

<p>1 Monday, 16 March 2020  2 (10.00 am)  3 (Proceedings delayed)  4 (10.10 am)  5 Welcome and opening remarks by THE CHAIR  6 THE CHAIR: Good morning, everyone. I am Alexis Jay and I'm  7 the chair of this public inquiry. With me are the other  8 panel members of the inquiry: Professor Sir Malcolm  9 Evans, Ivor Frank and Drusilla Sharpling.  10 On behalf of the inquiry, I welcome you all to the  11 first day of the substantive hearing into the  12 Investigation into Child Protection in Religious  13 Organisations and Settings. This hearing will run for  14 ten days, finishing on Friday, 27 March 2020.  15 As you all know, the task of the chair and panel of  16 the inquiry is to examine the extent to which public and  17 private institutions in England and Wales have failed to  18 protect children from sexual abuse in the past and to  19 make meaningful recommendations to keep children safe  20 today and in the future.  21 This investigation is thematic in nature, and will  22 examine what religious organisations and settings are  23 currently doing to keep children safe, including  24 considering their child protection policies and  25 practices and their attitudes to child protection and</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 1</p>	<p>1 child sexual abuse.  2 It will also consider the extent to which external  3 organisations, both state and non-state, play a role in  4 providing assistance, oversight or regulation of child  5 protection in religious organisations and settings. On  6 behalf of the inquiry, I am, as always, grateful to all  7 core participants and their legal teams for their  8 assistance, and I know that a great deal of work has  9 gone into preparing witness statements and providing  10 disclosure. To complainants, victims and survivors who  11 have provided witness statements or who are to be called  12 to give live evidence before the inquiry during this  13 hearing, we are also grateful to you for coming forward  14 to tell the inquiry about your experiences, and we are  15 conscious of the strength and courage that this  16 involves.  17 The investigation in particular has received  18 evidence from a large number of faiths, denominations  19 and institutions, as well as organisations which hold  20 very different views about the issues to be explored.  21 At this stage, I would like to emphasise again that,  22 throughout these hearings, core participants should act  23 with civility and respect towards everyone involved.  24 This means that all core participants should choose  25 their words with care when making submissions or giving</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 2</p>
<p>1 evidence and avoid use of language or statements which  2 are offensive or inflammatory.  3 Before we hear from leading counsel to the inquiry,  4 Ms Fiona Scolding QC, who will introduce the  5 representatives present and open this case study, some  6 points on timing: we will sit each day from 10.00 am.  7 Ordinarily, we will take a 15-minute break at around  8 11.15 am. On days when we are sitting early, we may  9 take an early break during the morning. We will break  10 for lunch at 1.00 pm, returning at 2.00 pm, and we will  11 break again at around 3.15 pm. We intend to sit until  12 4.15 pm each day.  13 By way of an agenda, we rely on the hearing  14 timetable which sets out the order in which witnesses  15 will be called, save for where unforeseen circumstances  16 require a change to be made.  17 The hearing transcript is recorded simultaneously on  18 screens throughout the room and will be published at the  19 end of each day on the inquiry website, and any  20 directions arising from the day's hearings will also be  21 published on the website.  22 There are anonymity arrangements in place for some  23 witnesses who will be giving evidence throughout the  24 hearing. Cipherng and redactions have also been used  25 in relation to the evidence in accordance with the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 3</p>	<p>1 inquiry's redaction protocol and restriction order, both  2 of which are available on the website, except for  3 complainant witnesses who have waived their right to  4 anonymity. If there is any inadvertent breach of  5 a restriction order, I will ask that the simultaneous  6 recording be stopped briefly so that the issues can be  7 addressed as appropriate.  8 Finally, we are all aware of the outbreak of  9 the coronavirus (COVID-19) and the fact that an  10 increasing number of cases have been reported in this  11 country. We must all take reasonable precautions to  12 avoid spreading infection. For that reason, we ask that  13 anyone who does not need to attend the hearing in person  14 does not do so. You can, of course, follow the hearings  15 remotely using the live stream. If you do attend  16 because your presence is essential, please make use of  17 the hand sanitisers when you enter the building and  18 avoid attending the hearings if you feel at all unwell.  19 It is much better to do that than risk spreading  20 infection if you have any doubt about your state of  21 health.  22 Please do also let the investigation team know if  23 you are feeling unwell or have fallen ill, in case there  24 are steps the inquiry needs to take more widely to  25 protect everyone else attending.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 4</p>

<p>1 Please now go ahead, Ms Scolding.  2 Opening statement by MS SCOLDING  3 MS SCOLDING: Good morning, chair and panel. I am  4 Fiona Scolding, leading counsel to this investigation.  5 On my left sits Mr Olinga Tahzib and Ms Nikita McNeill,  6 who are junior counsel. Today we begin the substantive  7 hearing into how faith organisations and religious  8 settings organise their current child protection  9 practices; manage any allegations made; and to examine  10 what oversight there is of child protection practices by  11 anybody external to the religious organisation and  12 setting.  13 Chair, I will first introduce those core  14 participants who are in attendance today. To my right,  15 Mr Scorer and Ms Harrison of Slater &amp; Gordon Solicitors,  16 who represent the following core participants:  17 Migdal Emunah, Southall Black Sisters, Lisa Oakley,  18 Yasmin Rehman, Sadia Hameed, the Interfaith Alliance  19 United Kingdom and Mr James Lloyd Evans.  20 Seated in the corner is Mr Samuel Barker, solicitor  21 of Hugh James, who represents the Ex-JW Advocates  22 Opposing Crimes Against Children group.  23 Directly behind him is Mr Honza Cervenka, solicitor  24 at AO Advocates, who represents Kol v'Oz.  25 Directly behind me, to my left, representing the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 5</p>	<p>1 Home Office, the Department for Housing Communities and  2 Local Government, the Department for Culture, Media and  3 Sport and the Ministry of Justice are Mr Griffin,  4 Mr Nick Griffin QC, and Ms Amelia Walker of counsel.  5 Next, to my left, are Ofsted, represented by  6 Ms Sarah Hannett and Ms Alice de Coverley of counsel.  7 Directly behind me is the Charity Commission represented  8 by Ms Sarah Idelbi of counsel. In the second row,  9 directly facing you, chair and panel, are the Christian  10 Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses, represented by  11 Mr Shane Brady of counsel. Next door to him is the  12 United Synagogue, represented by Mr Alan Payne QC.  13 Turning to the second row, one has the Baptist Union  14 of Great Britain, represented by Ms Rachel Stone. In  15 the row behind, one has the Methodist Church of  16 Great Britain, represented by Ms Genevieve Woods of  17 counsel. In the front row, one has the Union of Hebrew  18 Congregations represented by Ms Paula Jefferson,  19 solicitor at Berryman Lacey Mawer.  20 Again, in the back row, one has Shema Koli,  21 represented by Mr Adam Gersch, of counsel, next to  22 Ms Woods. Obviously, again, in the front row in front  23 of you, chair and panel, to my right is Thirtyone:eight  24 represented by Mr Justin Humphreys, its chief executive.  25 Last, but by no means least, sitting in the middle</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 6</p>
<p>1 of the second row is the United Reformed Church.  2 Present today is Mr Ioannis Athanasiou, who is the  3 safeguarding advisor for the church.  4 In addition, the following are also core  5 participants, although not present today: that's  6 Liberal Judaism, Reform Judaism, the  7 Evangelical Alliance and the Pagan Federation.  8 This investigation begins after you, chair, have  9 already looked at the institutional response to child  10 sexual abuse in the Church of England and the Church in  11 Wales, as well as the Roman Catholic Church, alongside  12 examining schools run by the English Benedictine  13 Congregation. The research team has also published  14 a literature review in November 2017 about sexual abuse  15 both in the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches  16 identifying the paucity of any substantive research into  17 sexual abuse in any religious institution in the  18 United Kingdom.  19 The inquiry has also published a review arising from  20 the Truth Project. This identified particular factors  21 present in the experiences shared with the Truth Project  22 by victims and survivors of sexual abuse when they  23 involved a religious organisation and setting. We have  24 used all this material to inform some of the strands of  25 this investigation.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 7</p>	<p>1 This hearing provides us with a novel opportunity to  2 examine how a greater range of religious organisations  3 in England and Wales in 2020 respond to the need to keep  4 children safe and to act appropriately if allegations of  5 sexual abuse are made. We want to look not just at the  6 policies which are presented, but at the cultures of  7 those organisations and the barriers that there may be  8 to dealing effectively with child sexual abuse within  9 these settings.  10 Culture we define as a highly complex series of  11 meanings that are shared by a group and transmitted  12 through generations. Meanings are manifested through  13 a set of norms and beliefs that provide individuals with  14 a behavioural blueprint as to how to live their lives.  15 Every religious organisation which has provided us with  16 evidence has stressed their dedication to stamping out  17 child sexual abuse and has categorically said that their  18 religion views child sexual abuse as abhorrent. What  19 this investigation wants to examine is whether or not  20 those statements of intent are reflected by practice and  21 actions.  22 Unlike some of the other investigations, we are not  23 examining any one religious organisation or a particular  24 incident, or series of incidents, of sexual abuse,  25 although we will hear about some during the course of</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 8</p>

2 (Pages 5 to 8)

<p>1 the next ten days. But that does not mean that we will                  2 not hear from victims and survivors. When I use the                  3 word "victim" or "survivor" in this context, I mean                  4 a situation where a perpetrator has either been                  5 convicted in a criminal court or findings of fact have                  6 been made in a civil, disciplinary or regulatory setting                  7 that they have sexually abused a child. Otherwise,                  8 I will use the word "complainant", where no such                  9 findings have been made, or could not be made, because,                  10 for example, the alleged perpetrator is deceased.</p> <p>11 We have deliberately chosen in this investigation to                  12 use the phrase "child protection" rather than                  13 "safeguarding". We do this recognising that the very                  14 word "safeguarding" has, because of its use when talking                  15 about radicalisation and terrorism, become in some                  16 communities a touchpaper issue. We also think that it                  17 is a term which does not reflect what we wish to                  18 explore. We want to look at how religious organisations                  19 minimise the risks of exposing children to those who                  20 would sexually abuse them and how they take steps                  21 actively to promote good practice in keeping children                  22 safe from harm.</p> <p>23 To that end, we will look at the following issues:                  24 the management of child protection within religious                  25 organisations and settings, including their training and</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 9</p>	<p>1 the understanding and awareness of child sexual abuse,                  2 both by volunteers, religious leaders and those who                  3 participate in religious organisations; any policies and                  4 procedures which exist; safer recruitment and the use of                  5 the Disclosure and Barring Service; arrangements in                  6 place to respond to allegations of child sexual abuse,                  7 including the provision or absence of pastoral support;                  8 any internal processes which exist within the                  9 organisation for auditing, inspection or oversight of                  10 practices and processes.</p> <p>11 We will also look at the existing statutory                  12 framework for the protection of children from abuse and                  13 its application to religious organisations or settings,                  14 and the existing framework, such as it exists, for                  15 auditing, inspection or oversight of practices and                  16 procedures by bodies other than the religious                  17 organisation itself.</p> <p>18 We have spent the past nine months requesting,                  19 collating and reviewing evidence from a significant                  20 number of organisations which are involved in child                  21 protection within a religious context. We wish to thank                  22 each and every one of you who we know has taken                  23 painstaking time and effort to produce the evidence that                  24 this inquiry needs. We know how much time this would                  25 have taken you, and we are, as ever, grateful for your</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 10</p>
<p>1 conscientious and careful attention and for your                  2 patience in dealing with our queries.</p> <p>3 Having said that, and identifying that it is                  4 impossible to estimate the prevalence of child sexual                  5 abuse in religious organisations because of the absence                  6 of data collection or research, it should be noted that                  7 it has been more difficult for this investigation to                  8 obtain the evidence it requires than it has been in                  9 other modules. It has been more difficult for us to                  10 identify the relevant organisations, to find the                  11 relevant contacts for those organisations and to obtain                  12 adequate responses from those organisations it has                  13 contacted.</p> <p>14 There is no list of religious organisations in the                  15 UK. The Charity Commission estimates -- and it                  16 identifies that this is only a rough estimate -- that                  17 there are over 34,000 faith-based organisations                  18 registered with it, excluding those related to the                  19 Church of England or the Roman Catholic Church. Around                  20 80 per cent of those are Christian in origin, with                  21 others relating to other faiths, of which the second                  22 largest is Islam, followed by Judaism and then Hinduism.</p> <p>23 However, there are around, in addition to those                  24 34,000, 60,000 exempt religious charities: all                  25 universities, further education colleges, academies,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 11</p>	<p>1 foundation mainstream or special schools, voluntary                  2 aided schools and sixth form colleges do not need to be                  3 registered with the Charity Commission and do not have                  4 to comply with the Charity Commission's relevant                  5 financial requirements, but they do, at the very least,                  6 have a regulator who performs much of the role that the                  7 Charity Commission would play, which is the Department                  8 for Education.</p> <p>9 On top of the exempt charities, there are also                  10 excepted charities, which means that the charity neither                  11 has to register nor submit annual returns, but the                  12 Charity Commission can use its power to intervene and/or                  13 to take compliance action against them where needed.</p> <p>14 A significant number of smaller religious                  15 organisations, including those present today, are deemed                  16 to be excepted charities, including all Christian                  17 churches which have an income of less than £100,000                  18 a year, as are any buildings which are registered as                  19 places of worship or school premises. Furthermore, all                  20 cathedrals are also, at the moment, exempt from any                  21 registration or regulation, as that is about to change.                  22 The Charity Commission has told us that it has changed,                  23 or it is about to change, its practice so that all                  24 charities with a turnover of more than £5,000 have to                  25 register, but to date there have, therefore, been very</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 12</p>

<p>1 many religious organisations which fall outside of 2 the scope of registration with the Charity Commission. 3 The way the Charity Commission also keeps its data 4 means it is also not possible out of those 34,000 5 charities to identify those which relate to religious 6 settings and those which may deal with charitable giving 7 or other aspects of religious life, such as, for 8 example, the provision of support to those who live in 9 developing countries. It was therefore not possible for 10 us to use the Charity Commission database as a basis to 11 identify which organisations would be relevant to our 12 investigation. 13 Local authorities do not map religious organisations 14 or settings at present, although some are telling us of 15 steps they are taking to do so in respect of 16 supplementary schooling which is offered, which I will 17 deal with later in this opening. 18 To try, therefore, to obtain a spectrum of 19 information, this investigation started by using 20 information provided about organisations belonging to 21 interfaith networks which had dealt with, or discussed, 22 child protection. That, of course, is a self-selecting 23 group. Even amongst those who had shown interest in the 24 work around child protection did not answer our requests 25 or identified that their size would make it impossible</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 13</p>	<p>1 to do so. This investigation, therefore, had to seek 2 information from religions other than those 3 organisations based upon the information that's known 4 about the pattern and nature of such observance from 5 general statistics and from information provided by some 6 religious organisations themselves. 7 The majority of organisations to whom we wrote have 8 responded fully, conscientiously and provided us with 9 a great deal of assistance, often pointing us in the 10 direction of others who can provide us with some help. 11 However, we have encountered some problems. One of 12 them, as I have already mentioned, is the lack of an 13 establish structural framework within which religious 14 organisations can be identified. The autonomous and 15 individual nature of many of them means that writing to 16 every place of worship would be neither feasible nor 17 proportionate and some religions, as well, have no 18 national or umbrella organisations to provide 19 co-ordination or support. 20 The second challenge we encountered was finding the 21 relevant person who deals with child protection within 22 that religious organisation and setting. In many cases, 23 websites or other publicly available information listed 24 no contact with responsibility for child protection or 25 provided no information about child protection at all.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 14</p>
<p>1 The only contact details were often generic information, 2 email addresses or administrative staff, who were not 3 always able to answer the questions that we posed to 4 them or identify someone who could. This is a cause for 5 concern for us, because, if the organisation cannot tell 6 us who is responsible for what, it strongly suggests 7 that child protection may not be part of their agenda at 8 all, or to a sufficient degree. 9 The third challenge is that some organisations did 10 not respond at all to our requests, necessitating 11 significantly greater use of the compulsory powers which 12 this inquiry has under section 21 of the 2005 13 Inquiries Act than has been the case in other 14 investigations. Without the use of such compulsion, we 15 would have struggled to receive adequate information 16 from some organisations. 17 What we think this shows us is that there is still 18 much work to be done in providing, mapping and collating 19 sufficient information to identify religious 20 organisations. We know it would be impossible to 21 identify every small or new religious movement made up 22 of maybe a handful of members meeting in someone's home, 23 but when we speak of difficulties in this context, this 24 is with long-established religious organisations with 25 significant numbers of adherents within the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 15</p>	<p>1 United Kingdom and long roots within the communities 2 which they serve. 3 We live in a multi-faith society with very many 4 religious traditions and beliefs. We are still 5 a majority Christian country. The 2011 UK census, which 6 we know may well be obsolete, it being nearly a decade 7 on, identifies that Christianity is the majority 8 religion for 59.5 per cent of the population who express 9 that they have religious beliefs. Under that badge of 10 Christianity, however, there is a vast number of 11 denominations and traditions. England and Wales do not 12 collect data on adherence to individual Christian 13 denominations, unlike Scotland and Northern Ireland, 14 which do so. Surveys, however, seem to suggest that the 15 majority of those who are Christian in the UK are 16 adherents of the Church of England, followed by the 17 Roman Catholic Church, with the next largest 18 organisations being the Methodists, Baptists and other 19 religious denominations, loosely called nonconformist, 20 because they spring from Protestantism but are not part, 21 and were never part, of the Church of England. As the 22 Evangelical Alliance, however, tells us, the fastest 23 growing part of the Christian Church in England and 24 Wales at present is evangelical, Pentecostal or 25 charismatic forms of worship, which can appear in</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 16</p>

<p>1 various guises, both in the traditions I have identified 2 above and in other religious movements. 3 The next largest religious affiliation is Islam. 4 Around 5 per cent of the population of England are 5 Muslim. That is around 2.7 million people. Muslims 6 make up 1.5 per cent of the population of Wales. There 7 has been a significant increase in the number of Muslim 8 adherents between 2001 and 2011, with 1.2 million people 9 more identifying in the 2011 census than in the 2001 10 census. The Muslim population of the UK, as with other 11 minority religions which I will mention, is noticeably 12 younger than those who express affiliation with 13 Christianity, and so is made up with many more children 14 and young people. 15 Hindus make up around 1.5 per cent of the English 16 religious population, so around 800,000 people. There 17 are around 420,000 Sikhs, 238,000 Buddhists and around 18 261,000 people who affiliate to various forms of 19 Judaism. All religions, with the exception of Judaism, 20 grew between the 2001 and 2011 census. 21 Despite the fact that society is seen as becoming 22 more secular, with 25 per cent of the population in the 23 2011 census stating that it does not have any religious 24 beliefs, most people do have some form of belief and, 25 therefore, religious organisations play some role in the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 17</p>	<p>1 lives of the majority of children in this country in one 2 way or another. 3 We should also identify that politically and 4 socio-culturally, this investigation has examined 5 a number of religious organisations, many of which have 6 significant numbers of worshippers of black or minority 7 ethnic communities or those which are ethnically or 8 culturally distinct, the most obvious example being the 9 Sikh population and those who are adherents of Judaism. 10 Some of those religious organisations and the 11 communities to which they belong live together in 12 concentrated geographical areas. For example, over 13 50 per cent of the black and minority ethnic community 14 in England live in either London, Birmingham or 15 Manchester. The concentration is even greater in Wales, 16 with the majority of those with black or minority ethnic 17 backgrounds living in Cardiff, Swansea or Newport. In 18 those areas, therefore, there can be some parts of local 19 authorities where 70 to 85 per cent of the population 20 share a bond both of religion or ethnicity. To give 21 some examples, Burnley, Bradford or Blackburn for part 22 of the Muslim community, or parts of Salford for the 23 Jewish community. In those areas, children will often 24 go to school with high concentrations of individuals 25 from the same religious background, even if they are not</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 18</p>
<p>1 faith schools -- over 50 per cent of pupils from ethnic 2 minorities go to such schools, so that growing up, their 3 religious, cultural, social lives and wider kinship 4 groups are often located as part of a religious setting. 5 There is no hard and fast boundary in those cases 6 between what's a religious setting and what is not. In 7 many minority religious organisations, no matter what 8 one's ethnicity or background, ties of kinship, 9 community, business and religion overlap and 10 interrelate. 11 Religious organisations have a rich tradition in 12 this country as a force for good and for those with 13 faith to engage in community and voluntary activities, 14 which help all of society, not just those with belief. 15 One only has to see the religious response to the most 16 recent flooding in parts of England to see this in 17 action. The work that religious organisations do in our 18 country is often selfless and unremarked upon, but can 19 have a dramatic impact upon those they help. 20 As I have already identified, in those settings, 21 ties of kinship, friendship, culture, language, leisure 22 time, business, employment are often interrelated. Many 23 children and young people who have parents and family 24 members who are religious believers will spend much of 25 their time outside school in religious settings or as</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 19</p>	<p>1 part of religious organisations. 2 Most organised religions and beliefs have some sort 3 of tradition and rituals, and parents, even if not 4 particularly observant, wish those traditions and 5 rituals to be passed on. The ties between culture, 6 language, ethnicity and religion means that a large 7 number of children are part of an extended religious 8 organisation or setting at some point in one's youth or 9 adolescence. This does not involve, often, simply 10 discussion and worship within the home, but also 11 education about religious traditions, preparation for 12 rites of passage, the learning of languages or cultural 13 traditions which are all bound up with religious 14 identity. 15 Religious figures, some of whom may have formal 16 qualifications and others of whom may simply assume 17 a role of leadership because of their reverence within 18 the community, are very important figures of authority 19 and influence, both within religious organisations and 20 the communities they serve. Children will often be 21 taught to respect and revere them, and they have special 22 status because of their spiritual and moral force, 23 setting themselves out as arbiters of what is good and 24 right. This may be the case even where families may 25 well not be particularly observant themselves, as their</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 20</p>

<p>1 role within their religious life often translates to  2 them being a central part of community and civic  3 society. Such figures will be trusted implicitly to be  4 alone with children and have access to both private and  5 public spaces, homes, religious schools and other forms  6 of social activities where children congregate. Places  7 of collective worship are often also the central hub of  8 all community life and activity. We will hear evidence  9 from a number of religious organisations who provide,  10 basically, a round-the-clock social and community  11 service unmatched by any other voluntary provision in  12 the local area. Everything from prayers to yoga, to  13 language classes, to meals, to organisations and  14 get-togethers.</p> <p>15 Religious organisations often provide linguistic,  16 cultural or religious tuition, either within their  17 setting or by those associated with them, from an  18 after-school club through to summer camps, from  19 religious studies to a particular rite of passage  20 through to extensive instruction in religious texts or  21 language throughout childhood, they provide an extensive  22 and unparalleled amount of support to children and young  23 people outside a school setting.</p> <p>24 The size of the religious organisation does not  25 necessarily reflect the scope of its children's</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 21</p>	<p>1 activities. For example, the Baha'i faith, a very small  2 organisation within the UK, with only a few thousand  3 followers, runs a comprehensive programme of children's  4 classes and a youth spiritual programme run by trained  5 members of the faith. Smaller organisations may well  6 provide a more encompassing service for their adherents  7 to seek to keep individuals within the faith and to  8 foster and continue community ties. Often they share an  9 ethnic, linguistic and cultural heritage. For example,  10 the Sikh community which encourages the community to  11 place the gurdwara at the centre of all aspects of Sikh  12 life or the Zoroastrians, whose ancient religion means  13 that they discourage marrying those who do not share  14 their faith and, therefore, will seek to meet together  15 socially in order to encourage a continuation of  16 the community.</p> <p>17 The particular diversity of England and Wales is  18 present in the religious organisations we will examine  19 here. Practically every long-established religion and  20 many new religious movements have a significant presence  21 in England and Wales and have done for very many years,  22 from the Islamic communities of Newcastle and Gateshead,  23 present from the 19th century because of trading routes  24 with Aden and the Arabian Gulf, through to the  25 long-established Jewish community enlarged by pogroms</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 22</p>
<p>1 from Eastern Europe and from the Shoah in the 19th and  2 20th centuries down to the recent influx of  3 Eastern Orthodox and Middle Eastern religions, such as  4 the Syriac church, the Yazidi community or the Druze,  5 who have arrived over the past 50 years due to wars and  6 conflict within the Middle East. We will also hear  7 about some newer religious movements or read about them,  8 such as Scientology, the Jesus Army, the Church of  9 Latter Day Saints and the Jehovah's Witnesses, all of  10 whom have a significant presence within England and  11 Wales. Not, obviously, to miss out on those religious  12 movements founded in the United Kingdom present around  13 the world, such as Methodism, Baptism, the Quakers, the  14 Plymouth Brethren and a multitude of others.</p> <p>15 It is essential that religious organisations and  16 settings, therefore, as focal points for communities, as  17 providers of religious education and worship, as places  18 of socialisation, have well-developed and clear child  19 protection policies. They can, and should, act as  20 beacons of good practice, responding with compassion and  21 care to victims of child sexual abuse and taking  22 adequate steps to minimise the risks to children and  23 young people in their care.</p> <p>24 The vast majority of individuals within these  25 organisations adhere to and practise the beliefs that</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 23</p>	<p>1 they espouse. But we also know that some individuals do  2 use religious organisations as a route to be able to be  3 with children without suspicion, and they groom and  4 perpetrate sexual abuse upon children in these settings.  5 The power and influence of those in positions of  6 religious leadership or the way that the community  7 operates itself can lead to such abuses being silenced  8 or ignored.</p> <p>9 Turning now to the role that religious organisations  10 play in respect of education, when this investigation  11 looks at religious organisations and settings, we are  12 not only looking at individual churches, mosques and  13 temples, but are looking at the educational role outside  14 of formal schooling that such faith communities have.  15 We have been provided with a lot of evidence about the  16 full-time schooling that they provide and about concerns  17 expressed by, for example, Ofsted, about some of that  18 provision. This is not within the scope of our  19 investigation.</p> <p>20 However, very many religious organisations provide  21 what the Department for Education call supplementary  22 schools. They define them as offering support in  23 mother-tongue languages, religious studies, cultural  24 studies or national curriculum subjects. These  25 supplementary schools often teach someone about their</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 24</p>

