

disclosure was made and I am sure that I would remember something this unusual and important. I would certainly have invited a colleague, such as my Registrar or Chaplain, to attend such a meeting and there is no record of this occurring (ie a meeting with a Reader in or around 2002 at which a disclosure of indecent assault was made). I am therefore confident that any "disclosure" that was made to me must have been so low key and informal, and perhaps in the context of another meeting, that I did not appreciate the significance of what I was being told.

24. Because the allegation involved a diocesan bishop, albeit long deceased, Pauline referred it to the National Safeguarding Team ("NST"), and I had little more to do with the matter, except when, later, civil claims arrived. However, I note from reading Pauline's notes in the course of preparing this witness statement that she and the NST case worker do not seem to have immediately encouraged the Reader to go to the police. I am not sure why this was, but this does not seem to have happened until late June 2016, by which time a second complainant had put in touch with Pauline via the DSA in London Diocese.
25. The second disclosure in June 2016 rightly led to a National Core Group recommendation that any complainant should be directed to the police. The NST advice that I should apologise immediately seemed to me (and to my DSA and Diocesan Secretary) to be premature, but there are difficult questions around the timing and manner of apologies. When it comes to apologies made in the course of civil proceedings, it is clear that these are not to be given until our solicitors are satisfied that a case had been demonstrated to their satisfaction, on the balance of probabilities.
26. The existence of two complaints about a previous Bishop alarmed me greatly. I discreetly enquired of about half a dozen respected clergy who had served in the Diocese around the period 1974-81 whether any of them had ever heard of any rumours, or disclosure, about VW. Canon Peter Lee alone told me that he had received a disclosure in around 1990 from a parishioner who did not want the matter disclosed further. I asked whether he could contact the complainant and ask whether he might be willing to meet with me, so that I could encourage him to report his claim to the police, and offer pastoral support. He came to see me with Canon Lee in late August 2016, and seemed relieved to be able to tell his story. He agreed to report it to the police, as facilitated by our DSA.
27. This was the only direct disclosure regarding VW which I received. The rest were handled by some combination of our DSA and the police, as set out in WWS000223.