



# Inquiry Update



<b>Foreword from the Chair .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Introduction by the Secretary to the Inquiry .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Our Purpose .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Our Ways of Working .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Our People and Resources .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Progress So Far and Commitments for the Future .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Our Truth Project .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Our Research Project .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Our Public Hearings Project .....</b>	<b>15</b>

## Foreword from the Chair, Professor Alexis Jay OBE



Child sexual abuse and exploitation blights lives. Its impact is profound and enduring, both on the victims and survivors of abuse and on their families and friends. Where abuse has an institutional element, the impact on victims and survivors is all too often compounded by the failure of institutions to protect those children they are responsible for keeping safe from harm.

I have spent my working life trying to help some of society's most vulnerable people, investigating institutional failures and recommending ways to prevent them from being repeated. I am honoured, first as a member of the Inquiry's Panel and now as its Chair, to lead an Inquiry which I believe offers us an unprecedented opportunity to ensure that today's children, and tomorrow's, are given the care and protection they deserve.

Our purpose is two-fold. We have a responsibility to understand the failings of the past and hold those responsible to account. But we must also focus on the future, making recommendations which ensure that children are better protected from abuse. Our success will depend on striking the right balance between these objectives and fulfilling them with pace, with confidence and with clarity.

This is the first written update about the Inquiry's work under my Chairmanship and we plan to issue further updates from time to time.

As well as setting out our commitments for the future, this update highlights some of our key achievements to date. Central to our progress so far has been our work with victims and survivors, in which we have been ably assisted by the Inquiry's Victims and Survivors' Consultative Panel. The first Victims and Survivors' Forum was held in August, marking a significant milestone in our efforts to ensure the widest possible participation in our work by victims and survivors of abuse. Also, following successful pilots at the end of last year, the Truth Project began in earnest in June. I am grateful to all those who have chosen to share their experiences with us to date - they are making an important contribution to our understanding of the nature and scale of child sexual abuse.

There is much to be done, but I believe that we are in a strong position to deliver. It is with confidence and determination that my Panel and I look forward to continuing the Inquiry's vital work.



## Introduction by the Secretary to the Inquiry, John O'Brien

The Inquiry was established on 12 March 2015, with [terms of reference](#) which set out our purpose and scope, and the principles to which we will adhere in delivering our objectives. This update sets out our priorities and commitments for the next period, as well as our progress to date. It describes the resources available to us to deliver our work, and how we will work to achieve the best possible value for money.

The publication of this update on our progress reflects our commitment to transparency in the way we work. We are committed to being open about our objectives and how we intend to deliver them.

Equipped with clear commitments for the next period, and with the dedication and skill of the Inquiry's staff, we are well placed to make swift and significant progress in delivering the Inquiry's important and pressing work.



## Our Purpose

The Inquiry's purpose is to consider the manner in which institutions in England and Wales have fulfilled their duty of care to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation, and to identify what further action is needed to protect children from abuse.

We cannot hope to prevent past failings from being repeated without seeking to understand those failings. Listening to the voices of those who suffered child sexual abuse will help us make meaningful recommendations - recommendations that ensure that children are better protected from abuse, and which ensure that victims and survivors of abuse receive the help and support they need.

Every aspect of the Inquiry's work is essential to our purpose. We will draw on the experiences of victims and survivors and the evidence we gather through our investigations and research to unearth the true scale and nature of child sexual abuse in England and Wales. We will examine the successes and failures of institutions in recognising and addressing the plight of children who have suffered abuse. And, using our statutory powers, we will hold institutions to account for past failings, and learn from the past to make recommendations for the future which we hope will effect significant change.

## Our Ways of Working

### **A statutory inquiry, independent of government**

The Inquiry is independent of government, and is led by Professor Alexis Jay OBE and a Panel of three members: Professor Sir Malcolm Evans KCMG OBE, Ivor Frank and Drusilla Sharpling CBE.

