

case against identified living perpetrators should any be identified and to ensure that any conclusions drawn at the end of the investigation withstand scrutiny.

3.1 Summary of Disclosures received by Operation Coverage

- 3.1.1 In July 2016, Cheshire Police were contacted by the Chester Diocese Safeguarding Advisor, who informed the Police that the Church had received an email report from a male (M1) who stated that he had been sexually abused between the dates of 1974-1979 at the Bishops House, Chester by Right Reverend Hubert Victor Whitsey. During this report, Cheshire Police were also advised that a further male (M2) had also come forward and they wished to speak to the police about the sexual abuse they suffered. The allegations of abuse from (M2) related to abuse suffered in 1981.
- 3.1.2 After the initial reports from the Church of England, relating to M1 and M2, the Church conducted their own further internal enquiries; this was not a formal part of the Police investigation however it did uncover a number of further witnesses and allegations. (M3) reported to the Church of England that he had been sexually abused by Right Reverend Hubert Victor Whitsey in 1980-1981, a female victim (F1) was spoken to by the Chester Diocese Safeguarding Advisor, during this meeting further 2 female witnesses making similar allegations (F2 & F3) were identified and the Church shared their concerns, reporting the details of (F2 & F3) to the Police. The incidents of alleged sexual abuse relating to (F1, F2 & F3) occurred between the years of 1980 – 1982.
- 3.1.3 During the initial police investigation, enquiries were conducted with representatives from within the Church and through this action a further female victim was identified (F4). On speaking with (F4) the Police identified a further female witness (F5). The disclosures from (F4) & (F5) related to allegations of sexual abuse by Right Reverend Hubert Victor Whitsey, which occurred around 1982.
- 3.1.4 Information obtained during the investigation from witnesses from within the Church of England, led to the further identification of a further female witness (F6). Enquiries completed with (F6), led to the identification of a further male witness (M4). The disclosures of F6 and M4 alleged abuse of a sexual nature and occurred in 1979.
- 3.1.5 During the course of the investigation, a further 2 female witnesses were identified (F7 & F8), along with a further male witness (M5). All disclosures and information obtained from these witnesses were allegations of a sexual nature and occurred primarily within the premises located within the home of the Bishop of Chester.

4.1 Enquiries with the Church of England

- 4.1.1 During the Police investigation, members of the Church were spoken too regarding the allegations against Right Reverend Hubert Victor Whitsey and formal accounts obtained. Through the enquiries conducted with the Church, it is clear that those who reported abuse had previously disclosed details of their allegations to the Church. Five of the cases that Cheshire Constabulary investigated related to disclosures which were allegedly previously reported to members of the Clergy.
- 4.1.2 Cheshire Constabulary have confirmed that one previous allegation had been reported to members of the clergy, confirmation regarding the earlier reporting of the four allegations was unable to be made.
- 4.1.3 It has been established that (M2) reported the abuse they alleged to representatives of the clergy the day after the alleged abuse occurred (1981) and (M2) was able to provide the Police with letters they had received from the Church appertaining to the events surrounding the alleged abuse.
- 4.1.4 It has been established that (M3) reported the alleged abuse to representatives of the clergy in 1992 and between the years of 2000-2002. On both occasions due to their wishes, no further action was taken by the Church. The disclosures have been confirmed by the witnesses from within the Church however Police could find no records of the disclosures being made.
- 4.1.5 Enquiries were also conducted with the Church in terms of establishing archive material relating to the Right Reverend Hubert Victor Whitsey - Bishop of Chester, on liaison with the Church Safeguarding Leads, it was established that no clergy file relating to Right Reverend Hubert Victor Whitsey could be located however the Police were provided with some personal data relating to Right Reverend Hubert Victor Whitsey, in the form of the Bishops retirement file. Throughout the enquiries conducted with the Church, there is no information that supports or undermines the disclosures made by the witnesses within this investigation.

5.1 Investigation Findings

- 5.1.1 At the conclusion of the Police Investigation into a deceased person the option for the police to present a case file to the CPS for consideration of charge is not available, however the advice and guidance from *Operation Hydrant – Advice for Investigating Deceased Persons ‘Publication of Findings’ (2017)* does provide the Police with the opportunity to conclude, if the deceased person was alive, would they have been spoken to provide a response.
- 5.1.2 The information obtained during the investigation into the alleged sexual abuse by Right Reverend Hubert Victor Whitsey, has uncovered 13 persons making allegations, the accounts provided by each has been assessed and considered in terms of whether the Police had sufficient information to consider if Right Reverend Hubert Victor Whitsey would be asked to provide an account.
- 5.1.3 Based upon the accounts provided, Operation Coverage has determined that should Right Reverend Hubert Victor Whitsey have been alive today, then the Police would have spoken to him in relation to 10 of the witness allegations. This is based upon the details they have provided within their accounts of the abuse they have alleged. The 3 other witnesses have provided only limited information to the Police regarding the abuse they have alleged as such it has been determined that we would have had insufficient information to speak Right Reverend Hubert Victor Whitsey in regard to these specific cases.
- 5.1.4 The following outlines the breakdown of the allegations that Right Reverend Hubert Victor Whitsey would have been asked to respond to:
1. Between 1974 and 1979 - Sexual Assaults against M1
 2. Between 1975 and 1979 – Adult abuse of position of trust /sexual activity with a boy aged 13-17 against M1.
 3. March 1981 – Sexual Assault against M2
 4. In 1981 – Sexual Assault against M3
 5. In 1981 – Adult abuse of position of trust /sexual activity with a boy aged 13-17 against M3.
 6. Between 1981 and 1982 – Sexual Assault against F4
 7. Between 1981 and 1982 – Sexual Assault against F5
 8. Between 1979 and 1982 - Sexual Assaults against F2
 9. Between 1981 and 1982 – Sexual Assault against F1
 10. Between 1981 and 1982 – Sexual Assault against F3
 11. In 1979 – Sexual Assault against F6
 12. In 1979 – Sexual Assault against M4
- 5.1.4 Where the Police have concluded that they would have spoken to Right Reverend Hubert Victor Whitsey, this is so that an account could be obtained. The account provided is an important part of the evidence gathering process and without it the evidence gathering process is not complete.