<p>1 cultural identity, ensure that they learn about their 2 faith, provide additional tuition in school, either in 3 school subjects or specific language teaching, or 4 provide a place for children to go to after school to 5 avoid being home alone. 6 They can raise standards and instil confidence. 7 There are, however, no reliable statistics about the 8 number of supplementary schools in this country. 9 Evidence from Ofsted suggests there may well be at least 10 5,000 faith-based supplementary schools in England and 11 Wales which probably teach in the region of a quarter of 12 a million children. Bradford Metropolitan Borough 13 Council which, as I have identified, has a very high 14 concentration of Muslim individuals, tells us that they 15 estimate around 10,500 children attend supplementary 16 schools in the evenings or weekends in Bradford and that 17 they have 130 schools in their area from a range of 18 religious and cultural backgrounds: Polish, Ukrainian, 19 Sudanese, Arabic, Chinese, Sikh, Hindu and Muslim. 20 Tower Hamlets, another very diverse borough in inner 21 London, which has been funded by the Department for 22 Education to try to identify the number and range of 23 supplementary schools, has identified around 120 of them 24 within their local authority. They say that, despite 25 visiting them to offer training, none of them have</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 25</p>	<p>1 responded positively or displayed any interest in 2 training, and the local authority has identified 3 a resistance by some of them to any oversight or 4 scrutiny. 5 Ofsted commissioned a report published 6 in November 2019 about the quality of safeguarding in 7 such faith-based supplementary schools following on from 8 a conference it held in June 2019. It identified the 9 significant number of religious organisations and stated 10 that the majority of supplementary schools from their 11 research serve a particular ethnic community, with those 12 which provide the more intensive tuition tending to be 13 faith based, with a heavy bias, they say in their 14 report, towards madrassas, which serve the Muslim 15 community, and yeshivas, which serve the Jewish 16 community. 17 Research by the Royal Society of Arts Action and 18 Research Centre in the last decade found that around 19 60 per cent of supplementary schools served a single 20 ethnic community. Of those, around 68 per cent offered 21 teaching in national curriculum subjects, and 22 three-quarters provided coaching for GCSEs. Religious 23 education was provided by just under half of them, with 24 Islam accounting for around 50 per cent of those 25 schools, with different denominations of Christianity</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 26</p>
<p>1 being 25 per cent and Hinduism at 18 per cent. Most of 2 them ran during term time, with about a third continuing 3 during school holidays. Children attended there for 4 between two and five years. 5 The Children's Commissioner visited a very small 6 number of yeshivas and madrassas along with Ofsted in 7 2017 and 2018, and in a report published in 2019 called 8 "Skipping school: invisible children", she expressed her 9 concern that the absence of oversight or the setting of 10 standards in respect of child protection in these 11 settings by statutory authorities could lead children to 12 being more vulnerable to abuse. These were, however, it 13 must be stressed, largely settings which Ofsted 14 suspected may well have been unregistered schools, ie, 15 providing full time, or nearly full-time, education. 16 Ofsted, furthermore, suggests in its evidence to us 17 that there are a small number of organisations which may 18 masquerade as supplementary schools but which provide 19 full-time education and should be registered but which 20 choose not to do so, many of which have a faith basis, 21 and about which, in their evidence, they expressed 22 significant concerns about child protection practices in 23 those settings. 24 There are some organisations which provide help for 25 supplementary schools. There is a national resource</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 27</p>	<p>1 centre for supplementary education from whom we have 2 evidence. That provides accredited teacher training 3 with a recognised certificate in teaching within the 4 supplementary education sector, and operates a quality 5 mark -- nearly 500 schools have qualified for such. 6 However, harking back to what I said earlier, that is 7 likely to be a very small number of schools in 8 comparison to the schools operating in the sector in 9 general. Again, the information, education, training 10 and accreditation that they provide is voluntary, and 11 the number of organisations that have used its services 12 are significantly fewer than those in the sector as 13 a whole. 14 As we know, there are no reliable statistical 15 surveys to identify the prevalence of sexual offending 16 against children in religious settings. The statistics 17 recently published by the Office of National Statistics 18 in January 2020 about sexual abuse in respect of adults 19 who were children as a whole estimates that around 20 7.5 per cent of all adults in England and Wales 21 experienced sexual abuse before the age of 16, which is 22 around 3.1 million people. There are no current surveys 23 which measure a child's experience of sexual abuse 24 because of the challenges of asking children about such 25 a sensitive topic.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 28</p>

7 (Pages 25 to 28)

<p>1 We have accounts of abuse, as I have already  2 identified, as part of the work of the Truth Project.  3 It published a report about those who had come forward  4 to it to speak about their experiences. It must be  5 noted that most of those experiences, as recounted in  6 the report, took place before 1980 and therefore are not  7 current. 183 individuals have spoken to the  8 Truth Project who had been sexually abused by either  9 religious staff or within a religious organisation. It  10 must, however, be stressed that, in line with the  11 English population, most of those cases related to the  12 Church of England and the Catholic Church. Of other  13 religious organisations, around 11 per cent of those who  14 have spoken to the Truth Project were members of  15 the Jehovah's Witnesses.</p> <p>16 In order to try to gain some understanding of what  17 the prevalence may be of child sexual abuse in religious  18 organisations, we asked Childline, a telephone and  19 online helpline run by the NSPCC which runs nationally  20 and is widely advertised in secular settings, providing  21 around a quarter of a million counselling sessions to  22 children and young people in 2017 to 2018 about the  23 number of calls they received related to a religious  24 setting. They said that over a four-year period, from  25 2015 to 2019, there were around 51 sessions where</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 29</p>	<p>1 a child mentioned a religious setting, so around  2 12 a year. Of those, most involved the child calling it  3 a church. That is obviously a very small number in  4 comparison to the overall counselling sessions I have  5 identified above.</p> <p>6 We also asked local authorities about the number of  7 referrals which they had made which were concerned with  8 or linked to religious organisations. Again, only  9 partial figures can be provided, as local authorities do  10 not keep data in this way, and, as we may explore,  11 religious organisations often do not refer matters to  12 the local authority designated officer, or LADO. In  13 Bradford, for example, there have been 32 referrals to  14 the LADO between 2007 and 2019 concerning religious  15 organisations. Similar numbers of referrals have been  16 made to other local authorities, and we will hear, in  17 the evidence given by a number of local authorities next  18 week, about the referrals they have received and from  19 which religious organisations.</p> <p>20 We also asked the National Police Chiefs' Council  21 whether they could assist us. They confirmed at present  22 they do not record whether sexual offences have been  23 committed within religious organisations. The only  24 information they were available to provide us with came  25 from Operation Hydrant, which is a national -- well, it</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 30</p>
<p>1 is co-ordinated nationally, which collects data related  2 to non-recent child abuse cases reported to the police  3 from August 2014 onwards. They identified that around  4 11 per cent of cases where a live investigation has  5 taken place involve a religious organisation or setting,  6 identifying that around 726 people whom they have  7 investigated have been employed in some form in  8 a religious organisation and setting.</p> <p>9 We also, to try and be as comprehensive as possible,  10 asked every religious organisation how many allegations  11 had been made to them over the past ten years. We chose  12 a decade as providing a reasonable snapshot of activity,  13 in particular given that there has been a great deal  14 more publicity and discussion about sexual abuse in  15 institutions since the turn of the last decade and  16 because, if any data collection exists, it is most  17 likely to exist within this period.</p> <p>18 Many organisations told us that they do not collate  19 statistics centrally about the number of allegations  20 within their churches or places of worship. As part of  21 this investigation, therefore, we can do nothing more  22 than to provide an extremely caveated and very small  23 picture of those allegations. We can, therefore, say  24 that Chabad Lubavitch, an organisation which provides  25 community activities and outreach work to both the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 31</p>	<p>1 Jewish and non-Jewish community and which runs a number  2 of schools, has identified eight allegations over the  3 past ten years, six of which, in fact, relate to the  4 schools that they run.</p> <p>5 The Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses  6 has identified 67 allegations being made to them, of  7 whom 13 people were convicted of criminal offending.</p> <p>8 By contrast, the Baptist Union could not provide us  9 with any reliable statistics because it does not collate  10 those figures.</p> <p>11 The Mosque and Imams National Advisory Board  12 furthermore told us that sexual abuse is limited, if not  13 rarer, within the Muslim community and that it has not  14 received any reports amongst its 552 listed members.</p> <p>15 The largest gurdwara in England in Smethwick, which  16 serves a congregation of around 10,000 on a weekly  17 basis, has told us that one allegation has been made  18 over the past decade, which was not substantiated.</p> <p>19 Turning now to victims and survivors, we have  20 gathered 12 witness statements from individuals and  21 11 witness statements from organisations which work with  22 survivors of sexual abuse in religious organisations who  23 have provided us with powerful testimony.</p> <p>24 Many of those who have provided us with evidence  25 were abused as children many years ago. However, as we</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 32</p>



1 know, those cases can shed light on an organisation's  
 2 ability to learn lessons and implement change from the  
 3 mistakes it may have made in the past.  
 4 The anguish of those who were abused as children  
 5 does not simply disappear. Some of those from whom we  
 6 will hear have had their whole lives blighted by this  
 7 abuse and the fabric of their belief system and sense of  
 8 trust has been shattered. For others, their abuse has  
 9 led them to become activists for change both within  
 10 their faith community and in society as a whole. We  
 11 will hear from them about their attempts to provide and  
 12 promote a more open and transparent culture for their  
 13 religion and to compel change within their religious  
 14 organisation. They have often sought to present to the  
 15 religious organisation what are uncomfortable truths.  
 16 The feelings of shame and guilt associated with  
 17 sexual abuse within childhood can leave scars for even  
 18 those with the most courageous and optimistic of  
 19 personalities. We thank all those who have provided us  
 20 with oral and written evidence for their openness, for  
 21 their honesty and for their willingness to speak about  
 22 some of their most private emotions in their sincere  
 23 desire to help us.  
 24 The issues which emerge from this testimony and that  
 25 of the Truth Project analysis has been key to shaping

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1 our examination during these hearings.  
 2 We have, for the benefit of core participants,  
 3 produced a table of those who have provided us with  
 4 evidence about their abuse. Again, we stress this is  
 5 not meant to be a comprehensive overview, as it depended  
 6 upon people coming to us or information given which we  
 7 have received from the Crown Prosecution Service. To,  
 8 however, give some examples from this table --  
 9 Mr Alvares, would you mind getting up the table, if we  
 10 may? PR-A10, from whom we will hear this afternoon, was  
 11 sexually abused by a communion steward, someone who  
 12 helped out while she was a member of  
 13 the Methodist Church in the 1990s. She tells us that  
 14 the reaction of the minister was not supportive, and he  
 15 would not offer any pastoral support to her and  
 16 commented, after his arrest by the police, upon how  
 17 valued the perpetrator was in the community and that he  
 18 must be considered "innocent until proven guilty".  
 19 No-one from the congregation apologised when the  
 20 perpetrator pleaded guilty and it came out that there  
 21 were previous concerns about his behaviour with young  
 22 people.  
 23 She raises concerns, which we will hear this  
 24 afternoon, about how the Methodist Church dealt with her  
 25 complaint about the actions of the minister in 2019,

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1 branding it a farce.  
 2 PR-A3 tells us about his abuse at the hands of  
 3 a youth leader in an organisation connected to the  
 4 United Reformed Church. These would include Sunday  
 5 school trips and holiday clubs every year. He spent  
 6 lots of time within the church because of his family  
 7 situation. His youth leader, Andrew Roy, would use his  
 8 role during those trips to sexually abuse him and then  
 9 telling him that he would not be believed if he told  
 10 anyone because of his position within the church. Many  
 11 years after the abuse, he came forward to disclose his  
 12 abuse to others. He identifies in his experience that  
 13 many families living their lives in and around church  
 14 organisations have little contact with people outside  
 15 them and that their whole lives revolve around the  
 16 church, thus necessitating an active response by church  
 17 organisations in these situations.  
 18 PR-A2 was abused as child by someone who had been  
 19 dismissed from two madrassas for his sexual abuse of  
 20 students whilst teaching them, but had not been reported  
 21 to the police. As an adult, whilst involved in work  
 22 within the Islamic community, she met someone she knew  
 23 who had been involved in moving this individual from  
 24 teaching without informing statutory agencies and sought  
 25 to confront him. She went to see a leading member of

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1 the mosque, who was a leading imam, who told her not to  
 2 rock the boat, given the name of the community and the  
 3 reprisals which may happen to her if she were to speak  
 4 out. PR-A2 said that she wanted to set up a support  
 5 network for those who had been subject to sexual abuse  
 6 within her community and chose not to do so after being  
 7 told that by the imam. She talks of being silenced  
 8 through religious arguments based on honour and shame  
 9 and says that there is a degree of cronyism or nepotism  
 10 in the families involved in her case in certain  
 11 religious organisations not to support victims.  
 12 PR-A4 tells us that she went to study the Qu'ran in  
 13 a "house mosque" which was a room in someone's house  
 14 which acted as a prayer room and teaching facility. She  
 15 learnt the Qu'ran there every day after school from the  
 16 ages of 6 to 11. During that period of time, she was  
 17 fondled by one of her teachers who groomed, coerced and  
 18 blackmailed her and the abuse escalated into rape. Her  
 19 abuser was only 16 or 17 at the time, being a trainee  
 20 teacher. At secondary school, she plucked up the  
 21 courage to tell her teachers and her parents of her  
 22 abuse, but she tells us that when her mother tried to  
 23 search out other victims, they denied it had happened as  
 24 they were concerned about the cultural shame that it  
 25 would bring on their family. She was also subjected to

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1 verbal abuse within the community once she had disclosed  
2 her allegation, being called a slag and a tart. She  
3 said that within the madrassa system, most teachers are  
4 male and that it is an old boys' network so that any  
5 allegation of abuse is quashed.

6 PR-A7, to give one example, tells us of her sexual  
7 abuse by an elder in the Jehovah's Witnesses  
8 congregation in the early 1990s from the ages of around  
9 12 to 14. She told her parents. They then told the  
10 elders of the congregation. She then had to, she says,  
11 as a teenager, meet both with the elders and with the  
12 perpetrator and his wife. The elders asking him what he  
13 had done to her in front of everyone. She also had to  
14 recount her story to a number of other elders, all of  
15 whom are male, but no action was then taken.

16 We also have the benefit of a witness statement from  
17 Mr Gregor McGill, who is director of legal services at  
18 the Crown Prosecution Service. He has provided us with  
19 several case studies of individual convictions of  
20 perpetrators in matters related to religious  
21 organisations in the recent past. They include,  
22 firstly, Menachem Mendel Levy, who was convicted in 2013  
23 of two counts of indecent assault against a teenage girl  
24 who was a family friend. He had donated a menorah,  
25 which was used during festivities celebrating Jewish

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1 therapy.

2 In another case involving the Haredi community,  
3 those involved in prosecuting the case identified that  
4 witnesses were reluctant to come forward for fear of  
5 shunning within the community, including the parents of  
6 the children who had been subject to sexual abuse.

7 Fourthly, in a case involving a Quranic teacher,  
8 Mohammed Saddique, at a mosque in Cardiff, he was  
9 convicted in 2017 of 14 counts of indecent assault and  
10 was sentenced to nine years in prison. The court noted  
11 in that case that the victims of the abuse had to  
12 overcome not only personal but also significant cultural  
13 barriers to be able to give evidence at the trial.

14 The CPS also told us of the case of John Wilson, who  
15 was a pastor in a Pentecostal church in Keighley,  
16 Lancashire. He was jailed for 21 years in 2017 for  
17 sexually abusing six women between 1984 and 2010. He  
18 told the vulnerable women that they were possessed by  
19 spirits and during "deliverance sessions" which were  
20 purported to exorcise the spirits within them, he would  
21 sexually assault them, sometimes assisted by his wife.

22 Last, but by no means least, on Friday, 6 March this  
23 year, a pastor, Michael Oluronbi, was found guilty of  
24 sexually abusing six boys and a girl over a 20-year  
25 period. He used spiritual work as a subterfuge for

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1 religious festivals in Trafalgar Square. He also  
2 donated, after his conviction, Torah scrolls, which was  
3 accepted by the Chabad Lubavitch Golders Green, despite  
4 knowing of his conviction for such offences. I must  
5 stress that, after an outcry, those Torah scrolls were  
6 returned.

7 Next, Todos Grynhaus was convicted of indecent  
8 assault against three complainants after a trial  
9 in July 2015 for which he received a custodial sentence  
10 of 13 years and two months with an extended licence  
11 period for public protection. In this case, at least  
12 one victim had gone and spoken to rabbis for help when  
13 she was a teenager, including a rabbi who was part of  
14 the Manchester Beth Din, which is a Jewish religious  
15 court. She provided him with a diary which referred to  
16 her account of the abuse which she had made whilst it  
17 was ongoing. She was offered compensation by one of  
18 the rabbis to whom she spoke, but was told she could not  
19 report the matter to the police and that, if she did so,  
20 she would be shunned by her community. It was also the  
21 case that, in 2011, Mr Grynhaus had disclosed to rabbis,  
22 as part and parcel of this investigation, that he had  
23 sexually abused two girls. Instead of being referred to  
24 the police, he simply had therapy organised for him and  
25 Mr Grynhaus was told to report to the rabbi after

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1 sexual abuse, administering holy baths which he said  
2 would cleanse them. Some of his victims had multiple  
3 terminations as a result of his sexual exploitation of  
4 them. None of them told anyone whilst they were  
5 a child, believing that he was undertaking God's work.  
6 It was only when they were adults that they felt able to  
7 come forward.

8 Chair and panel, would this be an appropriate moment  
9 to have the mid-morning break?

10 THE CHAIR: Yes, Ms Scolding, thank you. We will return at  
11 11.25 am.  
12 (11.10 am)

13 (A short break)

14 (11.27 am)

15 MS SCOLDING: I now want to focus a little about the  
16 evidence that we have about barriers to reporting that  
17 we will be discussing both in oral evidence and in the  
18 written evidence we have received.

19 The first barrier to reporting as identified is the  
20 fact that religious figures and leaders have  
21 considerable power. They hold an esteemed place within  
22 a religious community, and this esteem can obviously all  
23 too easily be abused.

24 One of the ways in which this power can be abused is  
25 by the use of religious text, religious positions, God's

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<p>1 name and the threat of spiritual consequences as a way                  2 of preventing the disclosure of abuse or seeking to                  3 justify why such abuse can take place.                  4 Professor Lisa Oakley, who is an academic who researches                  5 spiritual abuse and who is chair of the National Working                  6 Group for child abuse linked to faith and belief, has                  7 told us that survivors of child sexual abuse in faith                  8 contexts with whom she has spoken have identified that                  9 spiritual coercion and control has often been an                  10 integral part of their experience of abuse.                  11 The Muslim Women's Network has given us some                  12 examples of this from a report they published in 2013                  13 called "Unheard voices". They speak of Imaan, a young                  14 woman from a Muslim background, who was groomed both by                  15 her Quaranic teacher and her father. Her teacher told                  16 her that verses of the Qu'ran justified her abuse by her                  17 father. She struggled to let go of this belief that her                  18 abuse could be justified by religion. The Muslim                  19 Women's Network also provide examples of situations                  20 where the use exorcism is used as a cover for sexual                  21 abuse, as I touched upon just before the break.                  22 Moreover, as I have identified above, the notion that                  23 a minister or leader holds a divine position can mean                  24 that there is a reluctance to report abuse or fear of                  25 what may happen, if not in this life, then in the next,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 41</p>	<p>1 if this occurs.                  2 Other examples are given that black magic is often                  3 used both within the Christian and Muslim community as                  4 an excuse to dismiss the actions of an abuser, alleging                  5 that the rape or sexual assault was not caused by the                  6 person but by the spirit within them, thus excusing the                  7 perpetrator from any responsibility.                  8 The NSPCC has undertaken some work in respect of                  9 child protection and religious beliefs within the Hindu                  10 and Buddhist communities in 2017, focusing on the fact                  11 that the use of religious texts, teaching and culture                  12 could impact upon the approach to, and attitudes                  13 towards, child protection, identifying that within those                  14 communities the reverence towards their religious                  15 leaders would lead to a natural reluctance to report                  16 such abuse.                  17 The next barrier to reporting we have been told                  18 about is the inherent disbelief that somebody could                  19 sexually abuse someone else. Across all religious                  20 organisations, a common reason for not reporting abuse                  21 is the feeling that it could not happen here. People in                  22 religious organisations view themselves as good and                  23 others within the organisation are also viewed as having                  24 similar ethics and a very strong sense of morality. The                  25 Muslim Women's Network tells us that there is a serious</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 42</p>
<p>1 lack of understanding and ability to spot the signs of                  2 child sexual abuse and there is a naivety about the                  3 integrity of religious leaders which can be misplaced on                  4 occasions. This sentiment is reflected by the majority                  5 of religious organisations who have provided us with                  6 detailed information that those within the community                  7 often view their fellow congregants and religious                  8 leaders as beyond reproach.                  9 We have several witness statements from individuals                  10 and organisations who give us evidence of non-recent                  11 cases of sexual abuse. They have told us of being                  12 disbelieved, belittled or ignored when they told members                  13 of their community, or even in some cases being                  14 ostracised from their previous life or blamed for what                  15 happened to them. We have heard in the Anglican                  16 investigation about research undertaken within the                  17 Church of England which suggests that in that particular                  18 religious organisation there is a greater degree of                  19 disbelief than within the population as a whole that                  20 child sexual abuse can happen in a religious setting.                  21 That research is, of course, tentative, but seems to                  22 mirror what victims and survivors have told us within                  23 this investigation.                  24 The Edward Cadbury Centre for the Public                  25 Understanding of Religion, part of the University of</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 43</p>	<p>1 Birmingham, has in their witness statement identified                  2 that in some religious communities, of all faiths, they                  3 have been told that nothing could go wrong here, that                  4 they are safe places to attend and that a strict                  5 adherence to or the use of particular procedures isn't                  6 needed as the community can, and will, resolve matters                  7 together on an informal basis.                  8 I now turn to the issue of deference. We have heard                  9 a lot of evidence in the Roman Catholic and Anglican                  10 investigations about clericalism -- the excessive                  11 reverence for those in positions of authority. In other                  12 contexts, this reverence could be for the head of                  13 the household or the male elder, respect for which,                  14 again, there is a cultural expectation that someone is                  15 both above reproach and cannot be challenged.                  16 Manny Waks of Kol v'Oz, a victim and survivor                  17 organisation, tells us about the reverence in which                  18 rabbis in the Haredi community are seen. They and other                  19 religious leaders have the power to make decisions about                  20 all aspects of an adherent's life which provide them                  21 with significant power. Sadia Hameed says the same                  22 about the Muslim community.                  23 The same is true in respect of many Christian                  24 organisations. Those who are religious leaders in those                  25 settings consider they have a calling from God and that</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 44</p>

<p>1 this is a position of leadership which they have to                  2 take, which can therefore lead to a view that they                  3 cannot be challenged and must be obeyed.                  4 The next barrier to reporting is the role of                  5 the community. In many close-knit religious communities                  6 where, as I have already identified, kinship, social,                  7 cultural, religious and working life are integrated                  8 together, there can be a view that safeguarding                  9 oversight outside the community is either not needed or,                  10 in fact, would be positively unhelpful.                  11 The Union of Orthodox Communities, for example,                  12 a body representing a number of Haredi organisations,                  13 describes attempts by the City of London and Hackney                  14 Children's Safeguarding Board to intervene in their                  15 community in respect of child protection as arrogant,                  16 overbearing and intrusive.                  17 We have evidence from a number of religious                  18 organisations, not just within the Jewish community, who                  19 see their community with its emphasis upon family, upon                  20 strong personal morality, upon a need to guard children                  21 against what they would consider to be the sins of                  22 the secular community in the 21st century in the                  23 strength of the need to guard children to preserve their                  24 innocence and upon their religious observance as                  25 providing a greater degree of safety than the state.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 45</p>	<p>1 Examples of this we have seen and occur in the                  2 Christian, Jehovah's Witnesses, Church of Latter Day                  3 Saints, Muslims, Sikh, Buddhist and Hindu communities.                  4 There are also sometimes both cultural and language                  5 barriers to reporting abuse. Abuse Never Becomes Us UK,                  6 a UK body which works with the Tamil community,                  7 identifies that there are no words in Tamil for child                  8 sexual abuse, which can therefore deter disclosures and                  9 dialogue. Other organisations representing South-Asian                  10 communities identify that there are no words within                  11 their identify for rape or sexual violence. There is                  12 literally no way that people can describe what has                  13 happened to them within what is often their first                  14 language.                  15 Furthermore, Abuse Never Becomes Us identifies that                  16 both within the Tamil community and other South-Asian                  17 organisations within those communities have identified                  18 that child sexual abuse and knowledge thereof is kept                  19 within a close family network which deters greater or                  20 more widespread both understanding of child sexual abuse                  21 or can perpetuate unhelpful perceptions or denials.                  22 Other religious organisations have told us that they                  23 have faith leaders who may have poor English skills and                  24 so are not able to access training. Some local                  25 authorities have taken steps to provide training in</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 46</p>
<p>1 other languages, but this is not widespread. The                  2 gurdwara in Southall, for example, saying they cannot                  3 access non-English language training for their                  4 volunteers and Granthis.                  5 The London Borough of Tower Hamlets, however, has                  6 provided guidance on safeguarding in both Bengali and                  7 Somalian to access those significant communities within                  8 their local area. It also identifies that there are                  9 a number of cultural barriers in some of the African                  10 churches which are completely autonomous and are                  11 mistrustful of authority. We must also remember that                  12 particularly in the context of the Muslim community,                  13 there is a view that reporting abuse may well fuel                  14 Islamophobia, and so fear of the reprisals which may                  15 occur from this can, in fact, prevent open discussion.                  16 Bradford Council, whose work with supplementary                  17 schools in its area and with faith groups is seen as                  18 being in the vanguard of cooperative links identifies                  19 that, within its community, senior leaders and                  20 safeguarding leads recognise that there needs to be                  21 a cultural change.                  22 The paucity of information sharing and training                  23 between local authorities and many religious                  24 organisations may be a product of general mistrust of                  25 state interference by religious organisations in their</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 47</p>	<p>1 lives.                  2 Turning next to the concepts of shame and dishonour.                  3 In some cultures, which can often reflect a number of                  4 different religious faiths -- for example, the                  5 South-Asian community, which reflects the Islamic,                  6 Christian, Hindu, Buddhist and other religious                  7 traditions, those who are survivors of child sexual                  8 abuse may see themselves, or be seen, as dishonoured.                  9 As we know, the vast majority of victims and                  10 survivors of sexual abuse feel shame and guilt                  11 irrespective of their religious views, but these                  12 feelings can be heightened if the abuse takes place in                  13 societies where the concept of honour and the concept in                  14 particular of female virginity is of central importance                  15 and provides social status and standing. Being the                  16 survivor of sexual abuse may well, in a very practical                  17 way, impact significantly upon a young women's prospect                  18 of getting married or having a family. It can also, if                  19 the abuse involves a culturally significant                  20 organisation, or a religious leader, be an even bigger                  21 source of shame. But the concept of shame is not                  22 confined to those from the South-Asian community. As                  23 Shema Koli, an organisation which works with the                  24 Orthodox Jewish community running a helpline for those                  25 who have been abused, says, abuse within this community,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 48</p>

12 (Pages 45 to 48)

