



# INDEPENDENT INQUIRY CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

## NOTICE OF DETERMINATION CORE PARTICIPANT APPLICATION

1. On 2 May 2019 the Inquiry invited anyone who wished to be designated a core participant in the investigation into Child Protection in Religious Organisations and Settings to make an application to the Solicitor to the Inquiry by 13 June 2019.
2. On 13 June 2019 an application was made by the **United Reformed Church** (the 'URC') for core participant status in this investigation. This notice sets out my determination of the application.
3. The Inquiry has published a [definition of scope](#) of investigation and an [update note](#) which provides further information about the themes that will be examined and structure of the investigation. This investigation will be thematic in nature and examine the nature and adequacy of current child protection policies, practices and procedures within religious organisations and settings within England and Wales.
4. Applications for core participant status are considered under Rule 5 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 which provides:

*(1) The chairman may designate a person as a core participant at any time during the course of the inquiry, provided that person consents to being so designated.*

*(2) In deciding whether to designate a person as a core participant, the chairman must in particular consider whether –*

*a. The person played, or may have played, a direct and significant role in relation to the matters to which the inquiry relates;*

*b. The person has a significant interest in an important aspect of the matters to which the inquiry relates; or*

*c. The person may be subject to explicit or significant criticism during the inquiry proceedings or in the report, or in any interim report.*

*(3) A person ceases to be a core participant on –*



# INDEPENDENT INQUIRY CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

- a. the date specified by the chairman in writing; or*
- b. the end of the inquiry.*

5. In determining the application, the matters listed in Rule 5(2) must be considered, but the list is not exhaustive and I may also take into account other relevant matters.
6. The URC is a non-conformist Christian denomination. It is a religious organisation which runs various activities where children and young people gather in connection with their religious beliefs.
7. The application is put on the basis that the URC has played a direct and significant role in relation to the matters to which the Inquiry relates. It has a direct role in relation to child protection within its local congregations, institutions and communities in England and Wales. The URC has reviewed its organisational structures and child protection practices. Between 2015 and 2017 the URC undertook a Past Cases Review which looked at past cases of child sexual abuse within the Church. In November 2018 the Past Cases Review Learning Group provided its report to the URC. A range of developments and initiatives followed to standardise good practice in child protection procedures and safeguarding practice. Improvements to internal safeguarding policies and processes, safer recruitment practices, appropriate responses to allegations of child sexual abuse, pastoral support to and engagement with victims and survivors are described as areas of ongoing development.
8. Having regard to the provisions of Rule 5(2), I am satisfied that the URC has played a direct or significant role in relation to the matters under investigation and/or has a significant interest in the matters under investigation.
9. As set out in the update note, this investigation will focus upon organisational structures and child protection practices. It will look at whether there are common issues across religious organisations and settings and how they can be met and overcome.



# INDEPENDENT INQUIRY CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

10. I understand that, as a large non-conformist Christian religious organisation which is seeking to improve child protection procedures and set good practice standards within its denomination, the URC will be able to assist the Inquiry by providing information and offering insight into matters relating to child protection both within its denomination and within religious organisations and settings more widely. I am therefore satisfied that the United Reformed Church should be designated as a core participant in the Child Protection in Religious Organisations and Settings investigation.

11. Applications for designation as the recognised legal representative of a core participant are governed by Rules 6 and 7 of the Inquiry Rules 2006, which provide as follows:

*6(1) Where -*

- (a) a core participant, other than a core participant referred to in rule 7; or*
- (b) any other person required or permitted to give evidence or produce documents during the course of the inquiry,*  
*has appointed a qualified lawyer to act on that person's behalf, the chairman must designate that lawyer as that person's recognised legal representative in respect of the inquiry proceedings.*

*7(1) This rule applies where there are two or more core participants, each of whom seeks to be legally represented, and the chairman considers that -*

- (a) their interests in the outcome of the inquiry are similar;*
  - (b) the facts they are likely to rely on in the course of the inquiry are similar; and*
  - (c) it is fair and proper for them to be jointly represented.*
- (2) The chairman must direct that those core participants shall be represented by a single recognised legal representative, and the chairman may designate a qualified lawyer for that purpose.*
- (3) Subject to paragraph (4), any designation must be agreed by the core participants in question.*



# INDEPENDENT INQUIRY CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

*(4) If no agreement on a designation is forthcoming within a reasonable period, the chairman may designate an appropriate lawyer who, in his opinion, has sufficient knowledge and experience to act in this capacity.*

12. The URC has not appointed a legal representative at this stage. However it is at any time entitled to appoint a qualified lawyer to act on its behalf and to seek designation of that lawyer as its recognised legal representative in respect of the Inquiry's proceedings. I would encourage it to consider doing so.
  
13. Directions will be given for receipt of applications for an award under section 40(1)(b) of the Inquiries Act 2005 for expenses to be incurred in respect of legal representation at the forthcoming preliminary hearing. Such applications by core participants will be determined in accordance with the Inquiry's Costs Protocol on Legal Representation at Public Expense.

**Professor Alexis Jay OBE**  
**Chair, Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse**

**5 July 2019**