

THE INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE (IICSA)
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COUNCILS INVESTIGATION

BEFORE CHAIR PROFESSOR ALEXIS JAY OBE

CHILDREN IN THE CARE OF NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COUNCILS

CLOSING SUBMISSIONS
ON BEHALF OF D20
REPRESENTED BHATIA BEST SOLICITORS

Nicholas Brown
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9th November 2018

D20'S CLOSING SUBMISSIONS

1. D20 asks the Inquiry to recommend the creation of a Commissioner for the Victims of Child Sexual Abuse in the same way that there is a Commissioner for Children, or some other similar mechanism to ensure that the voice of children who have been sexually abused or at risk of being sexually abused continues to be heard after this Inquiry has done its work and that future governments are held to account and made to implement the recommendations which the Inquiry makes or publicly justify the reasons why they may fall short.
2. D20 feels passionately that the reason why there has been so much sexual abuse of children in care is that children are labelled when they go into care, they are labelled throughout the time they are in care, and they even continue to be labelled after they come out of the care system.
3. D20 believes that the evidence to this Inquiry has demonstrated that judgments are made about children in care by almost everyone who comes into contact with them, simply because they are in care. Children in care are pre-judged, and they are not seen as an ordinary human being in their own right as any other person would be. D20 believes that this makes these children particularly vulnerable. It means that, if they speak out, they are often not believed. It also means that they are much less likely to speak out, because they believe, with good reason, that they will not be listened to. They feel that they are judged, and they are judged by different standards. They are not given the benefit of the doubt in the same way other children and young people in the same or similar circumstances would be. They are treated differently.
4. This persists into adulthood, so that it is only now, with her son grown up, that D20 can begin to contemplate speaking out, because social services can no longer take her son away from her. D20 believes that this is one of the major reasons why so many people who have been sexually abused as children feel unable to come forward as adults to disclose what has happened to them. Like her, they feel they will be judged wrongly and differently, because of what has happened to them, and not as whom they are and as individuals in their own right.
5. D20 believes that this is why the Victims of Child Sexual Abuse need their own independent voice. For without someone whose job it is to understand and speak up for people like her, and for everyone whose life have been blighted with sexual abuse in their childhood, and who does not really understand the experiences which she and other victims have had, those same attitudes will persist and will continue to blight the lives of the current and future generations.

6. Both D20's generation and the next generation need someone permanently to be there to stand up and argue the corner for victims of child sexual abuse past, present and future.
7. D20's generation needs someone to identify the support and services which should be there for those whose lives have already been blighted. D20's generation need someone to tell the authorities what their needs are and to advise how they as victims should be approached and treated, and how they as victims can gain justice. D20's generation also need someone to police how the services and support they require are being provided and funded.
8. Today's children and future generations need someone to challenge and change the deep-rooted attitudes of the past, which have led to such misery and which still persist and are otherwise going to cause so much more misery.
9. They need someone to think innovatively in an ever-changing world, to highlight the shortcomings that there are throughout the system, from the lack of care and support which is currently given to all care leavers to the need to teach someone who has not been loved as a child how to be a mum, and to argue for the improvements which need to be made with the insights which only the victims of child sexual abuse will have.
10. They also need someone publicly to call out the government and individual local authorities, if they are failing to fund or cutting back children's services or any of the other checks and balances which are in place to try and ensure that this generation of children are safe, and to spell out the costs in human terms which those particular decisions will have. They need someone to hold the government and all the people who make decisions which will affect the victims and potential victims of child sexual abuse to account.

Nick Brown
Jon Wakefield
Raj Manan

9th November 2018