<p>1 as in many others, tells us that such abuse is shrouded                  2 in stigma, fear, shame and ignorance.                  3 The need for sexual chastity and "purity" of women                  4 can lead those who have been abused to hide it for fear                  5 that it will impact both upon their marital                  6 opportunities, their standing within society and, most                  7 importantly, the standing of their wider family.                  8 Marriage and the family unit are often of central                  9 importance to these religious communities for both                  10 religious but also for wider social and cultural reasons                  11 and such organisations can be constructed to exclude                  12 anything other than the heteronormative. The Southall                  13 Black Sisters have told us that, no matter what one's                  14 ethnicity, education or class, the extended family is                  15 the central way in which many women of South-Asian                  16 extraction see themselves and so therefore can be                  17 defined by what they call the patriarchal structures of                  18 submission and subservience.                  19 For men, having been sexually abused is an even                  20 greater stigma in these sorts of settings, given that                  21 often these communities will find it almost impossible                  22 to believe that men could be the subject of abuse by                  23 other men at all.                  24 We will be hearing from a number of organisations                  25 which represent women and girls who have been subject to</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 49</p>	<p>1 sexual violence within their communities.                  2 Karma Nirvana, which runs a well-respected national                  3 helpline for women survivors of sexual abuse, forced                  4 marriage and honour killings identified that shame and                  5 dishonour compounds victims and survivors' difficulties                  6 in speaking out and that religious leaders have also                  7 identified to them that speaking out within the                  8 organisation, or without the organisation, will cause                  9 shame to that religious organisation as a whole.                  10 The Muslim Women's Network which runs a helpline for                  11 Muslim women and girls have told us of the need for                  12 transparency to be a key aspect of child protection in                  13 this concept. They also identify that the general                  14 pattern from their experience -- and they say they tend                  15 only to hear about negative practice -- is that of                  16 silence. Southall Black Sisters identify that the                  17 concepts of honour and shame are embedded within the                  18 South Asian community even in the 21st century and                  19 perpetuate what they say is a means of regulating and                  20 controlling the sexual behaviour of women. Those who                  21 transgress, they say, are seen as immoral and may well                  22 be subject to social ostracisation.                  23 These codes, they say, are not just external but are                  24 also internalised by women, thus leading to                  25 under-reporting. Southall Black Sisters has undertaken</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 50</p>
<p>1 work which identifies that young South-Asian women have                  2 three times the national rate of average -- have higher                  3 rates of suicide, which are three times the national                  4 average, and that suicide, in this context, is often                  5 linked to abusive and oppressive family and community                  6 practices which assert silence as a prerequisite for                  7 these women if subject to abuse.                  8 Sadia Hameed, who runs an organisation for women in                  9 Gloucestershire, tells us that within the Muslim                  10 community in the UK, in her view, the idea of honour for                  11 men means that they are judged against the sexual                  12 conduct of women in their immediate family, and that any                  13 breach of sexual codes by such women is seen as an                  14 assault on a man's honour or the honour of the family                  15 and so must be subject to punishment.                  16 As part of this, Ms Hameed, in the work she's done,                  17 has identified that when girls have been the subject of                  18 sexual abuse, the victim can be questioned as if she                  19 asked for it or was responsible for the sexual attack,                  20 and identifying that the reason for such sexual abuse                  21 would be the women's dress, behaviour or way she                  22 approached the man in question.                  23 In some religious organisations and societies, there                  24 is also a reluctance to discuss sex, menstruation or                  25 other aspects of relationships so that children and</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 51</p>	<p>1 young people do not know either factual information or                  2 positive information which may well keep them safe from                  3 harm. Moreover, as I have already identified, there may                  4 well simply be no language for them to use to identify                  5 their concerns.                  6 The Interlink Foundation, for example, which is                  7 a membership organisation for a number of Orthodox                  8 Jewish charities, has identified that the cultural norms                  9 for the discussion of sex within this community is                  10 different from that of secular society. Children in the                  11 most orthodox part of the Jewish community may not have                  12 any awareness of the mechanics of sex before adulthood                  13 and adults are also unlikely to discuss sexual matters,                  14 use sexual language or identify sexual practices. The                  15 value placed upon modesty and chastity is also                  16 different.                  17 Very often, in some communities -- this is in all                  18 religious communities -- all senior staff are men and,                  19 therefore, women and girls can often find it very                  20 difficult to discuss matters with those men who may well                  21 be responsible for making ultimate decisions.                  22 Strengthening Faith Institutions, from whom we will                  23 hear next week, identifies that gender inequality issues                  24 in faith management roles can be an obstacle to creating                  25 safeguarding systems, firstly, because either only men</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 52</p>

<p>1 can perform those roles within certain communities, or                  2 that child protection issues are seen as those for women                  3 and so are not given priority.                  4 There is also the fact that in some communities                  5 women, for cultural reasons, may not spend time out of                  6 the house without male family members, and therefore may                  7 well not be invited or be unable to attend seminars run,                  8 for example, in mosques. Tower Hamlets has sought to                  9 combat this, for example, by raising awareness in school                  10 settings where mothers are dropping off their children                  11 at school or during the school day in order to deliver                  12 safer parenting courses in a situation where women will                  13 feel comfortable and welcomed.                  14 The next barrier to reporting is reputational fear.                  15 There is often a desire not to report the sexual abuse                  16 for fear of the reputational damage it may cause to the                  17 organisation or larger community. Such a fear overrides                  18 concerns about justice for those who were subject to                  19 abuse. We have seen several examples of this in both                  20 the Anglican and Roman Catholic investigations.                  21 Witnesses also tell us of organisations who prefer to                  22 deal with matters themselves, identifying that they know                  23 the community better than any external force and that                  24 they can be more powerful a force for good.                  25 I have already identified that many religious</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 53</p>	<p>1 organisations have often what, historically, was a very                  2 natural aversion to being engaged with the state and to                  3 have a distrust of external organisations. Some                  4 religious organisations, and in particular new religious                  5 movements, are deliberately set up to exclude the                  6 outside world and to create a complete environment in                  7 which individuals spend all their time and to live                  8 communally. An example of this recently within the UK                  9 is the Jesus Army. We have received a witness statement                  10 from the police about their criminal investigation into                  11 this organisation called Operation Lifeboat and from                  12 Sally Hirst, chair of the Jesus Fellowship Survivors                  13 organisation, from whom we will hear tomorrow.                  14 Most individuals within the Jesus Army lived in                  15 communes with shared possessions and monies, leaders                  16 dictating all aspects of their lives, such as where they                  17 lived or whom they married. This made individuals                  18 reluctant, or unable, to report abuse for fear of                  19 repercussions.                  20 To date, four individuals from this organisation,                  21 which was very small in nature, have been convicted of                  22 sexually abusing children.                  23 There can also be concern about reporting outside                  24 the organisation because of a fear of persecution, as                  25 they are a minority group. The Jewish concept of</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 54</p>
<p>1 mesirah, which is the action of one Jew reporting the                  2 conduct of another Jew to a non-rabbinical authority                  3 under circumstances forbidden by rabbinic law have often                  4 been used, in ways which I must stress rabbis consider                  5 is not theologically correct, to state or to encourage                  6 members of the Orthodox community not to report crimes                  7 of sexual abuse against children because it would break                  8 such religious practice. The law emanated from the                  9 persecution of the Jewish community by both the Persians                  10 and the Romans, which meant that, if such reports were                  11 made, those individuals would not have a fair trial or                  12 anti-Semitism and Jewish persecution would be                  13 encouraged. In the context of the persecution of the                  14 Jewish community around the world throughout the                  15 centuries, including and ultimately ending in the Shoah,                  16 such fears were more than justifiable. There is often,                  17 however, a continuation of a suspicious of reporting to                  18 authorities now because of the previous persecution. As                  19 I have already identified, culture is intergenerational                  20 and such fears can often be retained as part of its                  21 outlook.                  22 There are also concerns that when reports have been                  23 made, police and Social Services have acted in                  24 a heavy-handed or culturally inappropriate manner                  25 without appropriately understanding and respecting the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 55</p>	<p>1 cultural and community norms present within these                  2 communities.                  3 This is not something, and the idea of not reporting                  4 out is not solely something, which is related to the                  5 Orthodox Jewish community. For example, the                  6 Jehovah's Witnesses have, or are alleged to have, a very                  7 similar rule and there are very many other groups which                  8 identify that there should not be reporting out, even if                  9 sexual abuse had taken place.                  10 It is also the case that continuing persecution                  11 around the world by a number of religious groups can be                  12 translated into the England and Wales system so that the                  13 value system developed by those groups may well lead                  14 organisations to be less open to the state in England                  15 and Wales, seeing it as something oppressive or as                  16 a continuum of the oppression which they have                  17 experienced elsewhere.                  18 An example of the reluctance of violation of those                  19 sorts of codes can lead those communities to treat                  20 individuals as ostracised or as excluded. We use as an                  21 example Mr Manny Waks of Kol v'Oz who gave evidence to                  22 the Australian Royal Commission on child sexual abuse                  23 about his abuse whilst attending a yeshiva, a religious                  24 college of study in Australia, about his ostracism from                  25 the Australian religious community and the verbal abuse</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 56</p>

<p>1 he received, and members of his family received, when he 2 reported it to the police.</p> <p>3 Mr Waks also talks in his witness statement about 4 a concept called lashon hara, which means "evil tongue" 5 within the Orthodox Jewish community, which is that, 6 unless the evidence is unequivocal, even saying that 7 somebody has perpetrated sexual abuse is a major sin.</p> <p>8 Reshet, a Jewish training organisation, identified 9 that when it first started running safeguarding 10 training, some perceived that it was more important to 11 maintain the reputation of the organisation rather than 12 directly address the welfare of the child, described by 13 some sociologists as a "holy hush".</p> <p>14 We have been told of Islamic and Christian 15 organisations which discourage the reporting of 16 allegations to secular authorities because of the fear 17 of persecution. Smaller communities where racism and 18 social alienation are present can lead to an insular 19 mind-set and a view that, even if reported, authorities 20 will not deal with it appropriately or it will be 21 manipulated into an excuse for religious, national, 22 ethnic or racial oppression.</p> <p>23 Those individuals who make up the ex-Jehovah's 24 Witness Advocates group represented by Ms Sarah Davies 25 say that those who report sexual abuse within the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 57</p>	<p>1 Jehovah's Witnesses, for example, have ties cut 2 completely with other family members and are ostracised 3 and ignored. Those who have reported abuse within the 4 Jehovah's Witness faith tell us they have been socially 5 ostracised, which can mean children not speaking to 6 parents, siblings not speaking to each other, fathers 7 not speaking to daughters. That can have a profound 8 effect on someone's life and can lead to it being very 9 difficult for someone to report sexual abuse for fear of 10 that happening to them.</p> <p>11 Again, Professor Lisa Oakley has identified that 12 within the Christian faith, the idea of unity can be 13 used as a tool to prevent disclosure, as to threaten one 14 means threatening all.</p> <p>15 The next concept and the next barrier to reporting 16 is that of forgiveness. The idea of forgiveness of 17 the abuser is also something which has emerged from the 18 evidence gathered. The concept of forgiveness of sins 19 is very strong and faith organisations have, on 20 occasions, restored known abusers to a place of power if 21 they demonstrate contrition and penance. This is often 22 in the teeth of significant opposition from the survivor 23 of the abuse or without consulting them or taking their 24 views into account. Moreover, victims are often 25 pressurised to feel that they are only acting in an</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 58</p>
<p>1 appropriately faithful way to their religion by 2 forgiving their abusers. This can be impossible and, as 3 we learnt in the Anglican investigation, is not 4 necessarily a correct theological response in the 5 Christian faith, in any event.</p> <p>6 The Jehovah's Witnesses show us an example of this 7 as a repentant abuser can, on occasions, remain an 8 active member of the congregation if they are found not 9 guilty within the internal juridical process that the 10 Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses operate or 11 if they demonstrate something called reproof.</p> <p>12 I now turn to the current oversight of child 13 protection policies and practices by religious 14 organisations. To identify, there is little to no 15 external oversight of child protection in religious 16 organisations at present. Even within religious 17 organisations, an umbrella or central body sometimes 18 provides advice or guidance to individual churches, 19 mosques, temples or gurdwaras, but this is also often 20 voluntary, and there are, in many settings, no oversight 21 of what happens within an individual religious setting 22 by any umbrella body or central force. There are no 23 child protection standards or minimum levels of 24 competence by staff or volunteers working with children 25 which must be fulfilled at present.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 59</p>	<p>1 We asked various government departments about their 2 responsibilities or oversight they have of child welfare 3 in this setting. The Department for Digital, Culture, 4 Media and Sport, which I will now call the DCMS, is 5 responsible for the administration of 6 the Charity Commission and for policies in respect of 7 young people and volunteering. They tell us that they 8 have absolutely no responsibility for setting or 9 monitoring standards of child protection and have not 10 undertaken any work in this sector.</p> <p>11 The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local 12 Government has provided some monies via the 13 Cadbury Centre for the Public Understanding of Religion 14 to provide a programme for some faith leaders on 15 a voluntary basis. The Cadbury Centre themselves 16 identify that they have no specialist expertise in child 17 protection. The training is designed to help faith 18 leaders with the many varied social challenges they 19 face, and we will be hearing about the initiative next 20 week. The impetus for this programme, however, came 21 from the government's Integrated Communities Action 22 Plan, which was about supporting faith leaders to 23 understand both the English legal system and to promote 24 shared values. It is expressly designed to engage with 25 the most conservative religious communities.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 60</p>

<p>1 The training programme, however, focuses on                  2 significantly more than just child protection, and in                  3 fact child protection is a very small part of its work.                  4 It seeks to introduce basic principles of corporate                  5 governance, such as charity law, data protection,                  6 ethics, equalities legislation, the civil law on                  7 marriage in the United Kingdom, the role of religion in                  8 public life, and there are modules for child sexual                  9 exploitation, grooming and child protection. We will                  10 hear evidence from one of the trainers on this course.                  11 Some 257 participants had registered by October 2019 for                  12 sessions and it should be identified that this                  13 particular training has not been extended to Wales.                  14 It also funds Strengthening Faith Institutions,                  15 which works with organisations not affiliated with                  16 umbrella bodies for their faith, providing consultants                  17 to provide a "health check", an audit of individual or                  18 religious organisations' policies, procedures and                  19 structures. 446 organisations have undergone such                  20 a health check to date. They also provide safeguarding                  21 training and courses which we will be hearing about and                  22 they will also be giving us some advice about what they                  23 think needs to change in the sector.                  24 The Home Office have provided us with some evidence                  25 identifying that they have a tackling exploitation and</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 61</p>	<p>1 abuse unit which manages policy on child safeguarding                  2 and victims of sexual abuse. They also operate what                  3 they call a safeguarding hub. There is a ministerial                  4 group on child sexual abuse set up in 2015 which has                  5 representatives from all government departments, but to                  6 date has not done any work on sexual abuse in religious                  7 settings. The Home Office is also, as you know, chair                  8 and panel, responsible for policy about vetting and                  9 barring those working with children.                  10 The legislative framework, however, does provide                  11 that local authorities are responsible for delivering                  12 services to vulnerable children who live in their area,                  13 and this includes investigating where a child may have                  14 suffered significant harm. Local authorities are also                  15 under a duty to make arrangements to promote                  16 co-operation with what is called in the legislation                  17 a range of other relevant partners and such other                  18 persons engaged in activities relating to children and                  19 considered to be appropriate with a view to improving                  20 the well-being of children in each local authority.                  21 Now, that's quite a mouthful. They also have to put in                  22 place arrangements to take account of the need to                  23 safeguard and promote the welfare of children when                  24 discharging their functions as local authorities, and                  25 that any services provided by anybody else to discharge</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 62</p>
<p>1 their functions also takes that into account. This duty                  2 is also owed by the police and the Clinical                  3 Commissioning Group in a local authority.                  4 Under changes arising under the Children and Social                  5 Work Act 2017, a local authority can ask a religious                  6 organisation to co-operate with them in the discharge of                  7 their child protection functions, and therefore be                  8 knitted in and be part of these local safeguarding                  9 arrangements. The information we have from local                  10 government organisations is that none of them have to                  11 date used these powers to have local churches, mosques                  12 or temples as one of their relevant safeguarding powers.                  13 There is an expectation, but no compulsion, that                  14 religious and voluntary organisations will develop                  15 policies and processes in line with the statutory                  16 guidance known as Working Together to Safeguard                  17 Children. This expectation is not legally enforceable                  18 and religious organisations are under no duty to follow                  19 that guidance or even examine it. Some religious                  20 organisations who have provided us with evidence have                  21 a very good understanding of the guidance and make                  22 reference to it; others do not mention it at all and it                  23 is not clear that they are even aware of its existence.                  24 The guidance plainly says that voluntary                  25 organisations have a very important role in child</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 63</p>	<p>1 protection and in supporting families and communities.                  2 It says that all practitioners are deemed to be subject                  3 to the same safeguarding responsibilities, whether paid                  4 or a volunteer, and the guidance clearly recommends that                  5 every organisation should have policies in place to                  6 safeguard children from harm.                  7 There is, however, as I have already identified, no                  8 responsibility at present for any religious organisation                  9 to comply with minimum standards or to have certain                  10 practices and policies or to have certain safeguarding                  11 training. This is in stark contrast to other                  12 organisations which work with children, such as schools,                  13 nurseries, fostering or adoption agencies, children's                  14 homes, statutory youth services, domiciliary care                  15 services and other agencies which provide care and                  16 support to children and young people.                  17 Many religious organisations do run schools or                  18 provide nursery care or fostering and adoption and so                  19 are used to engaging with and do conscientiously do so                  20 with statutory responsibilities in this context, but                  21 that does not carry over, necessarily, into the rest of                  22 their work.                  23 We have sought evidence from seven local authorities                  24 who have large populations of diverse religious                  25 communities about the work that they do on the ground</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 64</p>



<p>1 with religious organisations in respect of child  2 protection. They are the most likely of the ground  3 organisations to encounter religious settings on  4 a day-to-day basis, given the many and varied work that  5 they do. To summarise their evidence, some of them,  6 such as Bradford, have good links with umbrella  7 voluntary sector organisations and through them offer  8 training on safeguarding, newsletters with best  9 practice, which will often go to religious organisations  10 although not designed for them. They also sometimes  11 offer free safeguarding training for not-for-profit  12 organisations. Some local authorities have informal  13 links with individual religious organisations, though  14 some are stronger than others.</p> <p>15 For example, in Bradford, they say that they have  16 a very good relationship between the local council for  17 mosques as well as the local Anglican and Jewish  18 communities.</p> <p>19 In Liverpool, they identify that their relationships  20 have mainly within with the local Roman Catholic Church.</p> <p>21 Tower Hamlets are unusual in that they have a Muslim  22 children's safeguarding coordinator who is employed to  23 run workshops with mosques and run parenting sessions in  24 schools. This is not replicated in other local  25 authorities, as far as we can see.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 65</p>	<p>1 All local authorities have standardised child  2 protection procedures which are used by all statutory  3 bodies and other partners, which do set out how to react  4 to an allegation of abuse, how to recruit people safely,  5 how to investigate allegations, but these do not have to  6 be adopted by religious organisations, and, as we have  7 identified, often are not.</p> <p>8 We have already talked about a LADO. That person  9 has responsibility for assisting in ensuring that any  10 investigation concerning child sexual abuse and other  11 forms of abuse which concern individuals acting in  12 a position of trust with children which would clearly  13 include religious organisations are reported to the  14 local authority. Religious organisations should be  15 referring allegations of abuse to the LADO if they  16 involve their staff, religious leaders or volunteers.  17 It would seem from the policies that we have seen from  18 these religious organisations that some of them do  19 mention the LADO but many do not, and the level of  20 engagement with this valuable service varies  21 considerably.</p> <p>22 Most local authorities also recognise that children  23 in their area attend some form of supplementary  24 schooling with a faith focus. Some of those local  25 authorities provide specific advice and, as we have</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 66</p>
<p>1 already identified, some also provide support by having  2 an officer in the local authority who has that role.  3 For example, in Bradford or in Harrow.</p> <p>4 They have undertaken work, including the creation  5 alongside a group of mosques of safe spaces where  6 children can talk and receive counselling, have provided  7 training to local supplementary schools and a toolkit  8 for mosques and Muslim faith schools and the development  9 of child protection policies for faith-based settings.  10 Bradford also provides assistance with the provision of  11 DBS checks for staff in religious organisations,  12 training and behaviour management, help with policies  13 and also does work with the National Council for  14 Supplementary Education to provide an accredited  15 training programme.</p> <p>16 The London Borough of Tower Hamlets also tell us  17 they have produced a set of guidance specifically aimed  18 at African evangelical churches and have an African  19 family services coordinator for these purposes.</p> <p>20 There appears, however, to be no systematic or  21 strategic work undertaken across the country or any  22 requirement from central government that this is the  23 case. This work also does not necessarily engage all  24 religious communities and organisations, and is largely  25 dependent upon the religious organisation coming</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 67</p>	<p>1 forward.</p> <p>2 It also can, and also is, only a very small part of  3 the local authorities' many pressing requirements in  4 respect of child protection. Given there is no  5 statutory obligation to provide such services, the  6 significant rise of the number of children who are  7 looked after in England and Wales and the pressures on  8 local authorities, given cuts to noncompulsory services,  9 make the provision of assistance on a practical level  10 something which is very difficult for them to manage.</p> <p>11 We have already heard about the relatively small  12 number of referrals which have been made to local  13 authorities by religious organisations. The question  14 therefore remains as to whether all allegations are  15 being passed to the LADO and/or whether the LADO is  16 being used for advice as guidance as appropriate.</p> <p>17 The Charity Commission has a limited role in respect  18 of the oversight in respect of child protection for  19 those charities which are registered with it. There is  20 a statutory duty for every charity to safeguard the  21 welfare of its beneficiaries, ie, those who benefit from  22 the charities' actions and activities, which includes  23 keeping them safe from child sexual abuse. That  24 responsibility lies with those who are the trustees, ie,  25 those who govern the charity. However, the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 68</p>

<p>1 Charity Commission in their witness statement to us                  2 identifies that this oversight is extremely limited and                  3 it is simply to ensure that child protection                  4 responsibilities and governance are taken seriously and                  5 that there is some ability to hold the trustees to                  6 account for the actions of their charities.                  7 The commission does have what it calls                  8 a safeguarding strategy, which was updated                  9 in December 2017, which identifies that safeguarding                  10 should be a key governance priority for all charities,                  11 and that the failure of trustees to safeguard those in                  12 their care is of serious regulatory concern. However,                  13 this is not guidance to which charities must have regard                  14 under the Charities Act 2011, and so the extent to which                  15 a breach or failure to follow that guidance could give                  16 rise to compliance action is doubtful.                  17 As well as safeguarding guidance, it also provides                  18 advice and the Charity Commission recognises that over                  19 the past ten years it has developed its approach in                  20 cases of safeguarding failure, intimating that perhaps                  21 before that point in time it was not so focused upon                  22 using its powers where there have been failures. It is                  23 certainly the case that there has been a significant                  24 increase in the reports of safeguarding incidents in                  25 2018 and 2019, almost doubling from 2017/2018. This is,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 69</p>	<p>1 the Charity Commission says, probably largely as                  2 a result of the strengthened guidance that the                  3 Charity Commission issued as a result of the scandal                  4 surrounding Oxfam and other international charities.                  5 The commission's safeguarding case load has                  6 therefore risen in consequence. In 2018/2019, they                  7 opened 764 compliance cases involving safeguarding as                  8 compared with 552 during the previous year.                  9 The commission, however, has rarely used enforcement                  10 action in cases involving child protection in religious                  11 organisations. There were 98 statutory enquiries                  12 undertaken by the statutory commission as a whole                  13 between 2018 and 2019, which is a significantly greater                  14 number than there have been in the past, of which 13 had                  15 some form of safeguarding component, which can involve                  16 either adults or children. Three of those related to                  17 charities involving the Roman Catholic Church, two of                  18 them resulted to the Jehovah's Witnesses, four related                  19 to Islamic charities, two related to Christian                  20 organisations and one related to a Buddhist                  21 organisation. There is also an inquiry into an                  22 evangelical Christian group, but I must stress that not                  23 all of those investigations relate to child sexual abuse                  24 or exploitation and many of them are around general                  25 financial exploitation and abuse.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 70</p>
<p>1 The Charity Commission has no role in investigating                  2 or dealing with individual incidents of abuse, nor does                  3 it administer any legislation about protecting children.                  4 I now turn to the role of the Disclosure and Barring                  5 Service. If an individual works with children, whether                  6 on a paid or voluntary basis, and does so for more than                  7 three days in a 30-day period -- the legislation is, in                  8 fact, more complicated than that, so that's the most                  9 simplified version of it I can come up with -- then they                  10 should be subject to a check under the Disclosure and                  11 Barring Scheme as they are engaged in what the law calls                  12 regulated activity.                  13 We have evidence from the Strengthening Faith                  14 Initiatives training programme that only 37 per cent of                  15 places of worship they have encountered have up-to-date                  16 DBS checks on staff engaged in regulated activities.                  17 We have heard a lot about regulated activity in                  18 other investigations, and in particular how it excludes                  19 supervised volunteers from such checks, such that many                  20 of those who run youth groups or after-school activities                  21 would not be considered to be providing regulated                  22 activity. Furthermore, religious leaders and others                  23 with a position of responsibility within religious                  24 organisations may not fall under the legislation,                  25 despite the fact that they have considerable power over</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 71</p>	<p>1 young people and are not subject to any DBS checks. In                  2 other investigations, we have had concerns raised that                  3 this position is anomalous and wrong by the religious                  4 organisations themselves. The same has been said again                  5 by the majority of religious organisations to this                  6 inquiry who consider that the current legislative                  7 position is unsatisfactory. It should also be                  8 identified that it is not a criminal offence not to seek                  9 a DBS check. However, it is a criminal offence to                  10 employ someone in regulated activity who has been barred                  11 from working with children.                  12 Some religious organisations also say that there do                  13 not need to be any checks of their activities because                  14 children remain with their parents at all times. We                  15 will be asking in this investigation, as we have asked                  16 in others, whether or not the current legislative                  17 landscape is fit for purpose.                  18 We also asked other relevant organisations about the                  19 work that they'd done. We asked, for example, the                  20 Children's Commissioner, a body independent of central                  21 government whose role is to promote and protect the                  22 rights of all children in England. The Commissioner has                  23 considerable powers to intervene and enter into any                  24 organisation to inspect it and can undertake independent                  25 reports which can be public enquiries. She is the eyes</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 72</p>

