

Lord Carlile named as independent reviewer in George Bell case.

Lord Carlile of Berriew has been named as the independent reviewer of the processes used in the Bishop George Bell case. The lessons learnt review, commissioned by the Church of England's National Safeguarding Team, in accordance with the House of Bishops' guidance on all complex cases, is expected to be completed by the end of the summer.

In 2015 the Bishop of Chichester issued a formal apology following the settlement of a legal civil claim regarding allegations of sexual abuse by Bishop Bell, who was Bishop of Chichester from 1929 until shortly before his death in 1958.

The aim of the review will be to look at the processes surrounding the allegations which were first brought in 1995 to the diocese of Chichester, with the same allegations brought again, this time to Lambeth Palace, in 2013. It will also consider the processes, including the commissioning of independent expert reports and archival and other investigations, which were used to inform the decision to settle the case, in order to learn lessons which can be applied to the handling of similar safeguarding cases in future. The full Terms of Reference are set out below.

Lord Carlile CBE QC is a Member of the House of Lords, having served as a Liberal Democrat Member of Parliament from 1983-1997. He was the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation between 2001 and 2011. He has a strong interest in cyber-related issues especially regarding National Security. (*see full biography below*). An executive summary of the review will be published once Lord Carlile has completed his work.

The Bishop of Bath and Wells, Peter Hancock, the Church of England's lead bishop on safeguarding, said: "I am grateful to Lord Carlile for agreeing to undertake the review, which will take a detailed look into how the Church handled the George Bell case; as with all serious cases there are always lessons to be learnt. The Church of England takes all safeguarding issues very seriously and we will continue to listen to everyone affected in this case while we await the findings of the review. The diocese of Chichester continues to be in touch and offer support to the survivor known as Carol, who brought the allegations."

NOTES

Previous statements

[October 2015: Statement on George Bell](#)

[June 2016: Announcement of independent review](#)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Background

In October 2015, the Church of England released a statement to say that the Bishop of Chichester, Dr Martin Warner, had apologised following a settlement regarding allegations of child sexual abuse by George Bell in the 1940s and 1950s. George Bell was Bishop of Chichester for 29 years until shortly before his death in 1958. The response to the announcement has included criticisms of the Church and its handling of the case from a range of individuals.

The House of Bishops Practice Guidance "Responding to Serious Safeguarding Situations Relating to Church Officers" (May 2015) states;

Once all matters relating to a serious safeguarding situation have been completed,

the Core Group should meet to review the process against this and other Practice

Guidance, and to consider what lessons can be learned for the handling of future

safeguarding situations

In June 2016, the Church of England announced that it would be undertaking an independent review into how the case was managed and the key processes involved in the decision-making.

Objectives of the review

To provide the Church of England with a review which, having examined relevant documents and interviewed all relevant people, ensures that:

1. Lessons are learnt from past practice
2. Survivors are listened to and taken seriously, and are supported
3. Good practice is identified and disseminated
4. Recommendations are made to help the Church embed best practice in safeguarding children and adults in the future.

Scope of the review

The review will cover the following periods:

- 1995, when the complainant first wrote to the then Bishop of Chichester and the actions taken by the Church of England as a result of this complaint
- 2012 when the complainant wrote to Lambeth Palace and the actions taken by the Church of England as a result of this complaint
- 2013 when the complainant wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the actions taken by the Church as a result of this complaint
- 2013 onwards when the case was managed across the National Church, Lambeth Palace and the Diocese of Chichester, notably via a Core Group.

- The review will consider the adequacy of the responses to the complainant and the subsequent decision making processes and action taken, in the context of the safeguarding policies and procedures in place at the time.
- The reviewer will be given access to all the evidence pertaining to how the decisions were reached:Â firstly, that the claim should be settled and, secondly that a public announcement should be made.Â This will include access to relevant medical information and reports which formed part of the settlement process (with the consent of the complainant).
- The reviewer will call for any material submissions or submissions connected to this case, which will be facilitated through the establishment of a website designated to the review.
- The person or persons undertaking the review will seek to interview key members of the core group and other individuals deemed by the reviewer to be appropriate.
- The review will provide a detailed evidence-based analysis of the responses and decision making processes concerning the case.

Undertaking the review

- The review will be carried out by an independent person who has not had a connection with the case and its management, nor with the Diocese of Chichester.
- The review will be carried out by someone or persons with either extensive legal and/or safeguarding experience of cases involving the alleged sexual abuse of children. A separate specification document will be agreed outlining this in more detail.
- The reviewer will produce a report, relevant sections of which shall be seen by those who directly contributed to the process for comment about factual accuracy, before it is finalised.
- The reviewer will produce an executive summary, which will be published to support the dissemination of learning. The executive summary shall exclude any material which might enable the complainant's identity to be deduced.
- The Church of England will determine whether the full report can be sufficiently redacted or otherwise anonymised to enable its publication without risking disclosure of the complainant's identity.

BIOGRAPHY- Lord CarlileÂ of Berriew C.B.E., Q.C.

Alex Carlile was born in Wales in 1948. After education at Epsom College he graduated LLB AKC at King's College London. Lord Carlile was called to the Bar by Gray's Inn (where he is now a Bencher) in 1970 and became a Q.C. in 1984, at the age of 36. Until 2009 he was the Honorary Recorder of the City of Hereford. He sits as a Recorder of the Crown Court, as a Deputy High Court Judge, and as a Chairman of the Competition Appeal Tribunal. Between 2001-2011, he was the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation; the Independent Reviewer of the Government's new PREVENT policy and remains the independent reviewer of National Security policy in Northern Ireland.

From 1983-1997 he was the Liberal (then Liberal Democrat) MP for Montgomeryshire in Mid Wales. During that time he served as spokesperson on a range of issues, including Home Affairs and the Law. He was Leader of the Welsh Liberal Democrats from 1992-7.

He was appointed a Life Peer in 1999 and was awarded the CBE in 2012 for services to national security.

Lord Carlile is involved in numerous charities, including the Royal Medical Foundation of Epsom College, and The White Ensign Association. He has a particular interest in mental health issues, and was a co-founder of the Welsh charity Rekindle. He is the Chairman of the Lloyd's of London Enforcement Board and is a non-executive director of a listed major agricultural merchanting company, Wynnstay Group plc. He is chairman of the not for profit company Design for Homes and is a founder director of SC Strategy Ltd, a strategy and public policy consultancy.

Lord Carlile is the President of The Security Institute, a Fellow of King's College London, and a Fellow of the Industry and Parliament Trust. He holds Honorary Doctorates of Laws in universities in Manchester, Wales and Hungary.

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