

for compensation. Advice would usually be given that applications would normally be made on the conclusion of any subsequent court case.

In addition it is part of the victim care package, Cheshire Cares offer a variety of options to victims who require assistance completing their CICA depending upon their ability to manage the process, access to suitable IT, their vulnerability or the complexity or sensitivity of the offence they are claiming for. Cheshire Cares also have protocols in place whereby RASASC and Probation Service VLOs directly refer victims they are supporting to Cheshire CARES to assist their clients through the CICA process. Cheshire Police then respond to any requests for police information as requested by the CICA as the claim is being processed.

c. Criminal compensation following successful criminal proceedings; and

As above in point b

d. Claims for civil compensation (including, for example, advising against such claims during ongoing criminal proceedings, and disclosing documentary evidence in support of such claims).

Any claims for civil compensation made by a victim of CSA are the decision of the victim and their parent / guardian.

It is common practice for the officer in the case to advise the victim and their parent / guardian that any such claims for compensation should normally be made on the conclusion of any subsequent court case. As per (b) above Cheshire Cares support victims and families through this process as required.

The Case Study

4. Brief summary of the investigations/operations into allegations of CSA concerning St Aidan's/St Vincent's Children's Homes and the outcomes including convictions.

In 1994 Cheshire Police launched a major investigation into allegations of sexual and other forms of abuse against children at St Aidan's Children's Home, Widnes. The investigation was entitled 'Operation EMILY'.

St Vincents was located in the Merseyside Police area and was subject to an investigation by that force.

The HOLMES account for Operation EMILY details that the enquiry had 2246 persons recorded as nominals, with approx. 60 persons identified as suspects. The below statistics outline a summary of the actions taken and outcomes of the enquiry:

10 x suspects arrested
10 x suspects charged
22 x suspects interviewed under caution
10 x deceased offenders

20 x cases resulted in an NFA decision by the CPS
18 x cases resulted in an NFA decision by the SIO

4 x Suspects were convicted

3 x cases were discontinued
3 x Not Guilty verdicts

Since Operation EMILY, further smaller investigations have been carried out by Cheshire Police in relation to individual allegations of abuse made by former residents of St Aidan's. These are summarized below:

In 2014 an allegation of sexual abuse was made against a former staff member of St Aidan's (who had previously been convicted of abusing other victims during Operation Emily) who was, by 2014, deceased. As a result no further action was taken by Cheshire Police.

In 2016 a separate allegation was made against the same (deceased) former staff member, so again, no further action was taken.

In 2017 ciphered victim [AR-A87] made allegations of abuse against another former staff member at St Aidan's. On review of the Operation EMILY records it was found that this suspect had previously been charged with committing offences against ciphered victim [AR-A87] but the charges had been 'stayed' at court. As such, no further action was taken by Cheshire Police.

Also in 2017 a separate victim made allegations of abuse against two former staff members at St Aidan's. This investigation is still ongoing.

In 2018 another former resident of St Aidan's made an allegation of abuse against a former staff member who was now deceased. The victim did not engage with police and no further action was taken.

Changes in the Cheshire Police approach to Child Sexual Abuse Investigations between 'Operation Emily' and the 2018.

Operation Emily commenced in 1994. At this time the policing methodology was determined by The Children Act 1989 (which came into force on 14th October 1991) supported by a number of Home Office Circulars which provided direction and instruction in relation to the implementation of The Children Act.

In the early 1990's Area Child Protection Committees were responsible for agreeing Local Policies and Procedures for inter-agency work and Widnes, where St Aidans was located, was a District of the non-metropolitan county of Cheshire (not achieving unitary status until 1st April 1998).

Operation Emily commenced as a result of allegations received from an individual complainant. Staff were drawn from divisional CID offices to work together with colleagues from Cheshire Social Services. The enquiry commenced prior to the establishment of the Major Crime and the Public Protection Directorate (2015) or the preceding Paedophile Unit (1996/97).

From SIO Policy files of other Child Abuse Investigations commenced around the same time as Operation Emily, it is possible to identify that there is a general absence of the 'victim voice'. This is not to say that individual officers did not operate in an empathic and considered manner towards the victims and witnesses with some consideration recorded as to anonymity and court transport arrangements. However, SIO policy decision making was clearly focused upon recording staff and resource decision making with little, or no,