<p>1 and ears of children in the system and a champion of 2 rights of children. However, she has undertaken to date 3 no work specifically on children within religious 4 settings. 5 There is also an All-Party Parliamentary Group on 6 Safeguarding in Faith Settings, a cross-bench 7 organisation of peers and MPs, which is working on 8 understanding what they consider to be the unique 9 safeguarding challenges of communities of faith. We 10 will be hearing from Justin Humphreys of Thirtyone:eight 11 who organises the secretariat for this All-Party 12 Parliamentary Group -- known in parliamentary shorthand 13 as an APPG -- about its work. They have very recently 14 published a paper about extending the criminal law to 15 include clerics and religious figures in positions of 16 trust. 17 In the Anglican investigation, this inquiry has 18 already made a recommendation that the criminal law 19 should be changed so that those in positions of pastoral 20 or spiritual authority should be criminalised if they 21 have sexual activity with those aged between 16 and 18. 22 The panel considers the law largely criminalises sexual 23 activity for those who work in schools, the health 24 sector or the care sector but not those working in 25 religious or other voluntary organisations. The</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 73</p>	<p>1 recommendation of the panel also reflects the view of 2 the NSPCC which has been focusing upon those in 3 positions of responsibility, particularly in sports 4 organisations, in a campaign called "Close the 5 Loophole". We will be looking again at this issue 6 within this investigation and we have asked 7 a representative for the Ministry of Justice to come and 8 give us evidence about why they have not yet decided to 9 legislate in this area. 10 There have been some attempts to consider the 11 regulation of religious organisations in the work they 12 do with children around five years ago. As part of 13 the government's counter-extremism strategy, the DfE 14 issued a consultation in 2015 about whether or not to 15 create a statutory regulatory framework for 16 out-of-school settings, and this was not just for 17 religious settings, but all of those who provided 18 voluntary or paid-for supplementary education. We 19 identified earlier how, possibly unhelpfully, the issue 20 of child protection in religious organisations over the 21 past decade has largely reflected concerns around 22 extremism rather than around other aspects of keeping 23 children safe. That consultation had an overwhelmingly 24 negative response from religious organisations. The 25 Evangelical Alliance urged parents in its churches to</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 74</p>
<p>1 respond to the consultation and provided pro forma 2 letters, the Northern Council of Mosques, which 3 represents over 400 mosques, issued a statement which 4 claimed the measures would encroach on religious freedom 5 and that this regulation would lead to a form of 6 state-sanctioned religious expression. Given this 7 concern, the Department for Education decided not to 8 act. 9 There were concerns that the burden of regulation 10 would push providers out of making provision or make 11 them too expensive. However, it is clear that the fact 12 that the consultation was focused upon counter-extremism 13 and identified that all settings would have to respect 14 fundamental British values upon registration meant that 15 potentially valuable measures about the protection of 16 children from sexual abuse and other forms of physical 17 abuse were rather lost in the hue and cry that followed. 18 Ofsted says that this consultation was a missed 19 opportunity. They say the majority of negative 20 responses concerned the aspect of consultation which 21 identified a prohibition on what was called "undesirable 22 teaching". No definition, however, was proposed of 23 this. It was this that caused the concern from 24 religious organisations as they identified that, without 25 specific definition, the scope of these terms could</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 75</p>	<p>1 either prohibit teaching on some of the beliefs of 2 mainstream religious groups or lead to straight 3 regulation of religious instruction, which they were, 4 quite understandably, unhappy about. 5 Ofsted considers that there should be some form of 6 regulation of out-of-school settings, and that what 7 should happen is that there should be better access to 8 safeguarding training and better model standards and 9 curriculum provided by the government. Ofsted proposes 10 a model of regulation for supplementary organisations 11 requiring them to register with a sector association or 12 an umbrella body -- this is both religious and 13 nonreligious organisations -- appropriate to the sort of 14 activities they will provide, who will then be 15 responsible for providing safeguarding guidance and 16 training. 17 We are, in the course of this investigation, going 18 to re-examine and ask organisations why they objected to 19 the proposed regulation and if they would object to 20 different sorts of imposition of some form of oversight 21 related to keeping children solely safe from sexual 22 abuse. 23 Whilst the government did not proceed with 24 regulation, it has issued a consultation on a voluntary 25 Code of Practice for out-of-school settings. It has, it</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 76</p>

<p>1 tells us, been collating responses to this consultation                  2 but has not yet issued any final code, despite the                  3 consultation ending in March last year.                  4 Many religious organisations have told this                  5 investigation that the voluntary code does not go far                  6 enough, and some religious organisations want some form                  7 of regulation, at the very least, to ensure that all                  8 settings vet staff adequately and to ensure training for                  9 those who work or volunteer in such organisations.                  10 The Muslim Council of Britain, for example, have                  11 identified that supplementary schools who work with                  12 children should be subject to regulation so that there                  13 are adequate checks and training in place with                  14 a register of those who provide organised classes being                  15 accessible to the public.                  16 Our focus is firmly not on religious extremism or                  17 radicalisation. In fact, it could be said that the                  18 focus upon such in the proposed statutory regulation was                  19 not right, as keeping children safe from sexual abuse is                  20 not a question of religious freedom. Every religious                  21 organisation has identified that it is wrong, immoral,                  22 sinful and against any religious belief and tenet that                  23 they hold for adults to abuse children.                  24 The DfE has also, alongside the consultation on the                  25 voluntary code, identified a series of</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 77</p>	<p>1 evidence-gathering pilot schemes mapping and trying to                  2 gather information about supplementary schooling and we                  3 have had evidence in writing from local authorities who                  4 have carried out that work and also asked the Department                  5 for Education about what these pilots can tell us.                  6 These pilots the Department for Education have                  7 identified are designed to identify where the current                  8 regulation works and the usefulness of current powers                  9 and whether the results of this can be used to identify                  10 best practice.                  11 We have sought evidence from five of                  12 the participating local authorities within this scheme                  13 as to what they do. Even if the code as written by the                  14 Department for Education is published as a helpful                  15 guidance document, it does not, of course, because it is                  16 voluntary, create any obligations upon religious                  17 organisations, and could be ignored without consequence.                  18 There is a division of view amongst those from whom                  19 we have gathered evidence as to whether or not some form                  20 of registration scheme for religious organisations that                  21 provide activities with children is desirable. However,                  22 nearly everyone agrees that some form of voluntary                  23 Kitemark scheme would be useful and such a scheme which                  24 may act as an auditing mechanism for objective review in                  25 a faith-sensitive context. There is a division as to</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 78</p>
<p>1 whether this organisation run by the government or by                  2 faith bodies themselves should be put in place. Some                  3 organisations have said that an agency independent of                  4 government, but funded by it, which would support good                  5 practice, is the way forward. Other survivor groups                  6 support some form of culturally-sensitive approach to                  7 regulation, which they suggest should be both                  8 consultative and inclusive. We will be exploring those                  9 opinions and suggestions with our witnesses at the                  10 hearing.                  11 We will also have, and have received, a number of                  12 witness statements from those who provide                  13 non-governmental voluntary provision for religious                  14 organisations, because it would be safe to say that,                  15 whilst the state doesn't provide a great deal of                  16 assistance at present, some of those organisations do.                  17 We will be hearing from Faith Associates which has                  18 provided safeguarding training to thousands of people,                  19 mainly in the Muslim community, involving supplementary                  20 schools. We have written evidence, as I have already                  21 said, from the National Society for Supplementary                  22 Education which provides a quality standards framework.                  23 We will be hearing from the NSPCC, which has worked with                  24 a number of religious organisations to run independent                  25 reviews, training and advice. And from Thirtyone:eight,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 79</p>	<p>1 which works with a very large number, but not                  2 exclusively, of Christian denominations who provide                  3 training, auditing, advice, emergency cover and internal                  4 reviews. We will also hear from Reshet, a network for                  5 Jewish youth provision, who also provides such training,                  6 support and guidance.                  7 When we talk of asking religions to engage with                  8 issues around child protection, it is expressly not                  9 around their religious teaching or belief system, but                  10 around what we consider to be basic processes and                  11 administrative practices. So, for example, we are                  12 talking about organisations having a child protection                  13 policy which is implemented, having training for                  14 volunteers and staff, having volunteers or staff who are                  15 aware of issues around how to spot abuse and who can                  16 respond appropriately to matters. Not employing people                  17 who have criminal convictions for sexual offending.                  18 Managing or supervising those employed by or working                  19 with children so they have appropriate training. Having                  20 policies that meet certain basic standards about keeping                  21 children safe. Identifying that the welfare of children                  22 is at the centre of any activity that a religion runs.                  23 Having people who are able to speak to children and                  24 young people and ensure that communications with them                  25 are written in appropriate language. Providing</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 80</p>

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<p>1 spiritual, theological, practical and psychological                  2 support for those who have been abused as children.                  3 Having processes in place to manage the risks associated                  4 with sex offenders who may wish to join the religious                  5 community or be part of the faith.                  6 We have identified that amongst the religious                  7 organisations from whom we have heard, there is a wide                  8 variety of structures as to how they manage child                  9 protection and manage themselves as a whole.                  10 Some, like the Salvation Army, have a hierarchical                  11 structure of safeguarding with a local safeguarding lead                  12 for each church and then regional and national leads.                  13 Others do not have any structures of management, with                  14 each individual place of worship being responsible for                  15 its own safeguarding. Others have no safeguarding                  16 structures at all. Most religious organisations are                  17 a group of self-sufficient and autonomous bodies who                  18 come together on occasions in some form of umbrella                  19 organisation. Some religious bodies, for example, the                  20 United Synagogue, require synagogues who wish to become                  21 members of their organisation, which is largely an                  22 umbrella organisation, to have safeguarding policies and                  23 guidance but few require compulsory training before any                  24 such affiliation.                  25 Child protection, in these circumstances, is</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 81</p>	<p>1 ultimately subject to the vagaries of local organisation                  2 and its implementation, in particular its implementation                  3 without any oversight from any other body.                  4 Moreover, whilst some religious bodies have                  5 processes for ordination or some form of religious                  6 qualifications or theological standards for those that                  7 lead, in some organisations this is not the case.                  8 Leadership can be simply the recognition by the                  9 community of their importance rather than any external                  10 accreditation. Any network or affiliation can therefore                  11 be withdrawn from without any religious, or even                  12 financial, consequences and there can be circumstances                  13 in which those individuals would not have had any form                  14 of external training in child protection at all.                  15 Most organisations have told us that they had                  16 a policy of some sort about how members of a religious                  17 community should work with children. Some have had                  18 policies in place for over 20 years, others very much                  19 more recently. Some, in fact, only put policies in                  20 place following correspondence from this investigation.                  21 Their contents vary widely in scope and their                  22 implementation is not consistent. For example, of those                  23 mosques audited by Faith Associates, a group dedicated                  24 to providing child protection expertise, they estimate                  25 from their work that 60 per cent of the mosques that</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 82</p>
<p>1 they first encountered had no policies in place.                  2 The fact that, in 2019, part of the work of                  3 the Edward Cadbury Foundation on Religious Understanding                  4 is to explain to religious organisations that there                  5 should be policies and processes for dealing with child                  6 safeguarding procedures shows that there is still                  7 a need. This is buttressed by the evidence we have been                  8 given by Strengthening Faith Initiatives. They                  9 identified that 311 of the 466 faith organisations they                  10 worked with said they had a safeguarding policy, but                  11 then, when asked to produce it, 150 either could not                  12 find them or they were out of date. What seems to be                  13 acknowledged by organisations which attend programmes                  14 like Strengthening Faith Initiatives is that they                  15 recognise the need for proper safeguarding procedures                  16 and that this is not questioned.                  17 However, policies are not always embedded within the                  18 organisational culture as they should be.                  19 Turning now to training. Some organisations have                  20 training for those in senior roles and they have                  21 a management structure which allocates somebody either                  22 on a paid or unpaid basis to be responsible for child                  23 protection. Very often, however, this training is                  24 provided in-house and not always by those with expertise                  25 of child protection. Strengthening Faith Initiatives,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 83</p>	<p>1 again, tells us that only a third of the organisations                  2 they work with have a safeguarding lead at all and many                  3 of those did not have adequate training.                  4 Even where employees have to attend training,                  5 volunteers often do not have to do so. In many                  6 religious organisations there is no systematic or                  7 compulsory training for all of those who work with                  8 children and the information we have that there are                  9 relatively few religious organisations which have                  10 compulsory training models. This does not mean that                  11 people are not committed to good practice, but that it                  12 is one priority amongst many against a group of a few                  13 volunteers who often have very many other commitments.                  14 However, the evidence we have received doesn't lead                  15 to a correlation that larger organisations have more                  16 sophisticated child protection and smaller organisations                  17 have none. For example, Triratna, a small Buddhist                  18 organisation, has safeguarding training, as do the                  19 Baha'i, the Quakers, the Church of Latter Day Saints and                  20 the Scientologists, all of which represent relatively                  21 small religious organisations in this country.                  22 Strengthening Faith Initiatives identifies that                  23 access to training is a major obstacle to the creation                  24 of what they call a robust safeguarding ecosystem.                  25 While sometimes willing, the size or language</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 84</p>

<p>1 difficulties inherent in some organisations mean they  2 cannot provide a designated safeguarding lead and the  3 rigour of compliance with safeguarding standards they  4 describe as not robust. Many local authorities to whom  5 we have spoken have identified that very few religious  6 organisations attend or use their free child protection  7 training, not seeing it as being particularly suited to  8 their organisation.</p> <p>9 The vast majority of religious organisations have  10 identified that they do know, or know of, some  11 individuals who have perpetrated child sexual abuse who  12 may well be within their congregation. A few  13 organisations have formal child protection agreements.  14 Others do not appear to have such and rely upon the  15 community knowing who these people are to either prevent  16 them attending worship or prevent them working with  17 children.</p> <p>18 A few organisations have well-funded risk  19 assessments. Others have none. All organisations,  20 however, are reliant on good communication with the  21 police and Probation Service to know if sex offenders  22 wish to worship in their setting. There is not always  23 consistent or comprehensive information sharing in  24 either direction.</p> <p>25 As we have found, it can sometimes be difficult to</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 85</p>	<p>1 identify who in the religious organisation one can and  2 should make contact with to discuss these matters.</p> <p>3 As we have identified, there is relatively little  4 external oversight of many religious organisations.  5 A large number of organisations have some internal  6 oversight of their policy and have regional and national  7 officers who provide advice, direction and management.  8 Good examples of this would be the Methodists and the  9 Baptists. A number of organisations have commissioned  10 external audits, either of their current arrangements  11 or, in some cases, non-recent issues of abuse. These  12 include the Salvation Army, the Methodists, the United  13 Reformed Church and the Baptists, all of whom have done  14 so.</p> <p>15 Some bodies are beginning to seek external reviews  16 of their behaviour in one-off cases or on a more regular  17 basis, but this still appears to be the exception rather  18 than the rule.</p> <p>19 Oversight by safeguarding professionals of any  20 religious organisation that we can find. There is no  21 routine monitoring or oversight by umbrella bodies. For  22 example, the Evangelical Alliance tell us they have no  23 oversight of the bodies who are affiliated with them and  24 the Muslim Council of Britain, which has a large number  25 of affiliates, also say they undertake no reviews,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 86</p>
<p>1 survey or monitoring in respect of child sexual abuse.</p> <p>2 There is very limited information about redress and  3 reparations in all these religious organisations. There  4 have only been a handful of cases which have resulted in  5 civil claims. Those who have brought complaints using  6 internal complaints procedures have told us that they  7 have faced obfuscation, delays and hostility. Very few  8 religious organisations who answered our questions about  9 this have counselling or therapeutic services available  10 for those who have been abused. Most rely upon pastoral  11 support from religious leaders who have had no specific  12 training themselves.</p> <p>13 There are very few whistleblowing practices. Most  14 religious organisations tell us they, in fact, have no  15 experience of someone reporting abuse to them in the  16 recent past or only in very small numbers, no more than  17 a handful in most cases. It is not clear to us whether  18 this is because abuse has not happened or because  19 individuals do not wish to report abuse to internal  20 authorities. Again, we have heard about the  21 consequences that may flow in some cases to some  22 witnesses who have reported abuse internally.</p> <p>23 The role of the statutory agency is also important.  24 Professor Oakley, who, again, has worked with many  25 religious organisations, has identified that there is</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 87</p>	<p>1 often a difficulty in religious organisations working  2 with statutory agencies. The research she has  3 undertaken has demonstrated what she calls a lack of  4 religious literacy in such agencies and a mutual  5 distrust or little understanding of religious  6 backgrounds such that there is a fear of reporting  7 matters for ill-informed judgments being made.</p> <p>8 This is further reinforced by what some religious  9 organisations have told us, believing that local  10 authorities can and do reach conclusions without  11 adequate scrutiny and providing unrealistic expectations  12 of the administrative capacities of such settings.</p> <p>13 One of the issues which obviously arises in this  14 context is whether or not religious organisations should  15 be obliged to report allegations of child sexual abuse  16 to either Social Services or the police. As we know,  17 there is no such legal duty -- and I don't think we need  18 to talk any more about mandatory reporting -- however,  19 this investigation will obviously be examining whether  20 or not it would be useful to have such within the  21 context of religious organisations in particular.</p> <p>22 One of the advantages of this investigation is that  23 many of the religious bodies we approached are not  24 solely based in the United Kingdom and have a presence  25 worldwide and so we are able to examine in what ways</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 88</p>

22 (Pages 85 to 88)

<p>1 their internal policies may be different in order to  2 reflect the mandatory reporting which exists in a number  3 of other countries.</p> <p>4 Many religious organisations have in fact told us  5 that they believe such a duty should be made compulsory  6 as do many victim and survivor groups. In particular,  7 religious organisations tell us that it could be seen as  8 a way of overcoming some of the cultural barriers  9 I identified earlier in my opening.</p> <p>10 Turning next to the question of resources, everybody  11 has told us they have some resources, but most of them  12 have told us the problem is they are volunteer led.  13 They rely on volunteers to give up their time and to  14 fund these organisations. There is often regular  15 turnover of volunteers, making it difficult to retain  16 those who have undergone training. They also identify  17 that, in some cases, many volunteers can be  18 first-generation immigrants with poor English language  19 skills and levels of literacy. For example, in  20 a gurdwara or a mosque, as they are the people who have  21 the time to commit to the religious organisation.</p> <p>22 Strengthening Faith Institutions also points out  23 that the communities which they operate within are often  24 not affiliated to large umbrella bodies, tend often to  25 be either black or from a minority ethnic community and</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 89</p>	<p>1 urban and they are often located in very  2 socioeconomically deprived parts of England. This can  3 lead to volunteers simply not having the leisure time to  4 be able to attend courses and the fees for DBS checks or  5 local authority courses can also, they say, be  6 prohibitive.</p> <p>7 To conclude, from the evidence we have received, the  8 following has emerged: there is a strong consensus that  9 those working in religious organisations want to ensure  10 that there are strong and robust child protection  11 procedures in place. The number of volunteers and the  12 fact that many organisations are exclusively volunteer  13 led causes practical and logistical problems to ensure  14 everyone has had training and that systems and processes  15 work effectively. All organisations would welcome some  16 kind of guidance as to what good child protection looks  17 like, common training or materials and guidance which  18 would be generally useful.</p> <p>19 Most organisations would also welcome some form of  20 national safeguarding standards applicable in every  21 place of worship, irrespective of any affiliation, and  22 would also find helpful sets of model policies and  23 procedures supported by clear basic guidance and a set  24 of practical requirements.</p> <p>25 People in such organisations often have very basic</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 90</p>
<p>1 questions, such as, "Can I hug a child if they are  2 upset?", for which answers would be welcome. Most  3 organisations would also welcome auditing from some form  4 of external body, providing that they understand the  5 religious context and are sensitive to it.</p> <p>6 Some organisations consider that there should be  7 a compulsory code for out-of-school settings. Others,  8 that it should be voluntary. We will therefore spend  9 time at the hearings looking at the following issues:  10 how far are the structures in place a way of effectively  11 managing child protection; are there child protection  12 policies; how often are they reviewed; how are they  13 implemented and put in place; are there local, regional  14 and national offices for larger religious organisations  15 which undertake child protection work and how do they  16 operate; how do the elders, faith leaders or senior  17 members of the organisation deal with child protection  18 and initiate change to improve practices; how far are  19 they aware of the extent of child sexual abuse within  20 their organisation; and have they taken steps to  21 identify or remedy inadequacies they have found and, if  22 not, why not; should there be a common set of basic  23 standards and, if so, what should they look like; should  24 there be some form of inspection, whether by a body  25 commissioned by the religious organisation or an outside</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 91</p>	<p>1 body of its provision for children and young people in  2 respect of child protection; could, or should, there be  3 a common set of policies, training materials or common  4 basic qualifications; and last but by no means least,  5 what does "good" look like in this context?</p> <p>6 What has been interesting is that organisations have  7 told us that our requests have led them to examine their  8 own processes and some of them have already initiated  9 changes to their policies in the light of our hearings.  10 For example, the Quakers have identified that a review  11 they undertook into past cases was deficient and so have  12 decided to undertake it again. The Sri temple in  13 Leicester, a very large and old Hindu temple there, has  14 told us it has engaged with safeguarding consultants and  15 many others have told us this has prompted them to  16 re-examine what they do at present.</p> <p>17 We thank those organisations for doing so and acting  18 in such a proactive way.</p> <p>19 I turn now very briefly to the conduct of this  20 hearing. Each of the counsel for the core participants  21 will have an opportunity to make a short statement. The  22 evidence will begin, hopefully, this afternoon with  23 a victim of sexual abuse from within the  24 Methodist Church, PR-A10, and we have published  25 a timetable which will set out the witnesses for the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 92</p>

1 rest of the week.  
 2 We also have prayer facilities which have been  
 3 organised nearby, so please speak to Ms Nicholls, the  
 4 investigation lawyer, if you need to avail yourself of  
 5 them.  
 6 Just simply to remind everyone, we do have an  
 7 anonymous witness this afternoon who does have special  
 8 measures in place, so before they testify, the hearing  
 9 room will be cleared of press and all members of  
 10 the public, who will be able to list in the annex.  
 11 I shall invite the chair and panel to rise while these  
 12 arrangements are being made. We also have several  
 13 witnesses coming to give evidence by videolink,  
 14 increasing by the day as the COVID-19 spreads, and so,  
 15 in those circumstances, we usually need to clear the  
 16 room to set up the videolink for a few minutes.  
 17 I would remind everyone that the chair has  
 18 previously made an order confirming that, whilst these  
 19 proceedings are live streamed, they are subject to  
 20 a three-minute delay. If something is said  
 21 inadvertently during these proceedings which risks  
 22 identifying someone whose identity has been protected,  
 23 I will invite the chair to halt proceedings while the  
 24 live stream is cut.  
 25 Chair, you have already made a restriction order

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1 Southall Black Sisters was founded in 1979 and over  
 2 many years has supported and advocated for black and  
 3 minority ethnic survivors of abuse, including from  
 4 within all the main South-Asian religious settings.  
 5 Sadia Hameed and Yasmin Rehman undertake similar  
 6 work based in Gloucestershire and Nottingham,  
 7 respectively.  
 8 Migdal Emunah is the leading organisation supporting  
 9 victims and survivors in the Jewish community and its  
 10 chief executive, Yehudis Goldsobel, contributed to your  
 11 mandatory reporting seminar.  
 12 Dr Lisa Oakley is a respected academic who has  
 13 researched abuse in Christian churches from a survivor  
 14 perspective.  
 15 Finally, the Interfaith Alliance campaigns to expose  
 16 sexual abuse, bullying and discrimination in faith  
 17 institutions.  
 18 Our clients bring to this inquiry a profound  
 19 knowledge of the victim and survivor experience and the  
 20 changes necessary to safeguard children. In this  
 21 opening, I want to highlight some issues which we urge  
 22 you to keep in mind as you hear the evidence.  
 23 Firstly, chair, our clients welcome this  
 24 investigation, which is one of the very few public  
 25 hearings to be held on this subject either in this

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1 preventing the publication or onward disclosure of any  
 2 details which may be capable of identifying anyone whose  
 3 identity is so protected but, in those circumstances,  
 4 I will remind everyone again of this.  
 5 Chair, we will now hear from the following  
 6 representatives: Mr Scorer, on behalf of a range of core  
 7 participants; then Mr Barker; then Mr Cervenka, then  
 8 Mr Brady; then Ms Jefferson; then Ms Woods; then  
 9 Mr Athanasiou; and then Mr Humphreys. I now turn to  
 10 Mr Scorer, who I believe wishes to speak for around  
 11 20 minutes. That will push our lunch break back  
 12 slightly. Chair, I don't know whether you would rather  
 13 break now and have a slightly earlier lunch or hear from  
 14 Scorer and then have lunch as normal?  
 15 THE CHAIR: No, we will hear from Mr Scorer before the  
 16 break.  
 17 Opening statement by MR SCORER  
 18 MR SCORER: Thank you, chair. Ms Harrison and I represent  
 19 seven organisations and individuals who work with and  
 20 advocate for victims and survivors of abuse in many of  
 21 the settings being examined in this hearing.  
 22 Lloyd Evans is a campaigner and documentary maker who  
 23 previously served as an elder in the Jehovah's Witnesses  
 24 but now works on behalf of those who are challenging  
 25 some of the practices of that church.

