



St Paul's School (Barnes) Serious Case Review **Media Briefing**

The below is a summary for the media on the history / review and findings of the SCR. Media are encouraged to read the full report for a wider and complete understanding.

It is important to recognise that whilst the review concentrates on events that occurred in the school, learning has been identified and recommendations made that effect a number of safeguarding agencies both locally and nationally.

ST PAUL'S SERIOUS CASE REVIEW

This Serious Case Review (SCR) was commissioned in April 2017 by Richmond Safeguarding Children Board following five convictions for sexual offences of adults who had previously worked at St Paul's School London.

At the time of this decision the Richmond Safeguarding Children Board was also aware that there had been allegations made against 32 ex members of staff, dating mainly from the 1960s to 1990s, and the emergence of these allegations between 2013 and 2015 had been resulted in the involvement of the police, local authority, health professionals and the Safeguarding Children Board with the school. Although the modern school had been subject to external inspections, conducted internal reviews including commissioning reviews by independent consultants and worked hard to put in place additional systems and processes to keep children safe, it was the unanimous view of the serious case review subgroup at Richmond that a wide holistic statutory review of the conduct of agencies involved in allegations of abuse from 1960 onwards would be in the public interest.

The aim of this review is to identify lessons relevant for safeguarding children today, but the starting point has deliberately been to seek to understand the experience of ex-pupils and survivors of abuse at St Paul's who are now adult men. The reviewers have wanted to keep their experience as pupils at the heart of the review. Although systems, procedures and guidance may have changed, the fundamental dynamics of abuse have not.

This review has taken place over an extended period due to the amount of information that needed to be processed and the breadth of issues that emerged. It has also been vital to consult properly with significant people with an interest in the review before the final report was agreed and published and to take legal advice as to what information could be included in the final report. It is important to emphasise that the process of the review has generated learning that has already been acted

upon, without waiting for publication, and this is explored in relevant sections of this report.

There has been ongoing dialogue with the senior management team at St Paul's who have been open to reflecting on where the school can build on the improvements that have already taken place, and have kept the review up to date with new information about their experience of working with the national safeguarding system. This has revealed gaps that affect all schools and has been commented on within this report.

The methodology was agreed by the LSCB SCR sub-group and takes a systems' approach, meeting firstly with ex-pupils and other multi-agency practitioners involved. Fifty-nine ex pupils or their family members have been interviewed by the reviewers and other Panel members, and from this several new disclosures have been made to Police. Ten cases involving four convicted perpetrators and six alleged perpetrators¹ were analysed in detail by the Panel.

WHO CONDUCTED THE SCR?

The Serious Case Review was conducted by Edina Carmi (Independent Chair) and Jane Wonnacott (Lead Reviewer)

Edina Carmi qualified as a social worker in 1978, working as a practitioner and senior manager in both statutory and charitable sectors. Since 2000 she has been an independent consultant focusing on safeguarding children and has been author/ chair of 60+ serious case reviews, including ones involving non recent abuse within institutions, such as (with Jane Wonnacott) the serious case review into Southbank International School² and the case review for the Diocese of Chichester, known as 'The Carmi Report'³. During 2015-18 she led the SCIE Church of England diocesan auditing team, providing the overview reports of national learning. Most recently in 2019, she was commissioned by IICSA (Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse) as an expert witness, to review, report and give evidence on current safeguarding practice within first the Church of England (20 cases) and secondly the Roman Catholic Church (36 cases).

Jane Wonnacott qualified as a social worker in 1979 and has significant experience in the field of safeguarding at a local and national level and since 1994 has completed in excess of 150 serious case reviews, including two reviews of abuse in nurseries and (with Edi Carmi) the serious case review into Southbank International School. She has a particular interest in safeguarding practice within organisations and has contributed to the literature exploring effective safeguarding in education settings.

¹ Alleged perpetrators include those who had been investigated and found not guilty, investigated and no further action was taken and those where there have been allegations that were not substantiated at all.

² <https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/pdf/Southbank%20SCR%20REPORT%2012%201%2016.pdf>

³ <https://safeguarding.chichester.anglican.org/documents/carmi-report/>

WHAT DID THE REVIEW CONCLUDE?

