

OPENING STATEMENT

Key Announcements

On 12 March 2015, the Home Secretary established a statutory inquiry into the extent to which institutions in England and Wales have discharged their duty of care to protect children against sexual abuse. Hon. Lowell Goddard DNZM took up her position as Chair of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse on 13 April 2015. Today, Thursday 9 July 2015, the Chair made the following announcements:

- (1) The Inquiry is now open for business and is seeking information about child sexual abuse from victims and survivors, from those involved or formerly involved in the care of children, and from institutions under investigation.
- (2) In order to manage the vast range of work effectively, the Inquiry has divided the institutional sectors under investigation into five broad workstreams. Each workstream will be led by a member of the Inquiry Panel, or by the Chair. The workstreams are:
 - (a) **Allegations of abuse by people of prominence in public life** - led by the Chair, Hon. Lowell Goddard DNZM
 - (b) **Education and religion** - led by Panel member, Prof. Malcolm Evans OBE
 - (c) **Criminal Justice and law enforcement** - led by Panel member, Drusilla Sharpling CBE
 - (d) **Local authorities and voluntary organisations** - led by Panel member, Prof. Alexis Jay OBE
 - (e) **National and private service organisations** - led by Panel member, Ivor Frank.
- (3) The Inquiry will be guided by three principles. It will be **comprehensive, inclusive, and thorough**. Those three principles are reflected in the division of the Inquiry's work into three Core Projects: the Research Project, the Truth Project, and the Public Hearings Project.
 - (a) **The Research Project** will involve a comprehensive literature review to bring together, for the first time, analysis of all the published work addressing institutional failures in child protection. Led by an expert Academic Advisory Board, the Inquiry will also commission sector-specific research to better understand the scale of the problem and to identify recommendations for change. The Research Project is already under way.

- (b) **The Truth Project** will allow victims and survivors of child sexual abuse to share their experiences with the Inquiry. Those who wish to take part can contact the Inquiry via our dedicated helpline, by email, post or online. They will have the option to attend a private session to share their experience with a member of the Inquiry. Their accounts will not be tested, challenged or contradicted. Every person who shares their experience with the Inquiry will be given the opportunity to leave an anonymised message to be published alongside the Inquiry's reports. The first Truth Project sessions are likely to commence in October 2015.
- (c) **The Public Hearings Project** will resemble a conventional public inquiry, where witnesses give evidence on oath and are subject to cross examination. The Inquiry will select case studies from a range of institutions that appear to illustrate a wider pattern of institutional failings. Evidence is likely to be taken from both representatives of the institutions under investigation and from victims and survivors of sexual abuse. Each hearing will last for around six weeks and the Inquiry expects to hold up to 30 separate hearings. Collectively, the evidence heard in the range of case studies will assist the Inquiry in drawing conclusions about the patterns of child protection failings across a range of institutions in England and Wales. The first Public Hearings are likely to start in 2016.
- (4) In addition to its Millbank headquarters, the Inquiry is setting up offices across England and Wales to make it easier for victims and survivors to share their experiences. Some offices will also hold formal hearings as part of the Public Hearings Project, at which members of the public will be welcome. The first office outside London is expected to open in Autumn 2015.
- (5) A Victims and Survivors' Consultative Panel ('VSCP') has been set up to advise the Inquiry on its engagement with victims and survivors generally and will also assist in the substantive work of the Inquiry. The members of the VSCP are Sheila Coates, Lucy Duckworth, Peter McKelvie, Fay Maxted, Michael May, Peter Saunders, Chris Tuck and Daniel Wolstencroft. Alongside the VSCP, the Inquiry has also established a Victims and Survivors' Forum as a self-nominating network to discuss the work of the Inquiry and to contribute its views on progress.
- (6) All other key appointments have been made. The key personnel serving the Inquiry are as follows:
- (a) Secretary to the Inquiry, John O'Brien
 - (b) Counsel to the Inquiry, Ben Emmerson QC
 - (c) Solicitor to the Inquiry, Martin Smith of Fieldfisher, and
 - (d) An Academic Advisory Board, led by Prof Jenny Pearce OBE.
- (7) The Inquiry has a delegated budget of £17.9m for the coming year.
- (8) The Inquiry has launched a new website and has a dedicated helpline for those who wish to get in touch.

Contact details

The Inquiry is now open for business. We can be contacted:

by telephone, on our Helpline: 0800 917 1000

by email: contact@csa-inquiry.independent.gov.uk

by post: Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, PO Box 72289, London SW1P 9LF, or

online: www.csa-inquiry.independent.gov.uk

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