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1 country or internationally. Over the past few decades,  
 2 numerous inquiries have examined abuse in the Catholic  
 3 and Anglican Churches, and rightly so. There has been  
 4 some public investigation, albeit nothing like enough,  
 5 of abuse scandals in the Jehovah's Witnesses, but for  
 6 various reasons, including political sensitivity, child  
 7 sexual abuse in many minority religious settings has  
 8 largely been ignored. The Australian Royal Commission  
 9 touched on this issue briefly but the reality is that  
 10 for far too long the authorities have marked this issue  
 11 down as too sensitive or too difficult to grapple with  
 12 properly. In some cases, the authorities have ducked  
 13 the subject for fear of provoking social tensions or  
 14 stoking discrimination. As a result, victims and  
 15 survivors in minority religious communities have been  
 16 silenced and their abusers, in some cases, given  
 17 impunity. Silenced not only by their own communities  
 18 and religious institutions but also by the state's  
 19 reluctance to tread in this territory.  
 20 My clients have fought hard for many years against  
 21 this wall of silence and have fought to open a space  
 22 where victims and survivors can be heard, so they  
 23 welcome the opportunity provided by this hearing.  
 24 At long last, the reality of what it means to be  
 25 a victim of abuse in a Jewish, a Muslim, a Hindu, a Sikh

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<p>1 or a Jehovah's Witnesses setting might be glimpsed and 2 maybe even addressed, so this is very welcome.</p> <p>3 However, by the same token, if this hearing is to 4 have real and lasting value, it can only be the start of 5 a much deeper process of scrutiny. You have only two 6 weeks in which to examine a large number of institutions 7 and settings. Inevitably, you can only scratch the 8 surface. In this hearing, we have no disclosure of 9 individual case files and, indeed, no time to 10 interrogate the detail of individual cases. We have 11 none of the auditing of files by independent 12 safeguarding experts which you commissioned at the 13 Catholic and Anglican hearings. As you know, it was 14 only -- in those hearings, it was only through forensic 15 examination of individual cases that you uncovered the 16 very big gap between rhetoric and reality on child 17 protection.</p> <p>18 In this hearing, you have many statements from 19 religious organisations asserting that everything is 20 basically fine. They have it all in hand and many have 21 seen no allegations anyway.</p> <p>22 Of course you will do what you can to scrutinise 23 these claims, but time is short. So this has to be the 24 start of a much deeper process of scrutiny. There can 25 be nothing worse for survivors than for this space to be</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 97</p>	<p>1 opened up briefly only for the door to be shut in their 2 faces once again. We will return to this in closing, 3 but a key part of what you need to do following these 4 hearings is to put in place mechanisms by which the 5 scrutiny and oversight that you are starting here can be 6 continued into the future. Without that, we say this 7 exercise will ultimately have little value.</p> <p>8 Secondly, chair, as you examine the evidence over 9 the next two weeks, you might be tempted to draw on your 10 experience of religion and abuse in the Catholic and 11 Anglican hearings. Much of that experience will 12 certainly be relevant and there will be many parallels, 13 but we also ask you to keep in mind some important 14 differences between the Catholic and Anglican churches 15 of today and many of the settings under scrutiny here. 16 For one thing, 40 years of public scandal has forced the 17 Catholic and Anglican churches to admit they have 18 a problem of child sex abuse. No current Catholic or 19 Anglican leader would come before this inquiry now and 20 seriously try to maintain that clerical sex abuse 21 scandals had never happened. But in some, if not many, 22 of the settings here, there is no such admission. 23 Indeed, there is clearly a deep reluctance on the part 24 of many religious leaders to admit that they even have 25 a problem at all.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 98</p>
<p>1 Mr Gillies on behalf of the Jehovah's Witnesses 2 offers no indication of any problem whatsoever in 3 a religious community that accounted for the third 4 highest number of religious victims coming forward to 5 your Truth Project. Other organisations suggest that, 6 as they have no direct interface with children, they 7 have no role to play in promoting safeguarding, even 8 though many claim at the same time to be umbrella bodies 9 with immense outreach and also to claim leadership of 10 their communities at the public table.</p> <p>11 Yet other organisations try to tell you in their 12 statements that the very religiosity of their 13 communities effectively immunises them from child sexual 14 abuse. As we heard, the witnesses for the Mosques and 15 Imams National Advisory Board maintains that because of 16 the Muslim community's strong religious emphasis, sexual 17 abuse is limited, if not rare, within that community.</p> <p>18 Mr Baumgarten, on behalf of the Union of Hebrew 19 Congregations, says the culture of the Haredi Jewish 20 community means the incidence of child abuse is lower in 21 that community than elsewhere. He cites factors such as 22 a strong religious faith, what he calls a chaste culture 23 and the segregation of men and women as reducing abuse. 24 Although he also acknowledges there is no research 25 evidence to support this.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 99</p>	<p>1 Chair, we say that these claims that religiosity 2 reduces abuse are simply not credible. They contradict 3 everything we know about child sexual abuse and its 4 prevalence, including the findings from your 5 Truth Project and the evidence of those who work with 6 survivors.</p> <p>7 What they illustrate, however, we say, is 8 a deep-seated denial and taboo around abuse which 9 permeates many of the settings being examined in these 10 hearings. Some of the groups you are dealing with here 11 believe fundamentally that child abuse is not really 12 a problem for them.</p> <p>13 This denial and disbelief has significant 14 consequences for children. It means that even where 15 safeguarding policies are adopted, they may not protect 16 children but simply give the appearance of compliance so 17 as to shield the organisation from criticism or 18 scrutiny.</p> <p>19 It may mean that safeguarding policies can be 20 ignored or not implemented effectively on the ground. 21 This is exactly what we saw in the recent Lancashire 22 case concerning the Jehovah's Witnesses. The judge in 23 that case looked at the safeguarding guidance published 24 by the Witness leadership in 2013 and 2018. The judge 25 found that this published guidance was not followed by</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 100</p>

<p>1 senior figures in the congregation. The judge 2 concluded: 3 "The policy documents are ones that seem to be 4 produced for public consumption but not to be effective 5 to protect children", something which the judge 6 described as deeply troubling. 7 Where organisations basically don't think they have 8 a problem, this has implications across the whole 9 process of child protection. It means that these 10 organisations are likely to respond to complaints of 11 sexual abuse either with blanket denial or, more subtly, 12 by discouraging and dissuading victims from reporting to 13 the statutory authorities. It means that little thought 14 will be given to the accessibility of safeguarding 15 policies and the extent to which they are really known 16 about and understood within congregations and 17 communities. It means that victims who do choose to 18 report are unlikely to get the help and support they 19 need. Indeed, this is often deliberately withheld so 20 that a victim who proceeds with a complaint is left to 21 face the process isolated and alone. 22 It means that victims also will be denied redress. 23 Look at the experience of PR-A5. To get reparation 24 for serious abuse, she had to fight a legal case against 25 The Watchtower all the way to the Court of Appeal. Even</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 101</p>	<p>1 though the court found The Watchtower responsible for 2 her abuse, she never received a full public apology from 3 the Jehovah's Witnesses leadership. This treatment of 4 a victim has its origins in the organisation refusing to 5 accept it has a problem in the first place. 6 Chair, a second key point is that in many of 7 the settings in this hearing, the reach of religion, 8 both its formal and informal reach into communities, and 9 its power and authority over those communities, is much 10 greater than in the present-day Catholic and Anglican 11 Churches. The social status, power and influence of 12 the imam or the ultra-Orthodox rabbi or the elder in the 13 Jehovah's Witnesses is comparable to that of 14 the Catholic priest in a devout Catholic community 15 100 years ago. Religious authority figures and 16 religious institutions in these settings exercise power 17 over many, if not all, aspects of people's lives. This 18 is the reality. Of course, little of this may be 19 visible in many of the statements submitted for this 20 hearing. To take just one example, the evidence from 21 Orthodox Jewish organisations talks about the role of 22 Beth Din, the Jewish religious courts. Some of that 23 evidence purports to set out the jurisdiction of 24 the Beth Din and the matters in respect of which it 25 issues rulings. It is suggested the Beth Din would have</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 102</p>
<p>1 little or no role in issues to do with child abuse. 2 As a matter of formal jurisdiction, that may be 3 true. But as Ms Goldsobel can confirm, in reality, in 4 Orthodox and especially ultra-Orthodox Jewish 5 communities the Beth Din and their judges involve 6 themselves day-to-day in a vast range of community 7 issues which fall outside their formal jurisdiction. 8 This certainly includes allegations of child abuse and 9 how to handle them. 10 But this power is exercised informally, under the 11 table, as it were, rather than in the formal legal 12 proceedings of the religious court. 13 Chair, just on the subject of evidence from Jewish 14 organisations, on behalf of our client Migdal Emunah, we 15 want to put on record our concern that you are not going 16 to hear oral evidence from Shema Koli and 17 Chabad Lubavitch. Our concern is that, because of that, 18 there won't be an opportunity to the assertions made in 19 their statements and, therefore, the full extent of 20 the failure to protect children across Orthodox and 21 ultra-Orthodox Jewish communities may remain hidden. We 22 understand Mr Rabson is unable to speak for Shema Koli 23 in this inquiry due to the disciplinary proceedings 24 against him by his professional body. However, to our 25 client's knowledge, he continues to act as</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 103</p>	<p>1 a spokesperson for Shema Koli within the community. So 2 we put on record our concerns about that. 3 Chair, to return to my central point, in practice, 4 in many of the settings you are examining in this 5 hearing, religious power and authority can be 6 all-encompassing. It permeates many aspects of daily 7 life. In the Church of England, they talk about the 8 Sunday Anglican who goes to church on Sunday but leads 9 an entirely secularised existence for the rest of 10 the week. But in many ultra-Orthodox Jewish or 11 conservative Muslim or Jehovah's Witnesses settings 12 religious authority is ever present. As Pragna Patel of 13 Southall Black Sisters says of South-Asian communities: 14 "The boundaries between community and religion are 15 deeply interconnected and, therefore, blurred." 16 This has huge implications for child protection. 17 For one thing, the current definition of regulated 18 activities fails to capture the full range of formal and 19 informal activities in which religious groups are 20 involved in some communities and this needs to be 21 addressed. 22 Also, chair, the all-encompassing nature of 23 religious authority is key because of the way it can 24 silence those who were abused. As Pragna Patel 25 explains, religion in South-Asian communities operates</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 104</p>

<p>1 through social ties within which religious personnel are 2 deeply embedded and enjoy special status. This gives 3 the abuser not just access to victims, but the power and 4 connections to silence them. 5 As Migdal Emunah explained, victims of abuse in 6 ultra-Orthodox Jewish communities are expected to report 7 to the rabbi first and then to the secular authorities 8 only if the rabbi so decides. So religious leaders 9 operate as the arbiters of permissible responses. 10 In this environment, to question religious power, to 11 challenge it, is to risk becoming a nonperson. 12 Sometimes this is done formally by the religious group, 13 as with shunning and disfellowshipping in the Jehovah's 14 Witnesses, sometimes, as in South-Asian communities, it 15 operates through the concepts of honour and shame 16 whereby women who challenge patriarchal religious 17 authority risk ostracisation and violence. But by 18 challenging, by pointing out the problem, you become the 19 problem. 20 A third and related factor is that in the settings 21 under examination in this hearing, communities can be 22 relatively closed and isolated from the secular world. 23 The Catholic and Anglican Churches are rightly 24 criticised for their failings on sexual abuse, but those 25 churches, at least today, are much more integrated into</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 105</p>	<p>1 wider society than many of the organisations you are 2 examining now and this has significant implications for 3 child protection. 4 To take just one example, in the Catholic Church of 5 today, a Diocesan Safeguarding Commission will typically 6 include professionals with experience in secular 7 organisations like the police, social work, teaching and 8 law, a commission might include non-Catholics. By 9 contrast, when you think about the Jehovah's Witnesses, 10 for example, the idea of a circuit or region of that 11 church having a Safeguarding Commission staffed by 12 secular professionals is totally inconceivable. It 13 wouldn't happen, because the Jehovah's Witnesses' 14 leadership regards the external world, the secular 15 world, as corrupt and evil and not as a source of useful 16 guidance and expertise. The Jehovah's Witnesses are, of 17 course, entitled to hold the beliefs they do, but it has 18 to be recognised that this belief system has important 19 implications for child protection. 20 It means that in many of the settings you are 21 examining, secular expertise and child protection norms 22 will not readily be welcomed voluntarily. They will 23 have to be brought in from outside and compliance 24 monitored from outside. 25 Chair, because this is a secular inquiry, some</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 106</p>
<p>1 religious groups appearing before you may also tend to 2 play down the extent of their resistance to outside 3 expertise and influence. Some may seek to persuade you 4 they now essentially embrace secular norms around child 5 protection, but we urge you to be very cautious in 6 accepting assurances about this. 7 To give one example, as Ms Goldsobel highlights, and 8 as we heard earlier, Judaism has two concepts, lashon 9 hara and mesirah, which, if interpreted conservatively, 10 can impact on the delivery of child protection. For 11 entirely understandable historical reasons, these 12 concepts are deeply embedded in some Orthodox and 13 ultra-Orthodox communities. A key question is the 14 extent to which these concepts are influencing behaviour 15 now. 16 Some witnesses from the various Jewish religious 17 groupings claim these concepts have now been officially 18 disavowed by rabbinical authority. However, from 19 experience of working with victims, Migdal Emunah 20 question whether that is really the case. If it is the 21 case, where are the documents to prove it? When and how 22 were they disseminated? What steps have really been 23 taken to ensure that the community understands that 24 age-old rules should no longer be observed? Where 25 particular modes of thought and behaviour are deeply</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 107</p>	<p>1 engrained, it takes a correspondingly forceful push to 2 dislodge them. Whether that has really happened is 3 a good measure of how serious an organisation is about 4 change. 5 Similarly, you will have heard about the two-witness 6 rule which operates in the Jehovah's Witnesses and in 7 some fundamentalist Christian churches, the rule that 8 two witnesses are required for a finding of abuse. The 9 Jehovah's Witnesses leadership denies this rule inhibits 10 the reporting of allegations to the statutory 11 authorities. We dispute that and we urge you to probe 12 this point very carefully. 13 But in any event, as their counsel Mr Brady alluded 14 to in his remarks in the first preliminary hearing, it 15 clearly does influence how the Jehovah's Witnesses deal 16 with the question of whether those accused of abuse 17 should have any continuing role in their congregations. 18 So, for internal purposes, the two-witness rule still 19 operates as the overarching principle. We urge you to 20 explore what that means in practice. 21 We urge you to be very cautious about accepting 22 claims of change and we urge you to keep in mind that if 23 certain ideas which are deeply engrained in religious 24 settings inhibit reporting to the authorities, then the 25 only way to overcome this is likely to be through</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 108</p>

<p>1 mandatory reporting, and, of course, by taking away  2 individual discretion over whether to report mandatory  3 reporting protects individuals who do seek to report.  4 Finally, chair, I want to say something about the  5 central issue for this hearing, which is whether or not  6 religious bodies are going to carry on self-regulating,  7 whether, in terminology we have heard before, they are  8 allowed to continue "marking their own homework". We  9 say that the evidence from Catholic and Anglican  10 hearings is very clear: self-regulation doesn't work.  11 In this hearing, you won't have the opportunity to  12 examine individual cases forensically, so we understand  13 that you may be hesitant about drawing definitive  14 conclusions about handling of cases in any particular  15 setting.  16 Of course, you will also, and rightly, hear examples  17 of good practice.  18 But as you hear the evidence, we urge you to stand  19 back and take a commonsense view. Many of the groups  20 submitting statements for this hearing say they have few  21 or no allegations. That in itself ought to ring major  22 alarm bells. So should the assertion that religious  23 settings are less likely to experience abuse. Most of  24 all, in considering the issue of regulation, we urge you  25 to heed the voices of victims and survivors and their</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 109</p>	<p>1 advocates. Organisations like Migdal Emunah, women's  2 advocates like Southall Black Sisters, Sadia Hameed and,  3 indeed, the Muslim Women's Network all know from their  4 own personal and professional experience what these  5 settings look like from the inside. They don't agree on  6 everything but they are unanimous in urging an end to  7 self-regulation. We urge you to consider those views  8 very carefully because they come from deep knowledge of  9 the survivor experience and what things really look like  10 on the ground.  11 Chair, to finish, we also urge you to treat with  12 scepticism arguments for self-regulation based on  13 religious freedom. Some of our clients are religious,  14 some are not. All of them care about religious freedom  15 and believe that it matters in a free society. None of  16 our clients want the state to dictate what people can  17 believe. But, as you know, religious freedom is not an  18 absolute right. It can be legitimately abridged to  19 protect the rights and freedoms of others and there are  20 few rights and freedoms more important than the right of  21 children to be free of sexual abuse.  22 Where children are at risk, the state has  23 a legitimate right to require action to protect them.  24 Most institutions in wider society now expect to be held  25 accountable and particularly in regard to safeguarding.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 110</p>
<p>1 Registration of those undertaking relevant activities  2 and external oversight of safeguarding is now the norm  3 in wider society. Nobody seriously thinks that it  4 imperils our freedom. On the contrary, it exists  5 precisely in order to protect the rights and freedoms of  6 children.  7 Religion cannot be treated differently to any other  8 part of society. Indeed, there are many people within  9 religious settings who care about children and don't  10 want religion to be given a free pass on this either.  11 So we say, chair, that pleas for religious freedom in  12 this context are really pleas for religious  13 exceptionalism, self-interest masquerading as principle.  14 Those pleas should be rejected. Chair, those are our  15 opening submissions.  16 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Scorer. We will now rise and  17 return at 2.10 pm.  18 MS SCOLDING: Thank you very much, chair.  19 (1.07 pm)  20 (The short adjournment)  21 (2.10 pm)  22 MS SCOLDING: Chair, just to indicate a very brief change in  23 the order of who is speaking this afternoon. We are  24 going to hear from Mr Barker and then Mr Cervenka, but  25 then, after that, instead of hearing from Mr Brady, we</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 111</p>	<p>1 are going to hear from Mr Athanasiou first and then from  2 Mr Brady, so just to let you know. Thank you very much.  3 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Mr Barker?  4 Opening statement by MR BARKER  5 MR BARKER: Thank you, chair. I appear on behalf of  6 the Ex-Jehovah's Witness Advocates Opposing Crimes  7 Against Children, who I will refer to as "the group" in  8 this opening statement.  9 Chair, yourself, the panel and all of us are here  10 today because there is a justifiable concern that  11 children within religious organisations are not being  12 properly protected from the risk of child sexual abuse.  13 This risk is not hypothetical, it is not fanciful,  14 it is real. The Truth Project's report confirms this  15 risk still exists in religious settings in the UK and it  16 is the job of this inquiry to take steps to help correct  17 this.  18 So how can you do this? It sounds like a daunting  19 task and, indeed, it is. This inquiry is well placed  20 over the next two weeks to take steps in the right  21 direction. But the group urges you to not be  22 misdirected by claims from the Jehovah's Witness  23 organisation that it does not have an ongoing issue with  24 child sexual abuse. The Truth Project's report in and  25 of itself shows that this is not the case.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 112</p>

<p>1 You need to look past what is simply written down.                  2 You need to examine how policies work in practice and                  3 how the effectiveness of those policies is affected by                  4 what is unofficial. You cannot just accept, because an                  5 organisation abhors child abuse, that it is taking every                  6 possible step available to it to help protect children                  7 from that risk.                  8 The inquiry has appointed the group as core                  9 participants to these hearings because they can provide                  10 that insight into what is unofficial. It can help the                  11 inquiry look past the well-constructed exterior and                  12 examine what actually presents a risk to children within                  13 the Jehovah's Witness organisation today.                  14 Why is the group uniquely placed to assist the                  15 inquiry in this way? Because members of the group have                  16 been failed by the Jehovah's Witness organisation. Some                  17 have been sexually abused themselves as children when                  18 members, and some have children who have been sexually                  19 abused. Some have been subjected to the two-witness                  20 rule, some have been shunned and some have family                  21 members who have been broken by the practice of                  22 shunning. All of the members of the group are able to                  23 provide this inquiry with a true insight into                  24 shortcomings which continue to place children at risk.                  25 The group has done this through its two witness</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 113</p>	<p>1 statements and the three personal statements exhibited                  2 to that witness statement. We must not lose sight of                  3 the fact that this inquiry is for survivors of childhood                  4 sexual abuse, to be heard and to take steps to ensure                  5 that this does not occur again. To this end, I thank                  6 PR-A39, PR-A40, PR-H14 and Sarah Davies for their                  7 invaluable contributions. These witnesses have                  8 disclosed their own sexual abuse to help you understand                  9 the cultural and systemic issues within the Jehovah's                  10 Witness organisation which failed them.                  11 Today we must ask ourselves why are we here? The                  12 reason is because something has gone gravely wrong.                  13 Children have been sexually abused in religious                  14 organisations and this abuse was preventable. If proper                  15 safeguarding was in place, we would not be here today.                  16 If every allegation of child sexual abuse was taken to                  17 the police, we might be a little bit more assured. But                  18 that is not the case, and we must not shy away from that                  19 fact.                  20 The inquiry will investigate, as part of these                  21 hearings, the child safeguarding policies in relation to                  22 a number of religious organisations in order to                  23 determine whether those are adequate to protect children                  24 going forward.                  25 In order to do so, the inquiry must not lose sight</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 114</p>
<p>1 of the fact the true inhibitors to proper safeguarding                  2 are not necessarily apparent on the face of policy                  3 documents, but they permeate an organisation through                  4 culture.                  5 In the group's view, there are four fundamental                  6 cultural issues within the Jehovah's Witness                  7 organisation which affect child protection, and those                  8 are: one, members are dissuaded from even reporting the                  9 fact that they were sexually abused for fear of being                  10 disbelieved, shunned, blamed or scrutinised by outdated                  11 biblical standards as part of the scriptural                  12 investigation, such as the two-witness rule which we                  13 have already about today; two, elders are instructed                  14 that their primary concern is in maintaining the                  15 sanctity of God's name, and this, together with                  16 a longstanding preference to protect the reputation of                  17 the congregation, the faith and Jehovah deprioritises                  18 the proper handling of an allegation of child sexual                  19 abuse. The Lancashire case is a recent and troubling                  20 example of this.                  21 Three, an elder's advice to a member to leave                  22 matters in Jehovah's hands, whether communicated                  23 directly or indirectly, has a profound and lasting                  24 effect on that member, such that it will very often                  25 result in them not taking that report to the police and</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 115</p>	<p>1 leaving matters to be dealt with scripturally and                  2 internally.                  3 And, four, the Jehovah's Witness organisation                  4 considers itself separate from secular laws and the                  5 secular world and the secular world. Why else would it                  6 frequently refer to secular laws as "Caesar's laws" and                  7 instruct elders to comply with secular laws when they do                  8 not conflict with God's laws. The Bible is not                  9 a handbook for safeguarding. Proper safeguarding                  10 training is not a series of biblical quotes, and an                  11 organisation which refuses to engage with secular                  12 authorities to better their own practices is not taking                  13 this risk seriously enough.                  14 The inquiry must be open to these cultural issues                  15 which prevent a survivor reporting their abuse to the                  16 police, because these do exist and it does affect child                  17 protection in an ongoing and ascertainable way. The                  18 abuser may offend again.                  19 Finally, the inquiry must look past mere assertions                  20 and assess how written policies, procedures and                  21 communications affect child protection in practice. You                  22 must critically examine the CCJW's position that                  23 safeguarding and the scriptural investigation are                  24 separate and distinct. This is simply not the case. In                  25 the absence of a mandatory report to authorities to</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 116</p>

1 properly deal with an allegation of child sexual abuse,  
 2 the complaint is subject to the two-witness rule. If  
 3 the allegation is not established, which it rarely will  
 4 be if it is subject to the two-witness rule, an  
 5 individual who might pose a risk to children is left in  
 6 the congregation and in the community without trained  
 7 officers having considered the merit of that allegation  
 8 or the ongoing risk that person poses.

9 To say these practices are not related in and of  
 10 itself portrays a serious misunderstanding of proper  
 11 child protection. It is not done in silos, it must be  
 12 all-encompassing.

13 You need to look into the deflection of  
 14 responsibility for safeguarding to parents and refer to  
 15 your own source material which confirms this is not good  
 16 practice.

17 If the CCJW's position on these issues is simply  
 18 accepted and not critically examined, it will leave  
 19 a void where risks to children continue to grow. If the  
 20 inquiry looks past what is simply written down on paper  
 21 and draws conclusions from practical examples of  
 22 safeguarding failings within the Jehovah's Witness  
 23 organisation and makes recommendations in order to  
 24 correct these failings, you have a real opportunity to  
 25 make a difference and to better protect children in the

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1 addresses child sexual abuse in the Jewish community  
 2 worldwide, irrespective of geography or demography. As  
 3 such, my client is able to draw on the lessons learnt  
 4 elsewhere and contextualise local efforts.

5 Although Mr Waks is now primarily based in Israel,  
 6 his work takes him to Jewish communities across the  
 7 world, including the United States, Europe,  
 8 South America, and, indeed, Australia where he was one  
 9 of the driving forces behind the Royal Commission into  
 10 Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

11 He is no stranger to the Jewish community in the UK,  
 12 having held multiple public events here, worked with  
 13 local victims and survivors and collaborated with  
 14 similar UK organisations such as Migdal Emunah. In  
 15 fact, Mr Waks wrote to the inquiry in 2016 encouraging  
 16 it to launch an investigation into the UK Jewish  
 17 community.

18 The inquiry will have to consider a wide spectrum of  
 19 different strands of Judaism in the coming days. They  
 20 each have their own stance on many of the issues  
 21 relevant to tackling child sexual abuse, but we submit  
 22 none of them have the ability or willingness to  
 23 competently, robustly and independently process  
 24 allegations of child sexual abuse, provide specialised  
 25 support to those impacted by the abuse or prevent child

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1 Jehovah's Witness organisation going forward.  
 2 The group would like to thank the inquiry for the  
 3 opportunity to participate in these hearings and, of  
 4 course, offer any kind of assistance necessary going  
 5 forward. Thank you.

6 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Barker. Mr Cervenka?  
 7 Opening statement by MR CERVENKA

8 MR CERVENKA: Good afternoon, chair and panel. My name is  
 9 Honza Cervenka and I'm an associate of AO Advocates and  
 10 appear on behalf of Kol v'Oz and its chief executive  
 11 officer, Mr Manny Waks, a core participant in this  
 12 inquiry. To my left are Julie Taberer and  
 13 Shannon Moore, my colleagues at AO Advocates. My client  
 14 is a survivor of child sexual abuse at a Chabad Yeshivah  
 15 Centre in Melbourne, Australia -- when Mr Waks went  
 16 public about the sexual abuse he had suffered, he and  
 17 his ultra-Orthodox Jewish family were shunned and  
 18 intimidated by their community. They were ultimately  
 19 driven out of Australia and relocated to Israel. There,  
 20 my client founded Kol v'Oz, an organisation whose  
 21 mission is to combat child sexual abuse in the global  
 22 Jewish community by educating all stakeholders,  
 23 including local congregations and their leaders, about  
 24 its pervasive and cancerous nature.

25 Kol v'Oz is the only Jewish organisation that

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1 sexual abuse from happening in the first place.  
 2 Indeed, the witness statements submitted on behalf  
 3 of the Jewish organisations speak of very few, if any,  
 4 cases of child sexual abuse reported to them. How can  
 5 one square the witness statement on behalf of  
 6 the Shema Koli helpline which states they have fielded  
 7 some 800 calls regarding child sexual abuse in the past  
 8 seven years with, for example, the witness statement on  
 9 behalf of the S&P Sephardi Community, saying they have  
 10 had no reported or recorded allegations of child sexual  
 11 abuse in the past ten years, or the identical assertion  
 12 on behalf of the Interlink Foundation. Calls to  
 13 Shema Koli are anonymous and so cannot be tracked to  
 14 a specific community, but the lack of corresponding data  
 15 from the Jewish organisations is highly alarming.

16 The inquiry may wish to consider whether Jewish  
 17 organisations in fact want to know of allegations of  
 18 child sexual abuse within their communities. In my  
 19 client's view, they often do not, preferring to be seen  
 20 as doing the right thing instead of actually doing it.  
 21 We ask the inquiry to look beyond the published  
 22 policies, DBS checks and appointments of safeguarding  
 23 officers and examine the reality that victims of child  
 24 sexual abuse face in their community.

