding bishop, said: "I am truly sorry that as a Church we failed the survivors of Peter Ball; having read the report I am appalled and disturbed by its contents; as Dame Moira says in her foreword Peter Ball abused boys and men over a 20 year period and as a Church we colluded, we failed to act and protect those who came forward for help. There are no excuses. We accept all the recommendations and are working to action them.

"For the survivors, it may feel this is all too late. I am personally aware from my meetings with individual survivors in the course of my work that they live with the effects of this abuse for their whole life. I once again offer them my wholehearted apology. This Report affirms the direction and steps that we have taken to improve the consistency, robustness and rigour of our practice, but progress has been too slow. It has

taken longer than it should have done, but we are absolutely committed to implementing Dame Moira's recommendations and my role as lead bishop is to ensure this happens."

Statement from Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby

"Abuse of Faith makes 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 and although Dame Moira notes that most of the events took place many years ago, and does not think that the Church now would conduct itself in the ways described we can never be complacent, we must learn lessons. I fully endorse the recommendations in the report and will ensure that the House of Bishops addresses how we can implement these as soon as possible, working with the National Safeguarding Team. For the survivors who were brave enough to share their story and bring Peter Ball to justice, I once again offer an unreserved apology. There are no excuses whatsoever for what took place and the systemic abuse of trust perpetrated by Peter Ball over decades."

If you are affected by this report and want to talk to someone in the Church, your local diocese has a safeguarding adviser or team who can be contacted via the relevant diocesan website. Alternatively, please email the National Safeguarding Team at safeguarding@churchofengland.org.

If you want to talk to someone outside of the Church of England you can call the CCPAS helpline on 0303 003 11 11

Notes

[Full statement from Bishop Peter Hancock read at press conference](#)

Report footnotes:

[A Statement by Lord Carey to the Independent Review led by Dame Moira Gibb](#)

[Lambeth Palace press release following allegations](#)

October 2015

[Archbishop commissions independent review of Peter Ball case](#)

[Statement on sentencing of Peter Ball](#)

Feb 2016

[Dame Moira Gibb announced as Chair of independent review into Peter Ball case](#)

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