

Learning Lessons Case Review – the late Graham Gregory

Terms of Reference

The National Safeguarding Team (“NST”) of the Archbishops’ Council intends to undertake a review into the handling of allegations that have come to the attention of the Church of England concerning the late Graham Gregory, formerly a member of Clergy in five Dioceses in the Church of England.

The review will take place in two stages: (1) a Diocesan review conducted in each relevant Diocese (“Diocesan Reviews”), and (2) a review by an Independent Reviewer informed by the work product of the Diocesan Reviews (“Independent Review”) which will lead to a final written report.

Brief Summary of the case

1. Graham Gregory was sentenced to three years imprisonment in 2014, having been found guilty of two counts of indecent assault on a girl under 13 years while curate at St Michael & All Angels, Southfields, Wandsworth in the Diocese of Southwark.
2. In March 2018 Graham Gregory was convicted of three historic indecent assaults against three separate victims. The offences were committed between 1975 and 1990 while Graham Gregory was the vicar at St Ninians’s Church, Douglas in the Diocese of Sodor and Man.
3. Graham Gregory died in prison in April 2019. At the point of his death, Mr Gregory was being investigated by Sussex Police in relation to his time as a curate in Hastings in the Diocese of Chichester in the 1970s. Detectives had identified five victims and had received allegations of serious and prolonged sexual abuse.

Objective of the Review

1. The Review will allow those individuals who have indicated that they have sustained harm at the hands of Graham Gregory to describe their experiences, and feel confident they are heard.
2. The Review is to allow the Church of England to take steps to enhance and improve its response to allegations of abuse and, thereby, to ensure a safer environment for all.
3. The Review will consider both good practice and failings in the Church of England’s safeguarding practices in respect of Graham Gregory, and the appropriateness of responses by Church of England bodies to allegations and concerns raised across each Diocese in which he held any post.

Process

Stage One – the internal review and fact-gathering

1. The Independent Reviewer will meet (in person or by video call) with each Diocesan Reviewer(s) and the Provincial Safeguarding Adviser to ensure that the Diocesan Reviewer understands what is required of them and how best to undertake the exercise. The Independent Reviewer will continue to be available to the Diocesan Reviewer for advice and help with Stage One; it is expected that the extent of support required will vary depending on existing Diocesan resource and the amount of information to be collated and analysed. It is expected that in the Diocese of Sodor and Man, the Independent Reviewer will be required to undertake the majority of the Stage One process to enable necessary resource.
2. Each Diocesan Reviewer and the Provincial Safeguarding Adviser will prepare a written report with assistance from the Independent Reviewer. The Diocesan Stage One report will comprise a chronology of all significant information relating to Graham Gregory in that Diocese, along with a commentary. In the Diocese of Southwark, the Stage One report will also include any information held prior to Graham Gregory's ordination. The commentary will address the following questions (so far as are relevant):
 - To what extent did the Church respond to concerns in line with the policy of the day?
 - To what extent was record keeping effective in ensuring children were kept safe?
 - To what extent was information sharing effective in ensuring children were kept safe?
 - To what extent did the victims/survivors receive a caring and compassionate response?
 - To what extent was risk managed to ensure the protection of children?
 - What lessons can we learn from each of these lines of enquiry and from Survivor experiences?
3. If in that commentary the Diocesan Reviewer criticises practice, they should outline what a good response would have looked like, taking account of the relevant standards in place at the relevant time, and based on their own professional judgment. Where there is any apparent conflict of fact in the documentary record, the Diocesan Reviewer is asked to give a view, informed by their professional judgment, as to what version of events seems to them more likely.
4. In order to prepare their report, each Diocesan Reviewer will:
 - a. Review any relevant hard copy or electronic records held by the Diocese or which can be obtained from churches within the Diocese;
 - b. Approach any relevant Diocesan body or cathedral, and any statutory agency that may have relevant knowledge, for their contribution;
 - c. Invite any known Survivor to meet them, if this has been established as the survivor preference for consultation.

5. Invitations to Survivors will be made via individuals with established appropriate relationships. Where there is not ongoing contact with a survivor by the Church, the relevant Police Force should be asked to share a letter of invitation and this document with the Survivor. Specialist support will be offered to each Survivor who wishes to contribute and engagement with Survivors will take into consideration their preferences for method of contact. Survivors should be provided with the option of speaking to the Independent Reviewer directly.
6. Stage One will be completed within three months of starting.

Stage Two – the independent review

7. Once all five Stage One reports, plus the report of the Provincial Safeguarding Adviser have been completed, the Independent Reviewer will review those reports and produce a final Independent Report which summarises the key facts and lessons to be learnt. It is intended that, as the Independent Reviewer has overseen the Stage One reports, it will not be necessary for them to review any of the records held by the Diocese, but they may do so if they consider it to be necessary. They may also seek clarification on any questions which arise by approach to the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor or the relevant agency.
8. The final Independent Report will be written for publication, with appropriate steps taken to anonymise any individuals and redacted so as to prevent identification.
9. The final Independent Report will be submitted to the Director of Safeguarding within three months of Stage One being completed.

Presentation and publication

10. Following the completion of Stage Two, the Director of Safeguarding will publish the Independent Report by making it available on the Church of England website, and by making hard copies available to any Survivor who has requested that. It is not intended to publish the Stage One reports.
11. In advance of publication, the Director of Safeguarding will take reasonable steps to give advance warning to any organisation or individual they consider has been subject to criticism in the Review, and will provide a reasonable opportunity for that organisation or individual to respond.

Dated 8 July 2020