25 The reality seems laced with a heavy dose of

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<p>1 naivety. Some in the Jewish community believe that                  2 rabbis can do no wrong or that the presence of multiple                  3 adults at a youth retreat, bar mitzvah classes or                  4 mikvaot ritual baths act as effective deterrents against                  5 child sexual abuse. We submit that evidence disproves                  6 these beliefs and research shows that child sexual abuse                  7 often occurs exactly in those presumably safe                  8 environments.                  9 We broadly agree with Shema Koli that child sexual                  10 abuse often goes unreported for reasons listed in                  11 paragraph 29 of their witness statement. Many of                  12 the victims who do decide to speak up first approach                  13 their rabbi, either out of custom or because of mesirah,                  14 a religious law which prohibits informing external                  15 authorities, about another member of the community.                  16 Not every rabbi will involve mesirah quite so                  17 dogmatically as the rabbi in channel 4's documentary,                  18 "Britain's Hidden Child Abuse", but the truth remains                  19 that rabbis enjoy tremendous authority and limited                  20 oversight in Jewish communities. In some strands,                  21 including every ultra-Orthodox one, all matters of                  22 life's minutiae are consulted with the rabbis. Many                  23 come to them for advice as victims or when they learn,                  24 suspect or worry that child sexual abuse is taking                  25 place. This, coupled with the common practice within</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 121</p>	<p>1 many Orthodox Jewish communities to avoid or limit                  2 record keeping, is highly problematic and enables the                  3 all too predictable practice of moving perpetrators from                  4 one assignment to another, abusing more and more                  5 children along the way.                  6 Unfortunately, many victims of child sexual abuse                  7 who have come forward publicly, like my client, have                  8 found the naivety quickly evolved into anger because                  9 they were seen as stoking anti-Semitism or speaking ill                  10 of another member of the community in violation of                  11 mesirah and lashon hara. The fear of revictimisation                  12 and stigmatisation is a powerful and dangerous silencer                  13 of victims.                  14 When Jewish leaders do make stands against child                  15 sexual abuse, they often just pay lip service to the                  16 cause. As a particularly grave example,                  17 Marie van der Zyl, president of the Jewish Board of                  18 Deputies, first supported Kol v'Oz and Migdal Emunah in                  19 their fight against child sexual abuse in the Jewish                  20 community only to then fail to criticise Chabad UK when                  21 it publicly honoured Mendy Levy, a convicted sex                  22 offender, because he had donated a Torah scroll.                  23 Although the gift was later rejected, it was so only                  24 because of the public outcry led by Mr Levy's courageous                  25 victim and my client. By then, all the damage was</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 122</p>
<p>1 already done. Mr Levy's victim felt even more shunned                  2 from the community as its leaders and over 1,000 members                  3 publicly honoured and praised Mr Levy and joyously                  4 danced with him and his new Torah scroll in                  5 a celebration which was heard several streets away. It                  6 is for these reasons that my client firmly believes that                  7 the full spectrum of Jewish communities in the UK                  8 require external intervention to change how they                  9 approach allegations of child sexual abuse and protect                  10 their children. A new regulatory body must be                  11 established and run by the government to put strong                  12 child protection policies in place and establish robust                  13 standards for processing of child sexual abuse                  14 complaints.                  15 This body should build connections with the                  16 community and work with experts, both religious and                  17 secular. It should have investigatory and enforcement                  18 powers and set up new, clear and mandated routes to the                  19 police and local authorities. These routes must bypass                  20 the rabbis whose role has been controversial and                  21 conflicted in this context.                  22 Too long and too often rabbis have been part of                  23 the problem, not the solution, whether in terms of                  24 the abuse itself or its subsequent coverup because they                  25 know the perpetrator, disbelieve the allegation or</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 123</p>	<p>1 simply want to avoid a scandal.                  2 Their intimidation of victims and their reluctance                  3 to intervene when others in the community persecute                  4 them, their families and other supporters must stop.                  5 In Mr Waks' view, the role of a rabbi is to provide                  6 spiritual, religious and emotional support and guidance,                  7 not legal advice. If they learn or suspect child sexual                  8 abuse is taking place, rabbis must tell and encourage                  9 their congregants to go directly to the police; no                  10 exceptions.                  11 The regulatory approach will no doubt have to be                  12 sensitive, but it will also have to be bold and daring                  13 to effectively protect children and give past victims of                  14 child sexual abuse some sense of justice and healing.                  15 We simply cannot afford to have the status quo continue.                  16 There must no longer be impunity for perpetrators of                  17 child sexual abuse. Instead, victims, recent and                  18 historic, must feel empowered and supported to come                  19 forward so that their allegations can be properly                  20 investigated. Otherwise, the community won't heal,                  21 won't learn and won't protect its most vulnerable                  22 members. Thank you.                  23 THE CHAIR: Thank you very much. Mr Athanasiou?                  24                  25</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 124</p>

<p>1 Opening statement by MR ATHANASIOU                  2 MR ATHANASIOU: Sorry for changing the order, but my husband                  3 is on a flight and I need to get him from the airport.                  4 As the United Reformed Church safeguarding lead and                  5 secretary of its safeguarding advisory group, I want to                  6 thank the chair and the panel for the time and space to                  7 hear from a small nonconformist Christian denomination                  8 in the UK.                  9 URC has 50,000 members, so it is a very small                  10 denomination. I would like to start my statement by                  11 apologising to survivors of abuse within our church, to                  12 their families, supporters and communities.                  13 Between October 2015 to June 2017, the United Reformed                  14 Church undertook a Past Case Review, a gradual journey                  15 for many, especially for survivors, that shed light on                  16 uncomfortable truths of the past of our church, as well                  17 as allegations in cases of harm and abuse, including                  18 child sexual abuse.                  19 The United Reformed Church acknowledged the past                  20 failures of the church with a public apology, and the                  21 courage of survivors, some of whom disclosed                  22 exceptionally difficult, life-changing experiences of                  23 trauma and abuse.                  24 The Past Case Review report which was generated                  25 through the process has outlined specific areas for</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 125</p>	<p>1 improvement, including development of safeguarding                  2 policies and training and disciplinary processes that                  3 privatise safeguarding for our ministers, appropriate                  4 responses to allegations of child sexual abuse, pastoral                  5 support and engagement with survivors.                  6 The Past Case Review has provided an opportunity for                  7 the church to put as much emphasis on reporting                  8 disclosures and allegations of abuse as well as on                  9 preventing abuse, and that's the reason the church                  10 in November 2015, the Mission Council, approved                  11 a safeguarding strategy plan for the next five years.                  12 One of the first things that I did, as the                  13 safeguarding lead of the church, was to instigate direct                  14 work with survivors of abuse, and consultation with them                  15 about the ways to improve safeguarding in the United                  16 Reformed Church. A reference group was set up, but the                  17 spiritual mandate that entitled survivors to attend the                  18 meetings was justice and prevention. A personal sense                  19 of justice and peace for those who disclose abuse and                  20 action to prevent abuse and hurt for all in the church.                  21 In their words, we should recognise that abuse happened                  22 and might happen again in any congregation, synod,                  23 office, school, property and community of the church.                  24 My conversations with survivors and pastors in the                  25 United Reformed Church highlighted the importance of</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 126</p>
<p>1 listening skills and the value of human connection with                  2 people in the church who are well informed about what                  3 trauma and sexual abuse means and responding based on                  4 two main principles: confidentiality and integrity of                  5 the creation.                  6 Pastoral support offered at the local church is                  7 paramount for them. As survivors of abuse pointed out,                  8 it is not easy to disclose and share, but it is                  9 important that there is pastoral care available as well                  10 as access to the support when they speak out.                  11 Access to initial and appropriate pastoral care and                  12 support, children and adults in need of protection,                  13 constitutes an essential strategic priority of our plan,                  14 but in an internal system characterised by inconsistency                  15 and limited interagency work with other agencies, such                  16 as the United Reformed Church.                  17 The safeguarding advisory group believes and wants                  18 to serve this statement with the panel, the chair and                  19 all the people in this room, believes a common set of                  20 basic standards can enable the United Reformed Church                  21 and other religious communities to get child protection                  22 work right.                  23 In recognition of our challenges to ensure                  24 compliance with our safeguarding policy, a key                  25 legislation embedded within it in all parts of our</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 127</p>	<p>1 church, the safeguarding advisory group would be in                  2 favour of self-regulated arrangements, backed up by an                  3 audit firm work from an external independent body.                  4 This would enable a safeguarding advisory group to                  5 review URC's practices at the denominational level on                  6 a regular basis in alignment with our recent updated                  7 safeguarding policy Good Practice 5.                  8 The reasons we argue for a denominational approach                  9 reflect the disparity of practice at the synod and local                  10 church level and the limited resources, especially at                  11 the local church level.                  12 The safeguarding advisory group would be able to                  13 meet the external body's requirement and provide the                  14 basis for this audit firm work. It is important that                  15 the firm work -- at least we can evaluate if our child                  16 protection practices and procedures is robust and                  17 rigorous. However, it would be very helpful if the                  18 auditing organisation understands the ethos and the                  19 structures of religious organisations and sects. We                  20 also believe that it should be compulsory for religious                  21 leaders or those in positions of responsibility in                  22 religious communities to refer allegations or suspicions                  23 of child sexual abuse to statutory authorities and                  24 especially Children's Services.                  25 Our safeguarding policy states clearly that</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 128</p>



<p>1 everybody has a duty to report and refer allegations or                  2 suspicions of child sexual abuse to statutory                  3 authorities. It should be remembered that action should                  4 not in any way compromise possible future investigations                  5 by the police or the Children's Services.                  6 The statutory agencies need to decide whether the                  7 legal criteria to investigate are met and, if so, will                  8 then undertake such investigations. We, churches and                  9 faith communities, have no power and resources to                  10 effectively respond to child sexual abuse risks. Making                  11 a referral is an important and essential, though not                  12 always easy, thing to do. However, where we want to                  13 emphasise individual responsibilities to respond to                  14 child protection concerns, and work with statutory                  15 authorities, the only way to meet these aims is to make                  16 reporting mandatory in legislation.                  17 This means that concealment of child sexual abuse                  18 should be a criminal offence if an admission has been                  19 made or if there have been internal disciplinary                  20 findings of such abuse taking place. This would also be                  21 linked with other changes in legislation, such as the                  22 change that is required in the legislation relating to                  23 positions of trust within the Sexual Offences Act 2003                  24 in order to extend the definition of positions of trust                  25 and include religious leaders and children's and youth</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 129</p>	<p>1 workers.                  2 Safeguarding is not just about reading and adopting                  3 policies and procedures. In order to save lives, they                  4 must be put into action. This is how safeguarding can                  5 serve people and become a core part of the mission of                  6 our churches and faith communities. The safeguarding                  7 strategic plan prioritises people and collaborative                  8 action. We intend to deliver the task and actions of                  9 our strategy in ways that align with the conciliar                  10 traditions and policies of the church as well as the                  11 need to build consistency and trust in working with                  12 others, such as police and Children's Services and other                  13 local authorities, to be able to protect children from                  14 sexual abuse or other abuse.                  15 I mentioned the role of traditions here because, in                  16 my view, only serious consideration of the theologies                  17 and organisational foundations of each faith community                  18 and the concomitant understanding of sexuality and                  19 sexual education in this context will help understand                  20 the cultural and religious barriers to disclosures of                  21 child sexual abuse.                  22 This will also help if we consider the theological                  23 and organisational foundations of each faith community,                  24 we will be able to identify what sort of responses can                  25 promise a sustained community of practice that heals and</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 130</p>
<p>1 cares for those children who have experienced, or                  2 experience, sexual abuse.                  3 At the moment, I am closing my statement. Thank                  4 you.                  5 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Mr Brady?                  6 Opening statement by MR BRADY                  7 MR BRADY: Chair and members of the panel, thank you for                  8 permitting us the opportunity to participate in this                  9 important investigation. We -- by that I mean the                  10 Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses -- would                  11 like to share with the inquiry our experience in doing                  12 our best to deal with this challenging issue. We hope                  13 that our contribution will be of assistance to the                  14 inquiry as it makes recommendations for the better                  15 protection of children.                  16 In my brief remarks, I would like to summarise the                  17 policy of Jehovah's Witnesses as it relates to the                  18 broader issues that this investigation is examining, and                  19 also to briefly respond to some of the criticisms that                  20 you have already heard. Briefly, I would like to                  21 discuss the history as it relates to this issue.                  22 For over 35 years, the religious organisation of                  23 Jehovah's Witnesses have alerted individual adherents,                  24 and the public at large, on the need to protect children                  25 from sexual abuse and to assist victims of this terrible</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 131</p>	<p>1 crime. We have done so by publishing dozens of articles                  2 and videos in hundreds of languages and in tens of                  3 millions of copies, and some experts have noted that the                  4 literature that we produced in the beginning in the                  5 1980s and the 1990s were ahead of its time. Those early                  6 publications were the beginnings of our current child                  7 safeguarding policy, and we believe that they                  8 demonstrate our firm commitment to dealing with this                  9 issue.                  10 Our child protection policy has not stood still                  11 since then. Our core child protection documents were                  12 revised in 2018 and 2019, and we continue to review that                  13 policy, and may I assure you that we are open to                  14 suggestions and ways to improve and clarify that policy.                  15 Of course, for a child protection policy to be                  16 effective, it needs to be tailored to what an                  17 organisation does. What do Jehovah's Witnesses do as                  18 a religious organisation? Well, as a religion, we are                  19 family focused. We do not sponsor any activity that                  20 separates children from parents. Each congregation of                  21 Jehovah's Witnesses holds two weekly religious                  22 services -- one on a week night and one on                  23 the weekend -- and each service lasts an hour and                  24 45 minutes. Now, as part of that family focus, families                  25 attend the services together, with children and parents</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 132</p>

1 sitting together.  
 2 One point I'd like to stress is that Jehovah's  
 3 Witnesses believe that the Bible teaches that parents  
 4 are responsible to provide religious training and  
 5 education for their children. That is a core religious  
 6 belief. It is for that reason that congregations of  
 7 Jehovah's Witnesses do not sponsor daycares, Sunday  
 8 schools, youth groups, clubs, camps, overnight trips or  
 9 the like, and so we submit that our safeguarding policy,  
 10 our protection policy, needs to be considered in the  
 11 light of what we do, as indeed with other religions.  
 12 Now, as far as the policy, we have read with concern  
 13 the Lancashire judgment that was referred to earlier in  
 14 the submissions by some of the other participants. On  
 15 reading the judgment, it seems clear that the judge did  
 16 not have before her all of the policy documents of  
 17 Jehovah's Witnesses, and I don't propose to address that  
 18 judgment in my submissions, but I do encourage you,  
 19 chair and panel, to look at the first supplementary  
 20 statement of Mr Gillies which addresses that judgment in  
 21 detail.  
 22 Our current child protection policy is implemented  
 23 in four core documents. The first is the policy itself.  
 24 The current version is dated April 2018, and it is  
 25 readily available on our official website, jw.org in

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1 a national level by the Britain branch office of  
 2 Jehovah's Witnesses, and in particular by experienced  
 3 elders who work in the service department of the branch  
 4 office.  
 5 So the fourth core document that is part of our  
 6 policy is the January 2019 edition of the Guidelines for  
 7 Branch Office Service Desks. Those guidelines provide  
 8 guidance for experienced elders in the service  
 9 department to assist congregation elders in responding  
 10 to allegations of child abuse, and in response to some  
 11 of the criticisms you heard a moment ago, these  
 12 guidelines specifically address these subjects:  
 13 reporting allegations of child abuse to the statutory  
 14 authorities; ensuring victims are provided with pastoral  
 15 support; and imposing strict restrictions on offenders  
 16 if they're not expelled or if someone with that history  
 17 wants to become a member of the congregation.  
 18 Now, in concluding, there are three aspects of that  
 19 policy that I would like to briefly touch on, and again  
 20 which I believe responds to the broader issues that the  
 21 inquiry is addressing. The first aspect is prevention.  
 22 Of course the best prevention is education and limiting  
 23 the opportunities for abuse. For decades, we have  
 24 endeavoured to address both these issues, as I have  
 25 touched on earlier, one, by providing a variety of

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1 dozens of languages. The second is the May 2019 issue  
 2 of The Watchtower, which is the principal religious  
 3 journal of Jehovah's Witnesses. That magazine contained  
 4 three articles that discussed the policy in detail.  
 5 Those articles were discussed in three religious  
 6 services by all congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses in  
 7 England and Wales in July 2019.  
 8 I think it is important to underscore that the fact  
 9 that that article was produced emphasises itself that  
 10 Jehovah's Witnesses do not feel they're immune from the  
 11 problem of child sexual abuse. The fact that it has  
 12 happened is one of the reasons why the article was  
 13 produced and was studied by all congregations, to  
 14 discuss this frank subject.  
 15 The third core document that Jehovah's Witnesses  
 16 have produced as part of their protection policy is  
 17 the October 2019 edition of the elders' handbook,  
 18 "Shepherd the Flock of God", and that handbook includes  
 19 chapter 14 which gives specific direction to  
 20 congregation elders how they should respond to an  
 21 allegation of child sexual abuse.  
 22 Finally, referring to the submissions of counsel to  
 23 the inquiry in the opening, we would like to underscore  
 24 that, as a religious organisation, our response to  
 25 allegations of child sexual abuse is co-ordinated on

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1 educative materials to assist parents in educating their  
 2 children on the crime of sexual abuse. Also, we don't  
 3 sponsor any activities that separate children from their  
 4 parents and, as a result, it minimises the opportunities  
 5 for abuse.  
 6 The second key aspect of our safeguarding policy is  
 7 how we respond to allegations of abuse. Now, our  
 8 current policy makes it clear that anyone -- anyone --  
 9 who learns of an allegation of child sexual abuse has  
 10 the absolute right to immediately report it to the  
 11 statutory authorities, and no-one -- no-one -- should  
 12 discourage them from doing so.  
 13 But our policy also directs that when congregation  
 14 elders learn about an allegation of abuse, they must  
 15 immediately telephone the Britain branch office to  
 16 ensure that allegations that need to be reported to the  
 17 statutory authorities are reported to the statutory  
 18 authorities. In addition, if a child is in danger of  
 19 abuse, the elders will be directed themselves to make  
 20 the report to the statutory authorities, even if there  
 21 is no statutory duty to do so. If I could underscore  
 22 that, if a child is at risk of abuse, the elders  
 23 themselves will be directed to report it, even in the  
 24 absence of a mandatory reporting law.  
 25 Thus, any suggestion that we have a culture or rules

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<p>1 that prohibit reporting abuse or that we ostracise those  2 who report abuse we submit is simply not true. It is  3 false. In the Republic of Ireland, there is a mandatory  4 reporting law and Jehovah's Witnesses fully comply with  5 what the law requires.</p> <p>6 After ensuring allegations are reported to the  7 authorities, the elders will then provide pastoral  8 support to the victim and the victim's family. That  9 pastoral support, as part of the family focus of  10 Jehovah's Witnesses, will be to pray with, and for, the  11 victim, to read comforting Bible passages that, for  12 Jehovah's Witnesses, will provide comfort and hope and  13 strength to them.</p> <p>14 But the elders are not health professionals. They  15 don't purport to be so, and they will remind the victim  16 and the victim's family of the need for them to decide  17 to consider obtaining professional support.</p> <p>18 The third key point I would like to emphasise of our  19 policy is this: if the offender is not expelled, and  20 that's a religious issue, or if a person who has that  21 history wants to become one of Jehovah's Witnesses, the  22 branch office will impose strict restrictions on the  23 offender. Those restrictions remain in place  24 indefinitely and they will follow the offender even if  25 he moves to another congregation. In most cases, an</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 137</p>	<p>1 offender would be expelled. But even if he is not,  2 those restrictions apply in all cases, not just to an  3 elder, to a faith leader, but to anyone who has  4 committed the offence, including a congregant or other  5 religions referred to as a lay member or a parishioner.</p> <p>6 Among those restrictions are these: the offender  7 will not qualify for any responsibilities, duties or  8 tasks in the congregation for decades, if ever.</p> <p>9 Secondly, the elders will meet with the parents of all  10 minor children in the congregation, and any others that  11 may move in afterwards, to specifically warn them that  12 their children should never be left alone with the  13 offender. They will also direct the parents to specific  14 material we have published on protecting children from  15 abuse. Those are in addition to restrictions that the  16 statutory authorities may impose.</p> <p>17 Once those steps are cared for, what happens next?  18 Well, child sexual abuse is not only a serious crime but  19 for many religions, and certainly for Jehovah's  20 Witnesses, it is a gross sin before God. So when  21 child abuse has been committed, the elders will then  22 determine, after the steps I've outlined are cared for,  23 whether the offender, if he is one of Jehovah's  24 Witnesses, should be excommunicated, expelled or  25 disfellowshipped, as Jehovah's Witnesses would refer to</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 138</p>
<p>1 it. What is the role of the victim in that  2 ecclesiastical process? Elders will receive information  3 from the victim if the victim is an adult or from the  4 victim's parents if the victim is a child about the  5 allegation. That information can be provided in writing  6 or in a private session as the victim feels comfortable  7 with. The adult victim can be accompanied by a mature  8 confidant. But the elders do not require the victim to  9 confront the offender in that ecclesiastical process.</p> <p>10 Ultimately, the elders will decide, based on  11 scriptural doctrine and standards, whether the offender  12 should be expelled. So we respectfully submit that,  13 whether an offender is expelled, and the religious  14 process that elders follow to make that determination  15 is, in that sense, beyond the scope of the issues this  16 inquiry is examining. It is strictly a religious  17 process.</p> <p>18 Chair and members of the panel, we look forward to  19 the opportunity to assist this inquiry in this  20 investigation and to provide accurate information about  21 our child protection policy, practices and procedures.</p> <p>22 Thank you.</p> <p>23 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Ms Jefferson?  24  25</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 139</p>	<p>1 Opening statement by MS JEFFERSON  2 MS JEFFERSON: Thank you. The Union of Hebrew Congregations  3 welcomes the opportunity to participate in this  4 investigation and the work of the inquiry. For ease,  5 I will refer to them as "the union".</p> <p>6 Haredim are a subgroup of Orthodox Jews and are  7 generally stricter in their practice of Judaism than  8 other types of Orthodox Jews. As the panel will have  9 seen from the many statements provided on behalf of  10 Jewish organisations, there is not one single Jewish  11 organisation which speaks on behalf of the whole Jewish  12 community.</p> <p>13 There are an estimated, we believe, 300,000 Jews  14 living in the United Kingdom, of which approximately  15 60,000 to 70,000 identify as Haredim. They are  16 primarily concentrated in London, Manchester and  17 Gateshead.</p> <p>18 The term "Haredi" denotes stringent commitment to,  19 and observance of, Torah law and tradition. Haredim are  20 culturally differentiated from the broader Orthodox  21 Jewish community. They are differentiated, for example,  22 in their dress, greater use of Yiddish language and  23 different social and cultural norms.</p> <p>24 There are many gradations within the community and  25 there is no clear line where the Haredi community ends</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 140</p>

<p>1 and other Jewish communities begin.</p> <p>2 Within the community, the union's constituent</p> <p>3 synagogues make provision for religious worship for</p> <p>4 London's Haredi community of about 40,000 people. The</p> <p>5 function of the union is to offer a single shared</p> <p>6 umbrella to provide specific religious functions as</p> <p>7 required across its members and to provide</p> <p>8 a representative voice to the authorities when required.</p> <p>9 The union is the membership body for Haredi</p> <p>10 synagogues and for Haredi households in London. It</p> <p>11 provides a range of religious functions to its</p> <p>12 constituent synagogues and the communities they serve.</p> <p>13 Those functions are wide. They range from kosher food</p> <p>14 certification, provision of meals on wheels, services</p> <p>15 for religious weddings and divorces, burials, provision</p> <p>16 for the disposal of sacred texts, through to liaison</p> <p>17 with government and public authorities on matters of</p> <p>18 religious concern and assistance for organisations such</p> <p>19 as carrying out DBS checks on staff and volunteers.</p> <p>20 But the union itself does not provide any direct</p> <p>21 activities or services for children and young people.</p> <p>22 However, protecting children from harm is of</p> <p>23 the greatest importance to the union and the community.</p> <p>24 Training community settings about child protection is</p> <p>25 undertaken by the Interlink Foundation and the union</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 141</p>	<p>1 fully supports their work. The Interlink Foundation is</p> <p>2 the national membership organisation in England for</p> <p>3 Orthodox Jewish charities and voluntary organisations.</p> <p>4 Founded in 1992 as a charitable trust to provide</p> <p>5 training and development support to Orthodox Jewish</p> <p>6 voluntary organisations and charities, recognising the</p> <p>7 need for support within this sector, the union and</p> <p>8 InterLink work very closely together.</p> <p>9 They work closely to ensure that member synagogues</p> <p>10 are aware of their child protection responsibilities,</p> <p>11 but each synagogue is an autonomous, independent body</p> <p>12 which is responsible for its own governance and child</p> <p>13 protection. However, the union seeks to make available</p> <p>14 information and support to enable those synagogues to</p> <p>15 understand the issues which arise and to implement child</p> <p>16 protection practices.</p> <p>17 In circumstances where there is disclosure of child</p> <p>18 sexual abuse, the union has a clear and consistent</p> <p>19 message that any allegation should be treated extremely</p> <p>20 seriously and all allegations should be reported to the</p> <p>21 appropriate authorities. Since 2013, the union has also</p> <p>22 provided synagogues and the community with a number to</p> <p>23 call should they have any concerns about child</p> <p>24 protection.</p> <p>25 This investigation is rightly looking at the role</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 142</p>
<p>1 that faith leaders play in any faith organisation,</p> <p>2 having regard to, as has been mentioned today, the</p> <p>3 special place they may hold in the community.</p> <p>4 In the Jewish community, the term used to describe</p> <p>5 a faith leader is "rabbi". The term "rabbi" can refer</p> <p>6 to a congregational rabbi, that is a religious leader,</p> <p>7 but also to someone who the community respects but who</p> <p>8 may be, for example, a schoolteacher or a Torah scholar.</p> <p>9 People using the title "rabbi" in this looser sense</p> <p>10 would not be congregational rabbis or faith leaders and</p> <p>11 would not have religious authority, but this can be</p> <p>12 confusing for those outside of the Jewish community to</p> <p>13 understand.</p> <p>14 In the event of any difficulty or dilemma, a rabbi</p> <p>15 will often be the first port of call for members of</p> <p>16 the community. The rabbis play a very important role in</p> <p>17 listening, helping and explaining many different daily</p> <p>18 dilemmas, including the application of Jewish laws and</p> <p>19 customs to everyday life.</p> <p>20 The union has read of the criticism and heard today</p> <p>21 criticism that members of the community don't feel able</p> <p>22 to speak other than to a rabbi. That is not correct.</p> <p>23 They can and do.</p> <p>24 However, it should also be understood that in many</p> <p>25 aspects of day-to-day life, members of the community</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 143</p>	<p>1 would speak to a rabbi for support and guidance, so to</p> <p>2 do so when an issue as serious as child sexual abuse</p> <p>3 arises is not anything unusual.</p> <p>4 The union appoints a group of senior rabbis known as</p> <p>5 the rabbinate to provide religious oversight and</p> <p>6 governance of its activities. The rabbinate will, from</p> <p>7 time to time, provide religious instruction, advice and</p> <p>8 guidance to the general Haredi public in London and the</p> <p>9 rabbinate is very clear about its own and the</p> <p>10 community's duty to report allegations of abuse.</p> <p>11 The union is, of course, aware of previous criticism</p> <p>12 which has been made publicly of it and a perceived</p> <p>13 failure by senior rabbis to report advice. The union</p> <p>14 can confirm that it will report all allegations to the</p> <p>15 authorities and is currently, for example, working with</p> <p>16 the police in prosecuting an alleged perpetrator within</p> <p>17 the community.</p> <p>18 The union has seen the evidence of witnesses in this</p> <p>19 investigation which state that certain Jewish laws stand</p> <p>20 in the way of child protection and the reporting of</p> <p>21 abuse. The union does not agree that that is correct.</p> <p>22 Rabbi Baumgarten in his statement, and when he gives</p> <p>23 oral evidence, will comment upon those misunderstandings</p> <p>24 and how societal changes impact upon and necessitate the</p> <p>25 need for change in application and understanding.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 144</p>

