

3.50 Yet the Panel was told that only around one third of the safeguarding concerns disclosed to the church were then referred on to statutory authorities by the church, year-on-year, between 2015 and 2017³⁸.

3.51 This proportion is far too small. These are the Church of England's own statistics, and they beg the question of what happens to the other two-thirds of the safeguarding concerns that are not referred on?

Externally enforced mandatory reporting: a summary

3.52 We have said repeatedly to this Inquiry that the case for an externally enforced mandatory reporting law is overwhelming. But what do survivors mean when they call for mandatory reporting?

3.53 The Slater & Gordon Survivors mean the following: a law that compels those in regulated organisations (in the context of this case study that would mean everyone in the Anglican Church from the lowliest church officers to Archbishops) to inform – as soon as reasonably possible – a safeguarding service *and also external agencies such as the police*, whenever they believe a child has been abused, or they have been told by a child that he or she has been abused.

3.54 The 'mandatory' element means any failure to inform is a criminal offence. This would create a culture of disclosure, and make people feel normal when they disclose rather than feeling that by disclosing allegations they are doing something abnormal. Such a law would give support to those who disclose, and stop them feeling like whistle-blowers.

3.55 It would make it a matter of routine, as Reverend Ineson said, to '*pick up the phone and call the police*'.

³⁸ Day 1, Page 10

- 3.60 Fourthly, an externally enforced mandatory reporting law will cost more money. On its face, this appears to be an obviously legitimate argument - more reporting will obviously mean more resources are required to cope with those reports. However it is in reality far from obvious that this will lead to an increased cost to society overall.
- 3.61 The extra cost of funding the requirement for the additional resources likely to be required by agencies such as the police and social services departments cannot be considered in isolation. To do so would be akin to arguing against the imposition of smoking bans in pubs because of the cost of implementing such a ban.
- The extra cost of the funding required by external agencies to which reports are made must be set against the cost to society of people suffering childhood sexual abuse.
- 3.62 As the Archbishop of Canterbury said on the penultimate day of this wider Anglican case study, childhood sexual abuse can destroy lives. Survivors need support - often lifelong support. Many are left entirely incapable of work as a result of their psychological injuries.
- 3.63 An increase in allegations being reported as a result of a mandatory reporting law will mean more abusers are brought to justice, which in turn will mean less sexual abuse of children. We say this is a reason in and of itself for mandatory reporting, no matter the increased costs of funding the independent institutions required, but when one considers the benefits to wider society of fewer people being sexually abused in childhood, the arguments against mandatory reporting look weak. An externally enforced mandatory reporting law is entirely likely to lead to fewer crimes being committed against children, which will mean fewer police resources will be used on the investigation of child protection offences and lower demands on the courts system, and also lead to fewer children being
-