The conclusion of the review is perhaps best summarised in the following paragraph taken directly from the report;

This review has brought into stark relief the complexities surrounding keeping children safe in school. Whilst many of the experiences of ex-pupils explored within this review could be described as “non-recent” and expected responses today would be very different, there are lessons for safeguarding that transcend time and place and raise important questions for our current safeguarding practices. A minority of recommendations are specific to St Paul’s School and even these may have relevance in other school settings. The majority of recommendations are aimed at firmly establishing a culture where the safety and wellbeing of pupils is paramount and in helping schools to put this into practice in a context where academic success may be perceived as the top priority in state maintained and independent schools alike. The recommendations recognise the importance of a sound legislative, strategic and procedural framework, but most importantly the crucial role played by sound relationships across safeguarding partnerships. These relationships need to be based on trust, clear respectful communication and a willingness to challenge, reflect and learn together.

WHAT WERE THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE REVIEW?

This review has identified some gaps in the current national safeguarding system that need to be addressed.

Recommendations relate to a number of organisations, including: the School, DfE, Charity Commission, Met Police, Home Office, Royal College of GPs, the Disclosure and Barring Service, the Teachers Regulation Agency, and Department of Health.

Themes revolve around:

- Accepting responsibility in order to affect cultural change.
- Developing positive relationships and partnerships as a prerequisite for effective safeguarding practice.
- Working with safeguarding in a school environment – balancing various legal requirements.
- Developing and refining national systems and guidance.
- Managing complex investigations – the need for strategic oversight.
- Refining practice systems and processes within the School.

The IICSA (Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse) is aware of the Review. The National Panel is fully aware of the Review, as is the Department for Education.

The report contains a total of 28 recommendations. Of these, 9 relate to improvements the school can make to extend its safeguarding system. The remainder relate to opportunities for national learning and improvements in the workings of agencies in safeguarding.

MEDIA STATEMENTS

Chris Robson, Chair of the Richmond Safeguarding Children's Board, said:

“This review was commissioned to consider allegations of abuse reported at St Paul's School over five decades. I am grateful to the independent reviewers, professionals that worked with them and most importantly those who contributed often giving very personal and difficult accounts. Through this process we have been able to understand what happened, why it happened and what it means for safeguarding practice going forward. The safety of children now and in the future is at the forefront of everything we do.”

“It is important that the reader understands this is an independent multi-agency review and whilst the school is the focus safeguarding remains the responsibility of all of us. The entire safeguarding community, including this and similar schools will benefit from the review of processes and procedures with recommendations that are aimed at ensuring young people are safe in the future and not at risk of any abuse.”

A spokesperson from St Paul's School, said:

“St Paul's School welcomes the Serious Case Review report. The school contributed to, and collaborated with, the SCR and accepts its recommendations. We accept full responsibility for the past abuse experienced by pupils at the school and have previously apologised to survivors and our wider school community. Today, we repeat that apology unreservedly to those who have come forward and to those who have not felt able to. Our modern safeguarding regime is of a very high standard and we are determined to ensure, through continuous improvement of practice, that we never forget the lessons of our past.”

BACKGROUND INTO SCR / RICHMOND LSCB

WHAT IS A SERIOUS CASE REVIEW?

A Serious Case Review (SCR) is a locally conducted multi-agency review in circumstances where a child/children has been abused or neglected, resulting in serious harm or death and there is cause for concern as to the way in which the relevant authority or persons have worked together to safeguard the child.

It is not the place of a review to consider blame, rather to seek out improvements in practice that could be put in place to safeguard children in the future. This is a statutory process, which outlines that reviews should be written to be published. (Working Together 2015, 2018).

WHAT IS THE RICHMOND SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD?

A Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) is a multi-agency body set up in every local authority in the UK. Each LSCB has an independent Chair (i.e. someone who doesn't work for social services)

The role of the LSCB is to:

- Coordinate what is done by the organisations represented to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the area
- Make sure that each organisation acts effectively when they are doing this.

The LSCB publishes policies and procedures for child protection in their area.

In Richmond, membership of the LCSB includes:

- The Council (Housing / Adult Social Care / Legal Services)
- Achieving for Children
- South West London and St George's Mental Health Trust
- Richmond CCG
- Hounslow and Richmond Community Health Services (HRCH)
- Police
- Probation
- Voluntary Sector
- Richmond College
- Local Schools
- Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (CAFCASS)

WHO IS THE CHAIR OF THE RICHMOND LSCB?