The Inquiry is not part of government and is not run by a government department. It was established under the Inquiries Act 2005 and conducts its work in accordance with that Act and the Inquiry Rules 2006. The Inquiry's terms of reference are set by the Home Secretary.

All state and non-state institutions in England and Wales are within our remit, and there is no cut-off date for the matters the Inquiry is able to consider. We will consider the steps it is necessary for institutions to take in order to protect children from abuse and publish timely reports and recommendations. The breadth of our terms of reference gives us an unprecedented opportunity to consider the underlying issues which have led institutions to fail children across England and Wales. We will adopt a thematic approach to ensure that, alongside our work to hold institutions to account, we are focused on the fundamentals relevant to the thousands of institutions within our remit, and make the far-reaching recommendations necessary to address them.

### **An inquiry with victims and survivors of child sexual abuse at its heart**

The experiences of victims and survivors are central to our work. To truly understand the nature of child sexual abuse and its impact, we must listen to those who have suffered abuse. The Victims and Survivors' Consultative Panel ensures that the perspective of victims and survivors of child sexual abuse informs our work, and the Victims and Survivors' Forum provides victims and survivors who wish to engage with the work of the Inquiry with the opportunity to do so.

Victims and survivors of child sexual abuse are able to share their experiences through the Inquiry's Truth Project. Their voices provide a unique insight into past failings and their impact, and will be of invaluable assistance when making recommendations that make a real difference to people's lives.

We are committed to properly supporting all those who engage with the Inquiry or share in its work. We are working with a number of experienced providers of support and counselling services to ensure that victims and survivors who share their experiences with us through the Truth Project, and those who participate in the Inquiry's research and investigations, are offered emotional and practical support as they do so.

## Our Ways of Working

### **An Inquiry which engages with its stakeholders**

The Inquiry Offices, located across England and Wales, are responsible for building and maintaining strong relationships with the stakeholders in their areas, promoting awareness and understanding of the Inquiry's purpose and objectives.

We are committed to being visible and accessible to our stakeholders. The Chair and Panel will attend a variety of national and local events to give those with an interest in the Inquiry the opportunity to hear more about our work. We are keen to reach as wide an audience as possible, and welcome invitations to participate in events.

## Our People and Resources

### Our people

The Inquiry was established as a statutory inquiry on 12 March 2015 and since then we have built our capacity and capability to ensure we are able to fulfil our purpose. As of 20 October 2016, there were 183 people working on the Inquiry across all areas of work, with teams based in locations across England and Wales. We have staff with a diverse mix of skills, expertise and backgrounds, drawn from across the public, private and third sectors, which we believe enriches the work we do and how we do it.

Protecting and promoting the health and wellbeing of our staff is vital. All staff have access to support and counselling, and training on how to look after their wellbeing. We will continue to ensure that the Inquiry provides a supportive working environment for staff, and we will enhance our learning and development provision so that all our people are equipped with the skills they need to deliver.

### Our locations

Our teams are based in Inquiry Offices across England and Wales. Inquiry Offices undertake and support the Inquiry's functions both regionally and nationally, and have been designed in consultation with victims and survivors. Offices have been opened in Wales and in the North West and North East of England. In the coming months, we will open our office in the South West. Truth Project private sessions are held in venues designed or set up to make it easier for victims and survivors of child sexual abuse to share their experiences with us in a confidential and supportive environment. We will ensure that, wherever they live, victims and survivors have the opportunity to attend a Truth Project private session as close to home as possible.



## Our People and Resources

### Our funding

The Inquiry is committed to using public resources efficiently and proportionately, delivering the best value for money. We adhere to effective financial monitoring, reporting and control of all Inquiry spending. The Secretary to the Inquiry is responsible for the administration and management of the Inquiry and is the Senior Accountable Officer, responsible for the proper management of public resources and Inquiry expenditure.

### Financial reporting and transparency

As part of our commitment to transparency, we will publish a financial expenditure update on our website on a regular basis. We will also produce an annual statement of accounts for the Inquiry at the end of the financial year. The Inquiry's financial report for 2015/16 can be viewed [here](#).