<p>1 His evidence also seeks to explain the 2 misunderstandings that the community seeks to somehow 3 use the Beth Din, the Jewish courts, to consider matters 4 relating to child sexual abuse. The union's Beth Din 5 does not deal with criminal matters. Child sexual abuse 6 cases would not be referred to it. If a child 7 protection issue arose, for example, in the context of 8 the granting of a religious divorce, known as a "get", 9 then that would be immediately referred to the relevant 10 authorities.</p> <p>11 The union has also read the evidence submitted on 12 behalf of Hackney Council and Ofsted and the criticism 13 made within that evidence of the union in connection 14 with the issue of yeshivas. Yeshivas are institutions 15 for Torah study primarily for orthodox boys and men. As 16 such, they are a central platform of religious life and 17 commonly regarded with reverence and loved by many 18 members of the community. Even the most vocal 19 ex-yeshiva students who argue for regulations of 20 yeshivas because of the narrow nature of the education 21 they received have not made allegations that there is 22 sexual abuse there.</p> <p>23 The safeguarding argument for regulating yeshivas is 24 limited to their being out of line of sight of 25 the authorities, which is not different to many other</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 145</p>	<p>1 types of community and religious settings, as we have 2 heard today.</p> <p>3 Each yeshiva is run autonomously and is responsible 4 for its own child protection and, although the union 5 cannot speak on behalf of the yeshivas, it believes 6 child protection is of paramount concern to them and it 7 is aware that they are seriously considering how they 8 can give confidence to the wider public about the 9 procedures they do have in place to protect children. 10 InterLink, for example, is already providing training 11 for yeshivas about child protection and has been working 12 closely with Hackney Council to develop this further.</p> <p>13 The union and the wider community it represents is 14 appalled whenever it hears any accounts of victims and 15 survivors of sexual abuse. No child should have to 16 suffer, as those victims and survivors have. The union 17 is always seeking to learn from the experiences of 18 others and it therefore welcomes the opportunity that 19 has been provided to it now to learn of what has worked 20 well for other faith organisations so that it can 21 continue to develop and ensure the safety of children in 22 the future. Thank you.</p> <p>23 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Ms Woods? 24 25</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 146</p>
<p>1 Opening statement by MS WOODS 2 MS WOODS: Good afternoon, chair and panel. The 3 Methodist Church is the fourth largest Christian 4 denomination in Britain. It has approximately 173,000 5 members and it's estimated that about 27,000 children 6 and young people attend Methodist Church services and 7 activities each week.</p> <p>8 Fundamental to the church's principles is its 9 obligation to protect these children and young people 10 from harm, to create safe spaces and to ensure that, for 11 them, going to church and to church events is 12 a positive, uplifting and, above all, a safe experience.</p> <p>13 The church takes this inquiry very seriously and 14 welcomes its part in it and the assistance it will 15 derive from it. From the beginning, the church has 16 sought to co-operate with the inquiry. In 2015, the 17 president of the conference, the Reverend Ken Howcroft, 18 with the Reverend Canon Gareth Powell and leaders of 19 the Church of England met with the then Home Secretary 20 Theresa May and the Home Office's director of 21 safeguarding, Mr John O'Brien, to discuss the scope of 22 the proposed inquiry and also learning points from the 23 church's own mistakes.</p> <p>24 In 2016, the church self-reported to IICSA and 25 reiterated its willingness to cooperate. The church</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 147</p>	<p>1 recognises that, like so many other religious 2 institutions, it has made mistakes in the area of 3 safeguarding, it has placed the reputation of the church 4 above the interests of the victims or those hurt by 5 abusive behaviour. It has mishandled complaints, it has 6 acted with insensitivity and, therefore, it has failed 7 to live up to its fundamental principles.</p> <p>8 For all of its wrongs, and its lack of 9 understanding, the church unreservedly apologises.</p> <p>10 In 2015, speaking on behalf of the church, the 11 secretary of the Methodist Conference and the general 12 secretary, the Reverend Dr Martyn Atkins, issued the 13 following apology to all survivors and victims of abuse 14 who have suffered within the church:</p> <p>15 "On behalf of the Methodist Church in Britain, 16 I want to express an unreserved apology for the failure 17 of its current and earlier processes fully to protect 18 children, young people and adults from physical and 19 sexual abuse inflicted by some ministers in 20 Full Connexion and by members of the Methodist Church. 21 That abuse has been inflicted by some Methodists on 22 children, young people and adults, is and will remain 23 a deep source of grief and shame to the church. The 24 church has not always listened properly to those who 25 were abused or cared for them and this is deeply</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 148</p>

<p>1 regrettable. In respect of these things, it has, as                  2 a Christian church, clearly failed to live in ways that                  3 glorify God and honour Christ."                  4 That apology was, and always has been, heartfelt and                  5 sincere. But the church recognises that this does not                  6 mean that it has always managed to deal with each case                  7 to the standard to which it would aspire. The church                  8 understands that an apology means nothing unless it is                  9 supported by concrete actions. So what follows is                  10 a very brief outline of our work in safeguarding over                  11 the past nearly 30 years.                  12 During this time, the church has continued to                  13 listen, learn and act to try to make it a safer place.                  14 In 1993, after lobbying the government to introduce                  15 police checks on youth workers, the church brought out                  16 its first guidance and policy in this area. In 2003,                  17 the church appointed a Connexional Safeguarding Advisor                  18 and introduced safeguarding training for all of those                  19 working directly with children and young people. Record                  20 keeping of safeguarding concerns commenced and                  21 relationships were forged with statutory authorities.                  22 This was followed by a presidential inquiry in 2011                  23 which was a fact-finding and a lesson-learning exercise                  24 which made various recommendations, including looking at                  25 how a culture of change could be effected, at the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 149</p>	<p>1 resourcing of safeguarding staff, and at responding to                  2 serious incidents.                  3 In 2012, the church announced a Past Cases Review of                  4 all safeguarding cases and concerns going back to 1950.                  5 That review reported in 2015 and it was a pivotal moment                  6 in the development of safeguarding within the church.                  7 It sought to recognise the full extent of past abuse                  8 and to embark on a programme of change which of course                  9 continues to this day.                  10 This was followed by a further review in 2017 based                  11 on a series of sample audits and other reviews have                  12 followed. Within the witness statements of                  13 the secretary of the Conference, the Reverend                  14 Dr Jonathan Hustler and the director of safeguarding,                  15 Tim Carter, there is clear evidence of not just good                  16 intentions, but good practice in safe recruitment,                  17 training, policy development, reporting and the                  18 establishment of close relationships with the statutory                  19 authorities.                  20 A survivor's advisory group was set up in response                  21 to a recommendation from the Past Cases Review to engage                  22 with, and to learn from, the perspectives of survivors.                  23 Some of the outcomes of this group include drafting                  24 a publication giving a survivors' perspective on current                  25 church mission work, producing a leaflet welcoming</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 150</p>
<p>1 survivors in every church, and creating seats on the                  2 church's safeguarding committee and the safeguarding                  3 training group for survivors.                  4 The church is grateful to the members of the group,                  5 of the safeguarding survivors advisory group, for their                  6 courage and for their commitment to safeguarding.                  7 The church's safeguarding commitment is clear but,                  8 as I say, that does not always mean that we get it                  9 right. The church knows that the only credible way to                  10 move forward is through listening to feedback and                  11 regularly reviewing procedures and practice.                  12 This afternoon, the inquiry will hear from witness                  13 PR-A10. The church deeply regrets the hurt that this                  14 survivor has experienced. The church has failed her                  15 twice in the handling of her complaints. The first was                  16 at the time of her abuse, over 20 years ago, when she                  17 reported it to the police; and the second, in much more                  18 recent times, when she reported the minister who                  19 responded to her complaint at the time to a church                  20 disciplinary panel.                  21 The church is saddened that PR-A10's experience of                  22 the complaints and discipline procedure has been such an                  23 overwhelming disappointment to her and apologises for                  24 the ways in which she has been hurt through that                  25 process. The church will work to ensure that it does</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 151</p>	<p>1 not happen again.                  2 In the summer of 2019, so before PR-A10's statement                  3 was received, the Methodist Church Conference resolved                  4 to undertake a review of the complaints and discipline                  5 process. What the church has heard from PR-A10 since                  6 has reinforced the urgent need for that review. Her                  7 comments and her recommendations will be put before the                  8 reviewing body, and this is consistent with a statement                  9 from this inquiry in an earlier hearing that survivors                  10 are to be considered an asset to religious institutions                  11 and never an embarrassment. The church knows from the                  12 invaluable work of its survivors advisory group that                  13 survivors can offer considerable help to faith groups.                  14 The church has sought to be transparent from the start                  15 of this inquiry and it genuinely hopes that the                  16 recommendations of the panel will help it to better                  17 protect children and to look after the interests of                  18 survivors. The Methodist Church is committed to the                  19 highest standards of safeguarding and is working hard to                  20 prevent failings and to create a culture in which all of                  21 its members know that child protection is everyone's                  22 responsibility.                  23 It understands, however, that it must demonstrate                  24 its good intentions in its actions, from its day-to-day                  25 handling of complaints, its treatment of survivors, to</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 152</p>

<p>1 the examples set by the leadership of the Methodist                  2 Conference. There is still much to learn and, above                  3 all, to learn from those whom the church and those who                  4 serve it have hurt, but the church is willing to listen.                  5 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Finally, Mr Humphreys?                  6 Opening statement by MR HUMPHREYS                  7 MR HUMPHREYS: Thank you, chair and panel, for the                  8 opportunity to address these proceedings on behalf of                  9 Thirtyone:eight, the charity for whom I am joint chief                  10 executive.                  11 We are thankful and very much committed to the work                  12 of the inquiry, and in particular this investigation, as                  13 it addresses child protection in religious organisations                  14 and settings. We note that there may well be many areas                  15 of concern which are common with previous investigations                  16 into the Anglican and Catholic Churches in this country.                  17 We also note that there will be other areas of concern                  18 which have their own unique challenges presented by huge                  19 diversity of theological understanding, doctrine,                  20 culture and practice that exists within the wider                  21 church, let alone across the breadth of faith and belief                  22 represented in the room today.                  23 We welcome the opportunity that this investigation                  24 presents to explore these challenges. Our commitment to                  25 this investigation is nonetheless tempered by our</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 153</p>	<p>1 concern that the breadth of religion, faith and belief                  2 that this investigation hopes to address is a vast                  3 undertaking and one which is likely to result in                  4 a light-touch exploration of many issues that probably                  5 warrant greater attention, given more time and                  6 resources.                  7 We fully appreciate this challenge for the inquiry,                  8 but we ask that it takes every opportunity to highlight                  9 where there is a need for further work to be done,                  10 rather than to dismiss matters that may well believe are                  11 relevant for full investigation into child protection                  12 across religious and faith communities. The work of                  13 the inquiry must clearly be a catalyst for change and                  14 improvement, but, again, we would urge you to make the                  15 most of highlighting opportunities that may exist going                  16 forward to engage in work in a collaborative manner with                  17 the range of organisations that exist in this space,                  18 such as ourselves, as well as the many others that will                  19 be represented over the next two weeks.                  20 By way of introduction, Thirtyone:eight was                  21 established in 1977, albeit with a different name at                  22 that time. we are an independent Christian charity, ie,                  23 not affiliated or connected to any particular Christian                  24 denomination or network.                  25 We have therefore spent the past 40-plus years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 154</p>
<p>1 providing a range of support to primarily, although not                  2 exclusively, organisations from within the Christian                  3 faith. It would be important to say that, alongside                  4 such organisations, including many churches and                  5 denominations across the Christian spectrum, we also                  6 work with individuals and organisations of other faiths                  7 and those of no faith. We are a membership                  8 organisation, currently with in excess of 10,000 members                  9 across the UK and further afield, the majority of these                  10 being churches and other organisations with a Christian                  11 faith basis.                  12 Our purpose is to assist whoever we come into                  13 contact with to create safer places for all. We do this                  14 through equipping, empowering and encouraging them to                  15 work towards best practice standards within their                  16 variety of settings and activities. Our support is                  17 offered in four distinct areas that can be found within                  18 my first witness statement to these hearings. In short,                  19 they are our open access helpline; training at                  20 foundation, advanced and specialist levels; the largest                  21 DBS umbrella body service to the faith sector; and our                  22 consultancy service, working with some of the most                  23 complex and challenging safeguarding concerns.                  24 Alongside these, we also engage in the commissioning                  25 and undertaking of academically rigorous research work,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 155</p>	<p>1 as well as our engagement at a parliamentary and                  2 governmental level.                  3 We have seen over the past four decades the progress                  4 with child protection and safeguarding more broadly is                  5 being made across the church. Much of the work                  6 undertaken in this regard has been through the                  7 dedication and the commitment of the countless                  8 volunteers working tirelessly in churches and other                  9 settings.                  10 We have also seen the huge challenge it is to effect                  11 widespread change and improvement across such a diverse                  12 section of society. There are undoubtedly many examples                  13 of good practice in child protection that exist across                  14 the Christian community. We are encouraged to see the                  15 benefits for all when good multi-agency and partnership                  16 working takes place that includes churches, other places                  17 of worship and faith-based organisations within local                  18 communities. This is how it ought to be. But, sadly,                  19 it is often not the case.                  20 Research that we have commissioned over the past few                  21 years has repeatedly told us of the disconnect or even                  22 a mistrust between statutory agencies and faith groups.                  23 We have constantly found that a lack of understanding or                  24 faith literacy amongst statutory agencies is hampering                  25 efforts to work together. Equally, a lack of</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 156</p>

<p>1 willingness on the part of some churches and other faith 2 groups to engage proactively with those statutory 3 agencies has resulted in difficulties when problems 4 arise and require support or intervention. 5 Our work with a wide range of stakeholders from 6 individuals, churches and organisations at grass roots 7 levels to government departments and the work supporting 8 the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Safeguarding in 9 Faith Settings has provided us with significant 10 opportunities. 11 In all this, we have consistently promoted both the 12 opportunities that exist to positively impact the 13 protection and safeguarding of children within 14 communities in addition to the great responsibility that 15 is incumbent upon all of us in doing this. It is most 16 important that these opportunities continue. 17 It was in 2004 that the Prime Minister's strategy 18 unit received a report concerning the huge contribution 19 of the church to youth work in this country. In that 20 report, it was stated that based on figures from the 21 1998 English churches' attendance survey there were more 22 than double the number of full-time paid youth workers 23 within churches than were employed by local authorities 24 at that time. 25 These figures were replicated and confirmed in</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 157</p>	<p>1 research commissioned by Thirtyone:eight in 2009 which 2 has been supplied to this inquiry. Following the drive 3 of the past government's big society agenda and the past 4 decade of austerity, this level of activity within 5 churches can only have increased since that time. It is 6 therefore surely time that the church was both 7 recognised for this important contribution to society 8 and that, in this recognition, policy makers reflected 9 this in the level of attention given to them so that 10 they are able to provide the highest standard of 11 safeguarding support to children and young people in 12 this country. 13 Ms Scolding has already alluded to the need for this 14 in her remarks. 15 The prevalence of community activity was illustrated 16 only last week when speaking at a safeguarding 17 conference for professionals from a range of backgrounds 18 and disciplines. I asked the delegates: "How many of 19 you live in a city, a town or a village where there is 20 no place of worship?" As you might expect, the answer 21 was: nobody. 22 This is a level of presence and opportunity that 23 seldom exists for any other group within our 24 communities. Yet it is not one that is afforded the 25 same opportunity when it comes to being in the room to</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 158</p>
<p>1 consider how faith communities can actively play a part 2 in the formation of policy and practice guidance at 3 local, regional or national levels. 4 If the same attention were given to developing 5 guidance and resources that included faith groups as is 6 given to education settings, we might see greater 7 consistency, higher standards and better outcomes for 8 children. 9 This is why I believe strongly that the attention of 10 focus brought to these issues by the All-Party 11 Parliamentary Group on Safeguarding in Faith Settings, 12 which Thirtyone:eight was instrumental in setting up and 13 is now supporting, is so important. 14 My second statement to the inquiry deals with the 15 important work of this APPG specifically, and most 16 recently the call to change the law concerning positions 17 of trust to enable improved application within faith 18 settings. At the same time, meaningful change within 19 the church has often been slow and the voices such as 20 our own that have been prepared to speak loudly and 21 consistently for the rights of all who may be vulnerable 22 have seemed to find hugely variable levels of support. 23 We stand with, and we pay tribute to, the organisations 24 that share this passion and especially with the 25 countless victims and survivors of abuse within faith</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 159</p>	<p>1 contexts who continue to struggle to have their voices 2 heard. 3 This is to the shame of the Christian church who in 4 some quarters persist in stifling those voices. 5 There is a great need for the church to level up in 6 this regard, learn lessons from its past and change the 7 narrative for the future. In doing so, we believe that 8 the church and other faith groups can play a vital role. 9 We live in a time where it is more important than 10 ever to understand and engage the diversity that exists 11 within our pluralistic society. This includes the role 12 that faith groups have in both shaping and responding to 13 the ever-evolving landscape for our children; most 14 importantly, their right to protection from harm and 15 abuse in all its forms. 16 We welcome the role of the inquiry in helping 17 achieve this new level. It must be recognised that we 18 have a limited ability to effect the necessary change on 19 our own. 20 Chair and panel, I would like to now draw your 21 attention to something that is of particular concern to 22 Thirtyone:eight, that is the increasing volume of recent 23 scandals and serious concerns that have been uncovered 24 across the spectrum of churches about the conduct and 25 alleged conduct of some of its leaders. I name</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 160</p>



1 Peter Ball, John Smyth, Jonathan Fletcher,  
2 Michael Oluronbi, John and Mary Wilson, just to name  
3 a few. The ability of our leaders to either champion or  
4 to undermine the safety afforded to children and others  
5 within the context of church cannot be overstated.  
6 These recent cases, which are just a small example  
7 of the many others that could be cited, only stand to  
8 confirm that the difficulties already highlighted by  
9 this inquiry within the Anglican and Catholic Church in  
10 the UK are, in fact, no less a concern for the wider  
11 Christian community.  
12 Church leaders hold positions of great power and  
13 influence. Many such leaders hold this power and  
14 influence positively for the good of others, and are  
15 great examples of how religion, faith and belief can  
16 play such a pivotal role in the lives and well-being of  
17 many. Again, sadly, this cannot be said of them all.  
18 Where power, influence and authority are wielded in  
19 a self-serving manner, great damage has been, and will  
20 continue to be, done.  
21 We believe that the level of concern from such cases  
22 and many others has brought the Christian church to  
23 crisis point. In this, I would include the Anglican and  
24 Catholic Churches, just as much as the wider church  
25 being considered within these hearings.

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1 that I have already made, which is to say that we would  
2 hope this inquiry is able to identify and shine  
3 a spotlight on both the aspects of good practice that  
4 exist across religious and faith settings as well as the  
5 aspects that can be seen to be failing our children and  
6 young people. Despite the vast majority of those  
7 working directly with children and young people in those  
8 settings being volunteers, we must commit to learn  
9 together, we must commit to share, we must commit to  
10 being active together in making a difference. We are  
11 therefore appreciative of the work of this inquiry and  
12 we again offer our commitment to it. Thank you.  
13 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Humphreys.  
14 MS SCOLDING: Chair and panel, we have an anonymous witness  
15 now, so I was thinking it would be appropriate for us to  
16 have a brief afternoon break so we can organise the  
17 facilities.  
18 THE CHAIR: Yes, we will return just after 3.40 pm.  
19 MS SCOLDING: Thank you very much.  
20 (3.25 pm)  
21 (A short break)  
22 (3.40 pm)  
23 WITNESS PR-A10 ( affirmed)  
24  
25

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1 The church exists to be a place of refuge, healing  
2 and restoration. However, its ability to do this  
3 credibly is severely impacted by its apparent inability  
4 to address the issues that exist within its own walls.  
5 It is a sad fact that, to a large extent, the church  
6 has failed to take the necessary action required to make  
7 itself that safe place to the degree that might be  
8 expected of it. It has failed to speak up and put  
9 survivors first, above their own institutional needs or  
10 reputation. It has failed to commit to unearthing poor  
11 practice and to conceal nothing. It has failed to take  
12 responsibility for its own shortcomings and to make  
13 positive change happen. And it has failed to hold  
14 itself accountable to others outside its walls.  
15 In acknowledging these failures, we have an  
16 opportunity presented to us by this inquiry to turn the  
17 tide. We truly hope that all the organisations and  
18 individuals participating in this process will use this  
19 opportunity to be a part of that change that is so  
20 desperately necessary. This is for our leaders to lead.  
21 It is for all of us to pledge to join and share in the  
22 responsibility for safeguarding our children and young  
23 people. We believe that this should include adherence  
24 to good standards and external auditing and scrutiny.  
25 Chair and panel, to conclude, I reiterate the point

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1 Examination by MS SCOLDING  
2 MS SCOLDING: Good afternoon. Thank you very much for  
3 coming to give us evidence. I am going to call you by  
4 the rather strange name of A10. It is done to try to  
5 protect your identity. Can I also remind you, as we  
6 spoke about outside, to try not to mention the names of  
7 anyone else if they don't appear in your witness  
8 statement. If they're in your witness statement, that's  
9 fine, but, otherwise, please don't, as that may lead to  
10 you being identified.  
11 If you do so, and please don't worry -- usually it  
12 is myself who does this -- we will stop the feed for  
13 a moment and then we can start again very quickly.  
14 I have a few preliminary matters to deal with, first  
15 of all. Firstly, this isn't a test of memory. Please  
16 feel free to refer to the witness statement which is in  
17 front of you, to any notes or any other documents you  
18 may well have brought with you to provide you with some  
19 assistance.  
20 Secondly, we can obviously stop at any time, and  
21 also for any reason whatsoever. Please just let me  
22 know.  
23 Lastly, you have a paper bundle in front of you  
24 which has your witness statement in and a couple of  
25 other relevant documents. I will refer to them as and

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1 when required. I don't think we are going to be needing  
 2 to get anything up on the screen for your evidence, but  
 3 if we do so, it will appear next door to you.  
 4 So we have a witness statement from you. You will  
 5 have signed the back of it. We cover all our signatures  
 6 for data protection reasons, so I have to ask you, did  
 7 you sign this?  
 8 **A. Yes, I did.**  
 9 Q. Have you had an opportunity to read it recently?  
 10 **A. Yes, I have.**  
 11 Q. Is it true, to the best of your knowledge and belief?  
 12 **A. Absolutely.**  
 13 Q. So A10, I understand your family weren't religious, but  
 14 you became a member of the Methodist congregation  
 15 through friends of the family when you were around  
 16 6 years old; is that right?  
 17 **A. Yes, correct. They lived next door to me.**  
 18 Q. This led you to becoming quite involved in the church.  
 19 Can you tell us how?  
 20 **A. I think initially I sort of went sporadically. My**  
 21 **next-door neighbours had a daughter the same age as me.**  
 22 **I was about 6/7 and I would go occasionally with them.**  
 23 **It started to become much more regular. I went most**  
 24 **weeks. Some weeks I lived with my other parent and,**  
 25 **therefore, didn't go as often. But the rest of**

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1 he was looking after you?  
 2 **A. I mean, when I was much younger -- I mean, I thought he**  
 3 **was great. He was funny, he was engaging, he would play**  
 4 **with us, he seemed to have constant time for all the**  
 5 **children. You know, he used to play tag with us. As**  
 6 **I got a bit older, he made me feel increasingly**  
 7 **uncomfortable and, with hindsight, I would say that his**  
 8 **behaviour became incredibly inappropriate.**  
 9 Q. Can you tell us in what ways his behaviour started to  
 10 become what you have just called "incredibly  
 11 inappropriate"?  
 12 **A. So his games would continue, but, for example, so if we**  
 13 **played sort of tag after church -- there -- the church**  
 14 **was quite big, a big downstairs open space we would run**  
 15 **about in. He would grab me from behind. He would have**  
 16 **his hands over my clothing, over my chest from behind.**  
 17 **He would tickle me in all sorts of places and it would**  
 18 **usually just be me and him wherever we were and it would**  
 19 **be like he'd cornered me.**  
 20 Q. So on one occasion, you were engaged, as I understand  
 21 once you had known him for around six years, so roughly  
 22 how old would you have been at this time?  
 23 **A. Approximately 12.**  
 24 Q. You were helping the organisation with a float for the  
 25 carnival. I remember that growing up. The carnival was

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1 **the time, I would go every week. I was in the Sunday**  
 2 **school. I took part in, you know, nativities, Easter**  
 3 **events, I used to do sometimes do readings in the**  
 4 **church; all sorts.**  
 5 Q. In this guise, you met somebody called David North.  
 6 From your role as a child, what role did he play in the  
 7 Methodist Church?  
 8 **A. He seemed to be kind of absolutely crucial. He seemed,**  
 9 **from my perspective, to be involved in all sorts. He**  
 10 **was involved in running the Sunday school. He gave**  
 11 **out -- when they did communion, he would hand out little**  
 12 **glasses of the wine. He would help open the church,**  
 13 **I think, at some points. I mean -- he was always -- if**  
 14 **we went on a Sunday school outing, which we did a couple**  
 15 **of times a year, he was always one of the helpers. So,**  
 16 **yeah.**  
 17 Q. Obviously, the reality is that his role was that of  
 18 a sort of volunteer and what's known as a communion  
 19 steward, as I understand it. But as a child you didn't  
 20 necessarily notice that description?  
 21 **A. No. I mean, I understand, since I've come forward and**  
 22 **been engaged with the Methodist Church more recently,**  
 23 **that's his role. I had assumed he was officially**  
 24 **a Sunday school leader.**  
 25 Q. How did he behave with you and with other children when

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1 the big thing in the local area.  
 2 **A. It was for us too.**  
 3 Q. So you were helping out with that. What were you  
 4 helping him with?  
 5 **A. At that point, most of the actual float had been built,**  
 6 **so we were doing costumes for all the Sunday school**  
 7 **children. So I suppose, at that point, there were a lot**  
 8 **of children quite a bit younger than me so I would be**  
 9 **expected to help a little bit with helping them get**  
 10 **dressed. He then asked me to go upstairs with him to**  
 11 **what was the actual church to retrieve costumes.**  
 12 Q. When he asked you to go and retrieve costumes, what was  
 13 your immediate response to that? Were you keen to do  
 14 so?  
 15 **A. No. By that point, he'd started to make me feel really**  
 16 **uncomfortable. I mean, I feel slightly shameful about**  
 17 **this now, but I actually suggested he take another child**  
 18 **because I didn't want to go with him. I really -- in**  
 19 **a weird way, I'm very glad that they didn't now because**  
 20 **then I might have put them in this position, but**  
 21 **I suggested he take someone else. He told me everyone**  
 22 **else was busy and I needed to help him. So I did.**  
 23 Q. Where were the costumes kept?  
 24 **A. They were -- I don't know whether you would call it**  
 25 **a small room or a very large cupboard, but it was a sort**

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1 of room off the side of the main church, so you kind of  
 2 went into the church hall and then into a sort of room  
 3 off the side of it. It was full of almost like  
 4 memorabilia of the church, from Sunday school events  
 5 over, I think, about 50 or 100 years, and the costumes  
 6 were in there. It was quite a dark and not particularly  
 7 pleasant space.  
 8 Q. So when you went into this cupboard, as I think I'm  
 9 going to call it, with him, what happened?  
 10 A. He sort of -- he said to me, "Now I can give you  
 11 a proper cuddle". He put his -- he came up behind me.  
 12 I could feel him behind me. And he put his arms  
 13 around -- from the back around my front and his hands  
 14 under my clothing. He spoke to me throughout this kind  
 15 of whispering in my ear. I mean -- and what I remember  
 16 most is, I can remember in detail the things he said.  
 17 Q. What did he say to you?  
 18 A. He told me that I was lovely, he told me how much he  
 19 missed me when I was with the other parent. And the bit  
 20 that gets me is that he asked me if I missed him, and  
 21 I didn't feel I could say no, so I said yes, and  
 22 I really -- in a way, I feel really angry at myself that  
 23 I wasn't able to say, "No, I don't miss you and I don't  
 24 want to be here". I felt absolutely trapped. Like,  
 25 just completely powerless in the situation.

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1 feeling is that they were quite determined to get the  
 2 evidence they needed in the right way, so they were  
 3 very, very supportive. It was referred also  
 4 automatically to social workers. Because of my mum's  
 5 position, it had to be out of area, because I knew all  
 6 the social workers in my area, but, yeah, I remember the  
 7 professional statutory agencies actually being quite  
 8 good.  
 9 Q. So I understand it was not just you, but also three  
 10 other young women -- girls/young women at the time, of  
 11 a similar age to you?  
 12 A. All within a sort of two-year age group range, yes.  
 13 Q. Had also come forward and made various allegations?  
 14 A. And all part of the same Sunday school.  
 15 Q. Did you have to give evidence at the trial of  
 16 the matter?  
 17 A. It got to Crown Court. I was literally about to give  
 18 evidence. I had been told that I was next up. And then  
 19 I suddenly -- an usher or someone came in and said,  
 20 "He's changed his plea" and he pleaded guilty to an  
 21 assault on me, an assault on one of the other victims,  
 22 with other matters being left on file.  
 23 Q. During the time, there obviously would have been  
 24 a period of time between your mum calling the police and  
 25 him pleading guilty?