Chris Robson – he has 30 years policing experience, bringing extensive operational and strategic knowledge in safeguarding – including serving on Child Protection units across four London boroughs, including Haringey post the tragic death of Victoria Climbié. He has led several high-profile enquires and was the police lead on the Stephen Lawrence Independent Review.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who commissioned the review?

The previous LSCB Chair, Deborah Lightfoot who retired in 2017, commissioned the review; the SCR Subgroup of senior multi-agency professionals unanimously recommended this step having reviewed multi-agency working in relation to this matter in April 2017.

When did the review begin?

The review began in June 2017.

Who was on the Panel?

The review panel was chaired by Edi Carmi. The Panel consisted of Jane Wonnacott, Wandsworth CCG Designated Doctor, Independent Schools' Inspectorate, DfE,

Charity Commission, School Governor, Director of Children's Services, AfC, LSCB legal adviser, AfC Education representative, Psychiatrist SWLStG.

Why was there no survivor on the Panel?

There was a request, but the LSCB Chair made the decision that one person would not be able to represent all survivors. Survivors were advised that the report would not have individual stories but amalgamated themes. If they wished to give their story, they could contact the Truth Project at IICSA (Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse). The lead reviewers offered to meet with any ex-pupils who wished to contribute to the review process. They met with 59 ex pupils / family members, some of these were survivors / victims of abuse. The LSCB Chair also met with one of these survivors.

Why did the review take so long?

The scale of the SCR was significant, with dozens of interviews needing to take place. The reviewers also needed to be mindful of live Police investigations regarding non-recent allegations at the school.

Why was there no School staff member on the Panel?

The School was represented by a Governor. The School submitted information and former and current staff members, and Governing Body Members were interviewed by the Panel Members.

Did the School cooperate with the review?

There has been ongoing dialogue with the senior management team at St Paul's who have been open to reflecting on where the School can build further on the improvements to its systems of safeguarding that have already taken place, and have kept the review up to date with new information about their experience of working with the national safeguarding system.

Before the start of the Serious Case Review the School had self-referred to IICSA and Richmond Safeguarding Children Board also notified IICSA of their intention to carry out the review. IICSA agreed that the serious case review should go ahead and that the final report should be submitted to the national inquiry. All survivors of abuse at St Paul's who had contact with this review were offered details of the IICSA Truth Project should they wish to share their detailed testimonies.

FOR MORE MEDIA INFORMATION

For more information please contact:

LSCB:

Elisabeth Major: 07833 481 774 or elisabeth.major@kingrichlscb.org.uk
Elinor Firth: 020 8487 5159 or: Elinor.firth@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk

St Pauls School:

Ellie Sleeman (Director of External Relations) 020 8746 5418 or
ems@stpaulsschool.org.uk

INFORMATION ON SUPPORT FOR THOSE AFFECTED BY THE IMPACT OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Who can I contact for support?

If you or members of your family, or friends and colleagues have been affected by the impact of child sexual abuse, directly or indirectly, and would like some help or support, there are a number of ways that you can do this. You may wish to speak to your GP who can refer you locally for counselling. There is also a range of ways in which you can find out more, or seek help and support: over the phone, face to face or online. Here are two suggestions of organisations to contact:

The National Association for People Abused in Childhood (NAPAC) offers support to adult survivors of all types of childhood abuse. NAPAC can be accessed nationally.

Go to: <https://napac.org.uk/what-napac-does/>

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) also has the following webpages which may be helpful:

Go to: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/signs-symptoms-effects/non-recent-abuse/>

How can I report allegations to the police?

Allegations in respect of abuse at St Paul's School should be reported to the police Operation Winter Key. The police can be contacted by telephone on 020 8217 6582 or email at OperationWinterKeymailbox@met.pnn.police.uk

IICSA (Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse)

More than 4,000 victims and survivors of child sexual abuse in England and Wales have shared their experiences with the Truth Project, part of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse.

Information gathered in Truth Project sessions will mean the Inquiry can get a better picture

of the past to help create a safer place for children in the future. More information is available in this booklet - Truth Booklet at <https://www.iicsa.org.uk/stakeholder-engagement-resources-library>

Survivors of child sexual abuse who would like to share their experiences in writing, over the

phone or in person can get in touch with the Inquiry's Truth Project at www.truthproject.org.uk or by emailing share@iicsa.org.uk.

Find out more about the Victims and Survivors Forum by visiting

<https://www.iicsa.org.uk/victims-and-survivors/attend-forum>

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