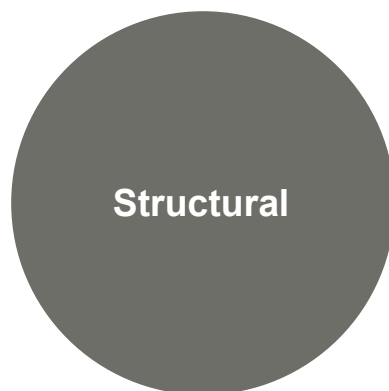
## Progress So Far and Our Commitments for the Future

We will approach our Terms of Reference by making sure we present recommendations for improved identification, prevention and response to child sexual abuse. We will base this on a thorough analysis of historic incidents, current ways of working and emerging best practices. To ensure that our findings and our recommendations are relevant to the thousands of institutions across our remit, we will align the elements of the Inquiry across four major themes:

- Cultural - examining the attitudes, behaviours and values within institutions that prevent us from stopping child sexual abuse
- Structural - looking at the legislative, governance and organisational frameworks in place within and between institutions
- Financial - considering the financial, funding and resource arrangements for relevant institutions and services
- Professional and Political - focusing on the leadership, professional and practice issues for those working or volunteering in relevant institutions



**Cultural**



**Structural**



**Financial**



**Professional  
and Political**

Our Projects - Public Hearings, Research and Truth - do not stand alone as separate strands of work. All of them will make crucial contributions to the whole Inquiry. When considered together they will not only enable us to make far-reaching recommendations for change. They will also capture the scale of child sexual abuse across England and Wales so that our recommendations address the entrenched issues that have impeded reforms or allowed child sexual abuse to continue.

## Our Truth Project

The Truth Project gives victims and survivors the opportunity to make a significant contribution to the work of the Inquiry in a private and confidential setting. Victims and survivors who wish to take part can either attend a private session at a venue in England or Wales to share their experience with a member of the Inquiry, or share their experience in writing. Their accounts will not be tested, challenged, or contradicted. We will shortly publish a report on sessions held so far. The experiences which are shared with us will play an important part in shaping the Inquiry's conclusions and recommendations for the future.

## What are participants in the Truth Project telling us?

**"I would encourage any abuse victim to speak to someone, it is a massive release. Thank you for listening."**

**"Extremely positive experience, has helped to believe that something positive for others can come from the bad things that happened in life."**

**"Particular thanks to Dru for extreme kindness, sympathetic listening, understanding and confidence-inspiring words. Thank you."**

## Progress so far

- The Truth Project has been designed with the close involvement of victims and survivors and is now well underway, with private sessions commencing in June 2016, following successful pilots in November 2015. The pilots provided valuable learning which has enabled us to tailor the private sessions to the needs of victims and survivors. Victims and survivors are also able to share their experiences with us in writing.
- To date, we have invited over four hundred people who wish to share their experiences with us to a private session, and sessions are now being held in a number of locations. The feedback we've received from victims and survivors who have attended sessions has been very positive about their experience of the Truth Project process.
- Support and counselling is being provided for all victims and survivors when they share their experience with us. The support we offer has been designed and delivered with the close involvement of victims and survivors.
- Facilitators and Assistant Facilitators have been recruited and trained to help lead the private sessions with victims and survivors, and support them to share as much of their experiences as they wish to.
- Where victims and survivors consent we will consider their experiences in the context of our research programme so that the Inquiry's recommendations are informed by what we are told.

## Our commitments

- We will complete the roll-out of private sessions throughout England and Wales by March 2017.
- We will develop ways of making the Truth Project as accessible as possible for hard-to-reach groups, including access to the Truth Project by victims and survivors in prisons and other establishments.
- We will continue to gather feedback on the support and counselling that we provide and on people's experiences of participating in the Truth Project, and use this feedback to evaluate our support model.

## Our Research Project

The Inquiry has a programme of research and analysis which advances our understanding of institutional failures in child protection, and the prevention of child sexual abuse. This contributes to the development of a robust evidence base for the Inquiry's work, with a strong focus on informing compelling and effective recommendations across our four key themes for change.