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1 Q. In the immediate aftermath of that happening, did you  
 2 tell anyone?  
 3 A. Within a day or two, I spoke to one of my other friends  
 4 from the Sunday school, you know, that I knew, who  
 5 actually was one of the other -- it transpired one of  
 6 the other victims and, within a week, I'd spoken to my  
 7 mum. My mum was a children's social worker at the time.  
 8 I absolutely knew that what David had done was wrong,  
 9 but there was still this part of me, and I think this is  
 10 about how we teach our children, that we teach our  
 11 children about "Stranger danger", and there was still  
 12 this part of me that didn't think that someone I was  
 13 supposed to trust, particularly someone who I was  
 14 supposed to trust within a church setting, could do  
 15 this. So I disclosed to my mum. She called the police  
 16 within minutes.  
 17 Q. Then, after the police had been called, there was an  
 18 investigation. How do you think the police treated you  
 19 during the course of this investigation? This was in  
 20 the early 1990s, when you were a sort of a "tweenager",  
 21 I believe is the word?  
 22 A. My memory of the police is actually very positive.  
 23 I think they were supportive. I mean, as it would  
 24 transpire, he had been kicked out of the police force  
 25 himself. I don't know. Maybe I'm wrong, but my gut

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1 A. It was almost a year, actually.  
 2 Q. Did anybody in the Methodist Church or from the  
 3 particular organisation which you'd been part of during  
 4 that time come and see you or come and try and help you  
 5 in any way?  
 6 A. No. Not -- no-one from the sort of Methodist leadership  
 7 helped in any way. The only contact we had from them  
 8 was a phone call that the Methodist minister at the time  
 9 made to my mother in which he made a very clear  
 10 statement that David and his family were valued members  
 11 of the church, must be considered innocent until proven  
 12 guilty. In my mum's perspective of that call, and in  
 13 mine from a child's -- from what I understood of it, he  
 14 insinuated that I might not be telling the truth and,  
 15 because I was the first victim to come forward at the  
 16 time of that phone call, I think there was a level of  
 17 blame from the church towards myself.  
 18 From that point, I was never offered any pastoral  
 19 care, any counselling, any support. The Methodist  
 20 minister never spoke to me about it, and to this date  
 21 hasn't spoken to me about it.  
 22 However, other members of the church clearly found  
 23 out. You know, other stewards in the church spoke to  
 24 me. A steward that --  
 25 Q. Spoke to you in what context? Did they phone you up and

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1 ask to speak to you?

2 **A. No, in person. So one time I was in town. There was**

3 **a small shop where the wife of a different steward**

4 **worked. We were in the shop and she asked if I was**

5 **involved. My mum -- our next door neighbour on the**

6 **other side also happened to go to the church. She asked**

7 **my mother if I was one of the victims.**

8 **So information seeped out. I know and understand**

9 **that at least one Sunday school teacher who had actually**

10 **also been in the church building the same time as the**

11 **main assault had had to give evidence to the police to**

12 **the fact that I -- you know, we were in there, that we'd**

13 **gone upstairs, so I fully understood that some people**

14 **would know, and I still get that. I can't get my head**

15 **around how no-one said it would be inappropriate to**

16 **spread this information or to talk to a child victim**

17 **about it.**

18 **Q. As I understand it, as you have already alluded to,**

19 **during the course of the criminal justice process it**

20 **came out that Mr North had already been removed, as**

21 **I understand it, from the police force after allegations**

22 **of him having had unlawful sexual intercourse with**

23 **a minor. Do you think that the church knew about that**

24 **or ought to have been able to find out, recognising, of**

25 **course, this is in the days before the Police Act 1997**

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1 **how it should have been done, but I asked them not to.**

2 **I just -- at that point, I was just desperate to get**

3 **back to normal. You know, I'd spent over a year waiting**

4 **for it to come to court. You know, people had been**

5 **asking me. The counselling report that had been**

6 **organised through Social Services at the time describes**

7 **a marked change in my kind of behaviour, my attitude at**

8 **the time. I just wanted to be normal. So, no, I didn't**

9 **make a complaint at the time.**

10 **Q. What impact did the abuse have upon your faith?**

11 **A. Right at the beginning, I think I was really confused.**

12 **I kind of -- I suppose there's a part of me going,**

13 **"Well, you know, how could God allow that to happen?"**

14 **But I still wanted -- because it had been such a part of**

15 **my life -- I'd spent six years going there. I couldn't**

16 **really remember not going. So I carried on. And**

17 **I tried for a number of years to carry on going to the**

18 **church. But if I sat in the church, I could just see**

19 **the room where I was abused in, and I couldn't really**

20 **understand -- and everyone just seemed to -- like, once**

21 **it was over, everyone wanted to brush it under the**

22 **carpet. A couple of the people connected to the**

23 **Methodist Church tried to organise a barbecue after**

24 **the -- sorry, after he pleaded guilty after the court**

25 **case, to say, "Oh, isn't it" -- to celebrate it all**

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1 and the introduction of Criminal Records Bureau checks?

2 **A. Absolutely. I fully understand that it was before sort**

3 **of CRB and DBS. It's difficult. I don't know if they**

4 **knew. However, it did transpire that he had been**

5 **a police sergeant in that area, he had been charged with**

6 **unlawful intercourse and he had been removed from the**

7 **police.**

8 **What I will say is that he went on to marry the**

9 **alleged victim of his first assault, and the age gap**

10 **between them and the length of time they'd been**

11 **together, with any level of professional curiosity,**

12 **should have drawn some conclusions.**

13 **Q. Following the court case, as I understand it, there was**

14 **some coverage in the local newspaper --**

15 **A. Correct.**

16 **Q. -- which would be relevant to what we are about to come**

17 **to. After he had pleaded guilty, did you make any**

18 **formal complaint or express any concerns to the**

19 **Methodist Church, whether to the minister or anybody**

20 **else within it?**

21 **A. No. Both my parents, though separated, were incredibly**

22 **supportive through the process and were really, really**

23 **angry with the way the church had handled it. They both**

24 **wanted to make a complaint and they were both sort of**

25 **from a social work background and understood, I suppose,**

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1 **being over now. I didn't go. Other people went.**

2 **But for me, it wasn't over. I had nightmares until**

3 **I was 18/19 about -- and completely black nightmares**

4 **just where I would hear his voice and hear those same**

5 **words over and over again.**

6 **So, as I got older, I couldn't rationalise how the**

7 **Methodist Church had handled it, the lack of support**

8 **they'd shown me and how -- and, to be honest, if that**

9 **was how a church was going to be, I wasn't sure I wanted**

10 **to be a part of it.**

11 **Q. What impact has the abuse had upon your life choices and**

12 **your choice of career?**

13 **A. Yeah, I mean, I spent a lot of time as I grew older**

14 **trying to rationalise and understand it, and I was**

15 **incredibly angry that David had been allowed to**

16 **effectively work with children, be alone with children,**

17 **and I didn't believe that he should have been, and**

18 **I know that when he was sentenced, it was before sex**

19 **offenders registration came in, and I kept thinking,**

20 **there's a good chance he's working with children again,**

21 **so I became involved in the criminal justice system and**

22 **safeguarding, myself, and have been working in that for**

23 **approximately 15 years now. I currently work supporting**

24 **victims of abuse, myself.**

25 **Q. So you have had a lot of professional experience, as**

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1 well as personal experience --

2 **A. Absolutely.**

3 Q. -- in managing people's emotional reactions and people's

4 reactions to sexual abuse --

5 **A. Yes, and I have a good --**

6 Q. -- and dealing with the criminal justice and civil

7 justice system?

8 **A. Absolutely. I understand the civil process, I have**

9 **given evidence in court trials, you know, I have**

10 **a significant understanding and professional training in**

11 **risk, I deliver risk training and I train staff in**

12 **trauma-informed approaches.**

13 Q. With all that expertise, you decided, as I understand,

14 in December 2018 to make a formal complaint, in effect,

15 to the Methodist Church to ask them to look again at the

16 way that they handled your case back in the 1990s, or,

17 rather, didn't handle your case?

18 **A. Yes, indeed.**

19 Q. What were you hoping to achieve by that?

20 **A. I think there's a huge part of me that really believes**

21 **in processes like this, that we learn from our past**

22 **mistakes in order to improve our future prevention**

23 **practices, and that believes in listening to and working**

24 **with the voices of survivors.**

25 **I felt it was a little bit almost ironic that**

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1 **They decided that my case was not a safeguarding matter.**

2 Q. Why was that? Do you know why?

3 **A. I have never had a satisfactory explanation for that**

4 **question. They, therefore, as a result, told --**

5 **suggested that the district safeguarding officer who**

6 **I had reported to could not be involved, and then --**

7 Q. And I understand he's an individual whom you say has

8 behaved very compassionately and well and supported you

9 very well?

10 **A. Yes, indeed, on the record, I can name him -- yes?**

11 **Because he's in my statement?**

12 Q. Yes, you can.

13 **A. Kevin Maidment has been phenomenal, and I think for me**

14 **is the epitome of how someone should take the journey**

15 **alongside you, and he deserves to be recognised for**

16 **that. Unfortunately, he's the only person I can say**

17 **that about within the church process. But he was**

18 **separated from it. He was told that he wasn't allowed**

19 **to be involved. When he said, "I want to help**

20 **[redacted] with this" --**

21 Q. Sorry, we will break the feed.

22 **A. Sorry.**

23 Q. No, don't worry.

24 **A. It is very difficult.**

25 Q. It is.

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1 **I hadn't sort of addressed that stuff for myself, and**

2 **I guess I wanted a little bit of a resolution. I,**

3 **possibly naively, believed that my case would be fairly**

4 **simple. There was no debate over whether the abuse had**

5 **happened. He'd pleaded guilty, there'd been a criminal**

6 **sanction, and I -- I also wanted to believe that -- to**

7 **be fair to the Methodist Church, as you have said, it's**

8 **the 1990s, it was before processes were in place.**

9 **I thought there would be a reaction of almost, "Oh, God,**

10 **I've always remembered this case. I'd like to**

11 **apologise. I wish I'd handled it differently".**

12 **Unfortunately, it's been -- well, the opposite of that.**

13 Q. In fact, you say in your witness statement:

14 "Sadly, with what I know now of the Methodist

15 safeguarding arrangements, and in particular their

16 complaints process, I wish I had not come forward."

17 You say:

18 "Doing so has caused me immense distress and for the

19 first time in many years I have experienced nightmares."

20 So what are your concerns about the Methodist

21 complaints process, as you have experienced them?

22 **A. I think it's an interesting process, where they have**

23 **tried to completely separate safeguarding and**

24 **complaints. They say they are two different things.**

25 **It's just not true. They are integral to one another.**

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1 Chair, if we carry on with proceedings, but I would

2 like to remind everyone of the restriction order that's

3 currently in place.

4 You were telling us about the relationship you

5 developed with Mr Maidment and what you felt about his

6 inability to assist you as fully as he would wish to or

7 as you would wish him to?

8 **A. Absolutely. So he was effectively separated from it.**

9 **When he tried to support me, he was told it wasn't his**

10 **role; he was told it's what is called a connectional**

11 **matter in the Methodist Church, that it didn't relate to**

12 **him. Then, within that process, although the**

13 **Methodist Church has tried to say that they want to be**

14 **victim centred, that they have made significant changes**

15 **since their Past Case Review, they then say that within**

16 **the complaints process it wasn't up to me what happened,**

17 **I had no say in the process, it wasn't my decision what**

18 **the minister involved was sort of charged with.**

19 **Evidence I supplied wasn't given to the complaints**

20 **panel, even though it would have directly challenged the**

21 **words of the minister, and it was contemporary to the**

22 **1990s.**

23 **When it then later came to an appeal I was told it**

24 **wasn't my decision if we appeal, but they still expected**

25 **me to turn up. When I raised concerns about the**

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1 **process, I got very legalistic responses. At one point,**  
 2 **I got sent a sort of link to something like a 700- or**  
 3 **900-page document and told to read it.**  
 4 Q. Now, I understand that the complaints panel which was  
 5 forwarded to bring a complaint against the minister who  
 6 was in place at the time for his failure to deal  
 7 appropriately with the issue as it arose technically  
 8 found in your favour but didn't issue any sanction and,  
 9 in fact, they suggested that the sanction should be an  
 10 apology with both sides to agree an acceptable form of  
 11 words. Given the particular situation you were in, what  
 12 did you think about that?  
 13 **A. It takes a lot to make me really upset or really angry,**  
 14 **and I had to walk out of the room at that point to stop**  
 15 **myself reacting in a too negative way.**  
 16 **As a professional, I am absolutely appalled that the**  
 17 **Methodist Church could suggest that they could**  
 18 **effectively make a sanction an apology. If you force an**  
 19 **apology, it's not an apology. I mean, any parent**  
 20 **disciplining a child knows that's not how it works.**  
 21 **If I have to agree an acceptable form of words,**  
 22 **I question the suggestion from the Methodist Church that**  
 23 **the minister felt genuine remorse. I also think that,**  
 24 **if you look at any kind of principles of restorative**  
 25 **practice, it is against every process there.**

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1 Q. I also identify that in your witness statement you said  
 2 that the minister had, in fact, offered an apology on  
 3 the morning of the complaints hearing, but only in  
 4 return for you dropping the most serious charge against  
 5 him. What was your view about that?  
 6 **A. It was a very strange experience. We had them come in**  
 7 **and they said that they've offered to plead guilty,**  
 8 **effectively -- the equivalent -- or I don't know what**  
 9 **the words are from the Methodist Church, but he would**  
 10 **accept the allegations, so we thought that would be it,**  
 11 **and we were beginning to talk about what might be an**  
 12 **acceptable sanction, because apparently we'd got some**  
 13 **say in it.**  
 14 **Then the advocate came back and said, "Actually,**  
 15 **they're asking you to drop one of the charges in return**  
 16 **for the apology". Again, for me, that really calls into**  
 17 **complete question whether that's a genuine apology.**  
 18 **I also think it is a sense of emotional blackmail.**  
 19 **I think it is an awful thing to put a victim through,**  
 20 **because I then had to give evidence to a hearing,**  
 21 **including being asked about abuse, and I just think --**  
 22 **I wonder how ethical that is for a minister.**  
 23 Q. You've identified some particular concerns you have with  
 24 the processes, the first of which you identify as  
 25 removing power from the victim. You have described how

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1 it happened to you in the context of this process.  
 2 What's your concern about how the complaints process  
 3 currently operates in this respect?  
 4 **A. I think any level of kind of -- victim-led and**  
 5 **trauma-informed approach is about empowering victims to**  
 6 **make informed decisions. There are obviously**  
 7 **safeguarding requirements within that, but it's about**  
 8 **victims owning their process and having some power. We**  
 9 **know that abuse removes power from people.**  
 10 **What's happening with the Methodist complaints**  
 11 **process is a re-echo of that, because there was no**  
 12 **choice for me on whether I -- the processes it went**  
 13 **through. I have had to kind of speak to three different**  
 14 **panels now, I think, from the Methodist Church at**  
 15 **different stages, each one asking similar questions.**  
 16 **I haven't been able -- I wanted to have both**  
 17 **a friend with me as a personal support and Kevin with me**  
 18 **as a professional who had been alongside me and**  
 19 **understood the Methodist safeguarding, and I was just**  
 20 **told that wasn't an option.**  
 21 **I asked at one point, because they expected me to**  
 22 **travel to the other side of the country, almost, for one**  
 23 **of the hearings, to stay overnight. I was told that was**  
 24 **unreasonable and that I could drive up.**  
 25 **I think it doesn't feel victim centred. It feels**

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1 **like all power is removed. When I asked about**  
 2 **appealing, I was told it wasn't my decision.**  
 3 Q. Even though it is about you?  
 4 **A. Yes, indeed. And, indeed, when I -- we did eventually**  
 5 **go to an appeal hearing, which I was told I had to**  
 6 **attend, I wasn't allowed to talk in it.**  
 7 Q. You also talk about the fact that the process -- and  
 8 this is a sort of disciplinary process that the minister  
 9 was going through -- has inherent bias towards members  
 10 of the clergy. Can you tell us why you think that's the  
 11 case?  
 12 **A. I mean, in my case -- and I can only talk about this bit**  
 13 **within my case -- I will say that the Methodist minister**  
 14 **changed his account before the disciplinary hearing four**  
 15 **times in relation to his account of the phone call to my**  
 16 **mother: at one point claiming that he had not made**  
 17 **a call; another time saying she'd phoned him; another**  
 18 **time saying she'd visited him. By the time we got to**  
 19 **the hearing, he was claiming that he didn't know if it**  
 20 **had happened or not, although he could remember in**  
 21 **detail other conversations he'd had, which apparently**  
 22 **meant that he was told not to talk to me.**  
 23 **Then, in the complaints hearing, again he changed**  
 24 **one account, and that's just been accepted, and they**  
 25 **said, "We think that his confusion is completely**

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1 understandable".

2 My mother and I have given a consistent account for

3 the entire process and it feels that the Methodist

4 minister's account has been held in higher regard,

5 despite the fact that even his actions -- his actions

6 and his words are sort of in contrast with one another.

7 He claims that he suspended David North immediately, but

8 claims to not know why he did that. He claims that he

9 suspended him, but didn't know that it had anything to

10 do with the church.

11 So, for me, I think that -- and the panel itself is

12 made up of I think three Methodist ministers. It feels

13 like they want to believe what he says.

14 Q. You also talk about some concerns you had about data

15 protection in respect of the church. Would you like to

16 tell us about that?

17 A. There are people in the Methodist Church, within their

18 safeguarding teams, that I have come into contact with

19 professionally in my own career, so you will understand

20 that coming forward felt slightly risky.

21 Kevin has always been incredibly understanding of

22 that, and we always agreed, if my case needed to be

23 discussed, a pseudonym or initials would be used, and

24 I was absolutely fine with that. You know, I am all in

25 favour of information sharing and case discussion. It

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1 a safeguarding professional, don't really understand

2 what's just been sent to me, how will the average member

3 of the public going through this process understand?

4 I also know that I'm lucky enough to have a good

5 support network and professional knowledge to support

6 that, and I think this -- again, it really echoes to me

7 that the process isn't victim centred. I do question

8 how traumatising it would be for someone else to go

9 through this process.

10 Q. One of your concerns about the Methodist Church is that

11 your case wasn't referred to the Past Cases Review.

12 Now, we heard Ms Woods just before the break talk about

13 the Past Cases Review, but it turns out that your case

14 and the case of the three other individuals was never

15 referred because the minister concerned said, "Well,

16 I don't think it happened on church property", or, "I'm

17 not sure it comes within the confines of it". What

18 concerns has this led you to have about the entire

19 process of the Past Cases Review?

20 A. I mean, it's absolutely interesting, isn't it, because

21 I had heard about the Methodist Past Cases Review and

22 had held it in high regard personally and

23 professionally. Then it comes and I find that my case,

24 and indeed the other three victims connected to my case,

25 weren't reviewed. For me, that means that also there

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1 has absolutely proven to be crucial to safeguarding.

2 There is, however, no need to discuss a victim's

3 identity.

4 They received some information through the post that

5 would suggest that they had discussed my case with

6 people I knew. I raised that and was told they had

7 a right to do so. I questioned that and, when I didn't

8 get a satisfactory response, in July last year I made

9 a formal data protection complaint. By my understanding

10 of GDPR -- which, again, professionally I know pretty

11 well -- they had 30 days to respond to that. As of

12 today, I am still awaiting that response and, despite

13 promises that it will be dealt with, they have not done

14 so.

15 Q. As a professional, you have obviously accompanied people

16 through similar sorts of disciplinary processes, through

17 the criminal justice process and the civil justice

18 process.

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. How did it feel to be on the other end of that process?

21 A. I mean, completely perplexing. I thought I really

22 understood safeguarding. I thought I really understood

23 the legal and civil justice process reasonably well, and

24 yet, actually, I have been left flummoxed.

25 A lot of time I sit and I think, if I, as

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1 are three other people out there who have not been

2 offered any support from the Methodist Church.

3 However, the bigger issue for me came that, within

4 the evidence bundle to the complaints panel, it

5 transpired that the Methodist minister had never made

6 any referrals to the Past Cases Review, despite becoming

7 very senior in the Methodist Church and having been in

8 the Church for I think well over 40 years. From

9 a professional perspective, I find it highly implausible

10 that he came across no other safeguarding cases and

11 didn't have anything to report.

12 When we tried to raise that within the complaints

13 system itself, we were told we weren't allowed to talk

14 about that, we could only talk about the one case,

15 which, again, led me to question, is this really quite

16 clergy focused, because, in looking at severity of an

17 inaction, you would consider a pattern of behaviour in

18 any other circumstance.

19 I think, for me, the question is, if the Methodist

20 Church haven't looked at this apparent quite large gap

21 in their own PCR, what faith can actually we have that

22 it has addressed all issues, and what evidence is there

23 really that the minister involved is taking safeguarding

24 seriously, given that he still continues to be in

25 practice?

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1 Q. You've identified some suggestions for improving  
2 Methodist safeguarding practice. You have already  
3 identified, and I think the Methodist Church and  
4 Ms Woods acknowledged to us in her speech just before  
5 the break, that they have acknowledged that their  
6 complaints process does need an overall haul, and  
7 I think, from the evidence you have given, we are clear  
8 about the reasons why that might be.  
9 You also identify that some of the concerns are that  
10 the Methodist Church's reliance on volunteers takes  
11 place even through their complaints and discipline  
12 process. How do you think that could be changed?  
13 **A. In my case, part of the delay apparently to getting  
14 towards the disciplinary process is they were waiting  
15 for a volunteer to write the charges. That took well  
16 over three months. When they came, it was one sentence  
17 long and didn't cover the whole issue, and, effectively,  
18 myself, with a couple of people supporting me,  
19 rewrote -- almost had to rewrite them and suggest they  
20 relooked at them again.**  
21 **I think there's an awful lot that can be done quite  
22 simply. There are timescales, but they ignored them,  
23 and they were never communicated. You could update  
24 people if there are going to be delays. I fully  
25 understand that in safeguarding there are delays, and**

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1 **feel that it was a very victim-centred approach, I was  
2 told that it was better than other churches'. I might  
3 suggest that that's not a very high bar to be aspiring  
4 to.**  
5 **I just think also just recognising the impact on  
6 people. It was really interesting, shortly before here  
7 I was sat out there and we listened to the live  
8 transcripts -- sorry, you know, the opening statements,  
9 and I heard the Methodist Church one, I heard them refer  
10 to my case.**  
11 **I'm a little bit gobsmacked, a little bit  
12 disappointed, that they're giving an apology to me  
13 through this medium. Why haven't I had it personally?  
14 It feels really disingenuous. Last week, I was at  
15 Methodist Central Hall at the appeals hearing. They  
16 didn't ask to meet me. During that appeals hearing,  
17 I was -- we were informed about the impact on the  
18 Methodist minister, on his well-being and his mental  
19 health, and how we needed to give consideration to that  
20 for this complaints process. My advocate tried to raise  
21 the impact on me, and we were told it was our decision  
22 to appeal.**  
23 Q. I'm asked to ask you two questions on behalf of  
24 the Methodist Church, the first one of which is: how do  
25 you think organisations such as the church can improve

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1 **quite legitimate ones sometimes, but updating people  
2 regularly makes a huge difference to how people feel.**  
3 **I think you can offer pastoral care. I think --**  
4 Q. Were you offered any pastoral care?  
5 **A. No. Kevin has offered to refer me to counselling, but  
6 that's not the same as pastoral care. I also would say  
7 that the closest thing I've had to pastoral care is  
8 Kevin himself, and they absolutely tried to separate him  
9 from the case. I think -- so joining safeguarding back  
10 up with complaints. It's ludicrous to suggest you can  
11 separate them.**  
12 **I think a clear explanation of processes in plain  
13 English. The Methodist standing orders are not a simple  
14 document. I think you could train staff in victim care,  
15 understanding person-centred approaches. At one  
16 point---**  
17 Q. Is that safeguarding staff or more general  
18 administrative staff who might have to engage with  
19 victims?  
20 **A. A bit of both, indeed. I got an email from the  
21 Secretary of Conferences' secretary who addressed me by  
22 the wrong name. I would suggest that that's not a good  
23 start. I think -- particularly the complaints panel  
24 should have an understanding of safeguarding knowledge.  
25 At one point when I raised concerns that I didn't**

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1 their practices in terms of managing confidentiality,  
2 risk management and pastoral care, given the current  
3 framework of GDPR? That's quite a complex question.  
4 **A. It is quite a complex question, isn't it? To look at  
5 one bit of it, take the GDPR. Abide by it. I mean,  
6 they have blatantly ignored it, in my case. You know,  
7 they haven't responded to my complaint.**  
8 **Risk assessment I think is absolutely vital.**  
9 **You know, I write professional risk assessments, I train  
10 staff in risk assessing. It feels -- I noted in the  
11 bundle of evidence you supplied that they are now  
12 looking to do a risk assessment on the Methodist  
13 minister. For me, that's come in the wrong order. They  
14 have already, by their own evidence, said they decided  
15 no sanction was necessary because he has good  
16 safeguarding awareness. If that is the case, why are  
17 you risk assessing him? If it is not the case,  
18 shouldn't you have risk assessed him before, as if you  
19 would in a criminal court with a pre-sentence report.**  
20 **What was the first bit of your question? Sorry?**  
21 Q. That's fine. Managing confidentiality.  
22 **A. I think, like I say, there is a very simple way to do  
23 that, in terms of, you can use a pseudonym, you can use  
24 initials, you can ask the victim what they want.**  
25 **I know, in working with victims and survivors, there are**

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1 **people who want to be called a victim, there are people**  
 2 **who want to be called a survivor and some people who**  
 3 **hate the labels. I think we should keep them at the**  
 4 **heart of the process.**  
 5 Q. In the light of the history of this case, and separate  
 6 from whatever is going on with the complaints and  
 7 discipline process, in what way can the church best  
 8 support and help you as a survivor of abuse within it?  
 9 **A. It feels very sad to me that I'm only getting asked that**  
 10 **question at this stage, almost a year and a half on, and**  
 11 **despite the fact that they have known about my case for**  
 12 **such a long time, that they have not asked before.**  
 13 **I think, though, they could respond to my issues**  
 14 **with confidentiality. They could also move forward with**  
 15 **this apparent review they are going to do into their own**  
 16 **complaints process.**  
 17 **I was told a long time back that they would involve**  
 18 **me in that process. I'd like them to stick to their**  
 19 **word.**  
 20 Q. Do you have anything else that you would like to say to  
 21 the chair and panel?  
 22 **A. No, I don't think so. Thank you.**  
 23 MS SCOLDING: Chair and panel, are there any questions?  
 24 THE CHAIR: No, we have no questions, but on behalf of  
 25 the panel, I'd like to thank you very much for coming

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1 here and telling us about your experience today,  
 2 particularly for your ideas about improvement. Thank  
 3 you.  
 4 **A. Thank you.**  
 5 **(The witness withdrew)**  
 6 MS SCOLDING: Thank you very much, chair and panel. We have  
 7 no further witnesses for today, you will be glad to  
 8 hear. I think we start again tomorrow morning at  
 9 10.00 am. Thank you very much.  
 10 (4.24 pm)  
 11 (The hearing was adjourned to  
 12 Tuesday, 17 March 2020 at 10.00 am)  
 13  
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