

The Archbishop of Canterbury has today commissioned an independent review of the way the Church of England responded to the case of Peter Ball, the former Bishop of Gloucester.

During a hearing at the Central Criminal Court on September 8th of this year Bishop Peter Ball pleaded guilty to two charges of indecent assault and one charge of misconduct in public office following the work of Sussex police as part of Operation Dunhill.

Operation Dunhill began as a direct result of the safeguarding officer at Lambeth Palace raising concerns about Peter Ball following a church initiated review of files. The approach to the police was a proactive step on the part of the national Church leading to a self-initiated referral via CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection centre) to Sussex Police in 2012. This led to active co-working between the Church and Sussex Police on a complex enquiry with full information sharing.

Since Peter Ball's guilty plea questions have been raised about the Church's handling of this case. As a result the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, has today commissioned an independent review of the way the Church responded.

The independent review will examine the Church of England's cooperation with the police and other statutory agencies and the extent to which it shared information in a timely manner, identifying both good practice and shortcomings alike. It will also assess the extent to which the Church both properly assessed the possible risk that Bishop Ball might pose to others and responded adequately to concerns and representations submitted by survivors.

Further information about the arrangements for the review will be available in due course. The Archbishop has confirmed that the report of the review will include a detailed account of how the case was handled within the church and will be published.

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