

CONFIDENTIAL

Terms of Reference: Review – George Bell

1. Background

1.1 In October 2015, the Church of England released a statement to say that the Bishop of Chichester, Dr Martin Warner had apologised following a settlement regarding allegations of child sexual abuse by George Bell in the 1940s and 1950s. George Bell was Bishop of Chichester for 29 years until shortly before his death in 1987. The response to the announcement has included criticisms of the Church and its handling of the case from a range of individuals.

1.2 The House of Bishops Practice Guidance “Responding to Serious Safeguarding Situations to Church Officers” (May 2015) states;

Once all matters relating to a serious safeguarding situation have been completed, the Core Group should meet to review the process against this and other Practice Guidance, and to consider what lessons can be learned for the handling of future safeguarding situations

In June 2016, the Church of England announced that it would be undertaking an independent review into how the case was managed and the key processes involved in the decision-making.

2. Objectives of the review

2.1 To provide the Church of England with a review which, having examined relevant documents and interviewed all relevant people, ensures that:

- a. Lessons are learnt from past practice
- b. Survivors are listened to and taken seriously, and are supported
- c. Good practice is identified and disseminated
- d. Recommendations are made to help the Church embed best practice in safeguarding children and adults in the future.

3. Scope of the review

3.1 The review will cover the following periods:

- a. 1995, when the complainant first wrote to the then Bishop of Chichester and the actions taken by the Church of England as a result of this complaint
- b. 2012 when the complainant wrote to Lambeth Palace and the actions taken by the Church of England as a result of this complaint
- c. 2013 when the complainant wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the actions taken by the Church as a result of this complaint
- d. 2013 onwards when the case was managed across the National Church, Lambeth Palace and the Diocese of Chichester, notably via a Core Group.

3.2 The review will consider the adequacy of the responses to the complainant and the subsequent decision making processes and action taken, in the context of the safeguarding policies and procedures in place at the time.

3.3 The reviewer will be given access to all the evidence pertaining to how the decisions were reached: firstly, that the claim should be settled and, secondly that a public announcement should be made. This will include access to relevant medical information and reports which formed part of the settlement process (with the consent of the complainant).

3.4 The person or persons undertaking the review will seek to interview key members of the core group and other individuals deemed by the reviewer to be appropriate.

3.5 The review will provide a detailed evidence-based analysis of the responses and decision making processes concerning the case.

4. Undertaking the review

4.1 The review will be carried out by an independent person who has not had a connection with the case and its management, nor with the Diocese of Chichester.

4.2 The review will be carried out by someone or persons with extensive legal, forensic and safeguarding experience of cases involving the alleged sexual abuse of children. A separate specification document will be agreed outlining this in more detail.

4.3 The reviewer will produce a report, relevant sections of which shall be seen by those who directly contributed to the process for comment about factual accuracy, before it is finalised.

4.4 The reviewer will produce an executive summary, which will be published to support the dissemination of learning. The executive summary shall exclude any material which might enable the complainant's identity to be deduced.

4.5 The Church of England will determine whether the full report can be sufficiently redacted or otherwise anonymised to enable its publication without risking disclosure of the complainant's identity.