The need for high quality research and analysis underpins everything we do. In addition to gathering and receiving a wide range of evidence, data and research, the accounts of victims and survivors offer an unrivalled source of information about experiences of child sexual abuse and its impact. Our research and analysis activity ensures that we draw on the highest quality evidence and information in forming our conclusions and making recommendations. Where we identify gaps in the evidence base that can be met within the terms and resources of the Inquiry, we will conduct new research to fill those gaps, working with external organisations where necessary.

## Progress so far

- A number of specific research projects are underway:
  - An assessment of published evidence about child sexual abuse in the Anglican and Catholic Churches;
  - An assessment of published evidence about the role of institutions located in other jurisdictions in preventing and responding to child sexual abuse; and
  - An assessment of published evidence about child sexual abuse in custodial institutions.
- Working with victims and survivors, we are helping to ensure that the Inquiry's approach to research and to gathering information and evidence reflects the perspectives of victims and survivors - for example, ensuring that victims and survivors are able to make an informed choice to participate in the Truth Project and understand how the information that they provide will be used.
- An Academic Advisory Board has been established, composed of experts in the field of child protection. The Board allows us to be assured of the rigour and ethical integrity of the Inquiry's research and analysis.

## Our commitments

- We will continue to ensure that the Inquiry's work is informed by high quality research evidence and analysis. We will also develop proposals for primary research that will further support the making of recommendations across the four key themes for change.
- We will assess the published research information using the Rapid Evidence Assessment approach in the following areas:
  - Promising practice from overseas in the prevention of child sexual abuse;
  - Child sexual abuse in custodial institutions; and
  - Child sexual abuse in the Catholic and Anglican Churches.
- We will develop a series of research briefing notes on the following topics to support investigations:
  - Child sexual abuse in residential schools;
  - Child sexual abuse in residential care; and
  - The impact of child sexual abuse on victims and survivors.
- We will externally commission a review of the published evidence on:
  - The behaviour and characteristics of perpetrators of online-facilitated child sexual abuse and exploitation;
  - The characteristics and vulnerabilities of victims of online-facilitated child sexual abuse and exploitation; and
  - Social and political discourses about child sexual abuse.
- We will provide quality assurance of Inquiry data and data processes to ensure that publications using these data and information can withstand scrutiny. This will include:
  - Ensuring that people are making an informed choice to participate in the Inquiry, and that they understand how the information that they provide will be used; and
  - Ensuring that the information we receive through the Truth Project and from correspondence with victims and survivors is used to produce robust outputs.

## Our Public Hearings Project

The Inquiry is examining evidence of potential failings of institutions to protect children from sexual abuse, to enable the Inquiry to make relevant findings and recommendations.

### Progress so far

- We have launched investigations into a range of institutions and themes, with 11 preliminary hearings held in March and July 2016.
- We have made over 250 formal requests for evidence from over 120 different institutions.
- We have procured an evidence management system which supports our assessment of around 75,000 documents received to date, a total which amounts to approximately three quarters of a million pages of material.
- The Inquiry has requested and the Chair has determined applications for core participant status in relation to seven investigations. To date over 200 applications have been granted.
- Two issues papers have been published by the Accountability and Reparations investigation, seeking views on the civil justice system and criminal compensation schemes.

## Our commitments

- The first Inquiry Seminar will be held on 29-30 November 2016 on the civil justice system and criminal compensation schemes. This will be the first in a series of such seminars which will inform our work.
- If during the course of the review which the Chair announced on 6 September 2016 we consider that changes to our existing investigations might be necessary, we will ask the relevant core participants for their views before any decisions are taken. If there are other substantial changes to the Inquiry's work which we think will directly affect others, we will seek their views.
- We will commence our first public hearing in February 2017.
- We will commission new investigations only if we consider they are necessary to fulfil our terms of reference.
- We will share further updates about our programme of work as soon as they are available.